

MARX ON ASIA / INDIA: REVIVING DEBATE ON ASIATIC MODE OF PRODUCTION

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Until recently, the legacy of the Leningrad Conference of 1931¹ has had unfortunate implications for the analysis of complex pre - capitalist social formations. Under the auspices of Stalin, this Conference concluded by rejecting the validity of the Asiatic Mode of Production (hereafter the A.M.P.) as a useful starting point for the analysis of the Chinese and, by implication, other post tribal precapitalist social formations.

From the early thirties through to the mid sixties, China and other social formations hitherto conceptualized by Marx in terms of the A.M.P. were subsumed as variants of the feudal mode of production. During this period there emerged a certain reluctance, often implicit, to transcend the theoretical dogmatism inherent in Stalin's² rigidly mechanical evolutionary progression of historical epochs. This tendency is reflected in much of the material written by Marxist scholars and practitioners in this area such as: Mao Tse Tung (1945), Maurice Dobb (1950) and Kuo Mojo (1957)³ Moreover, even amongst Indian Marxist historians of the calibre of Kosambi (1956) and Joshi (1958) there existed a marked

inclination to characterize the pre - colonial era in India as predominantly feudal. With the demise of Stalinism and in the dawn of revolutionary struggle in China, South East Asia, India, Latin America and Africa, interest in precapitalist social formations has been rekindled resulting in a proliferation of theoretical⁴ and substantive debate, discussion and analysis. I am in this paper primarily concerned, particularly, in that it relates to the conceptualisation of the A.M.P.

As I have indicated, the renewed interest in Marx's work on the A.M.P. has not emerged in a theoretical vacuum but in an ongoing socio - economic context. Coinciding with the general interest in complex precapitalist societies there has emerged a more specific concern with conditions of production in existence in Mughal, British and Independent India. It is generally accepted that no single dominant mode of production has prevailed over the entire land mass at any one point in time. In consequence, the concern has been with the identification of the dominant or most extensive mode and this question has been approached in a variety of different ways in the writing of: Rudra(1970, Patnaik

(1971,1972); Chattopadhyaya (1972); Alavi(1975); Davey (1975); McEachern (1976); Omvedt(1980); Gupta(1980) and Currie (1980,1981). This interest in substantive analysis has, in turn, important implication for the further theorisation of modes since if substantive analysis is to progress beyond mere description it is important to develop adequate conceptual apparatuses. We now have an adequate conceptual construct in the capitalist mode of production for theorising the capitalist world but many of the concepts, such as the A.M.P., that are crucial to an understanding of the dynamics of non-capitalist societies remain poorly constructed and ill defined. This remains the case in spite of some important contemporary attempts to rectify this state of affairs, e.g. Godelier(1965, 1968, 1977); Thorner (1966); Lichtheim (1967); Meillassoux (1972); Terray (1972, 1975); Rey(1975); Melotti(1977); Sawyer(1977); Krader(1980); and Clammer(1982). Regrettably, much of the current work of the Paris Centre D'Etudes et de Recherches Marxistes school on the analysis of precapitalist modes of production is still inaccessible to non-French reading scholars. On this point, it is worth noting that both Bloch(1975) and Seddon(1979) contain good selections in translation of the works of Godelier, Terray and Meillassoux and that the Italian theorist Melotti, provides a brief introductory sketch of some of the ideas of the Africanist Suret-Canale and the Sinologist Tokei. The primary purpose of my own paper is to critically examine the

manner in which Marx develops a theoretical basis for the analysis of complex pre-capitalist, non-feudal social forms of Asia / India. In the process of this evaluation I shall draw on some secondary sources and, in so doing, will assess the contribution to the discussion made by a number of writers from a variety of perspectives.

MARX ON THE A.M.P. - THE LOCATION OF A CONCEPT

My intention is to contextualise Marx's analysis of the A.M.P. within the corpus of his work as a whole. This approach necessarily entails a rejection of those interpretation of Marx, popularised through Althusserian Marxism, which are premised on the assumption of an epistemological break between the 'young' Hegelian influenced Marx of the period prior to the publication of the 1844 Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts and the mature ('scientific') Marx of Capital. The influence of Althusser is probably most clearly evidenced in the writings of Hindess and Hirst who operate within a rigid Althusserian frame. In their search for the A.M.P. in Marx they make explicit their intention to focus exclusively on Capital on the grounds that the theoretical status of Capital is higher, i.e. more scientific, than that of other writings, in particular, letters and journalistic work⁵. Ironically, this arbitrary process of selection is presented as scientific practice, and contrasted, by these authors, with the subjectivism of those authors, with the

subjectivism of those accounts of the A.M.P., which are derived from an analysis of Marx's work viewed as a totality.

In order to locate the discussion of the A.M.P. within Marx's materialist conception of history it is important to briefly comment on the notion of mode of production as it is developed within Marxian theory. Essentially, for Marx, a mode of production refers to a specific epoch or period in the passage of human history which enables us to identify and grasp the fundamental character, defined in material terms, of the epoch in question. This emphasis on the mode of production of material life contrasts sharply with the Hegelian view in which the character of an age is embodied in its essential 'spirit'. In Marxian theory, different modes of production can be differentiated on the basis of variation in the manner in which the surplus product is appropriated from the direct producer. It is in this sense that it can be argued that the mode of production comprises a combination of forces and relations⁶ of production in which relations structure forces and, in so doing, account for the form appropriation assumes.

In Marx's discussion of the capitalist mode of production, which is developed in the three volumes of *Capital*, his main concern or preoccupation is with the underlying structural mechanism of capitalism as a system of production predicated on the relationship between

economy and polity in the Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (1967) and the relationship between classes in French society in *The Class Struggles in France 1848 to 1850* and *The Civil War in France* (1968). In *Capital*, however, Marx's prime objective is to articulate and construct a set of interrelated concepts - use - value, exchange value, relative surplus value, absolute surplus - value, fetishism of commodities, labour process, constant capital, variable capital, rate of surplus-value, mass of surplus-value, rate of exploitation etc. - which enable the reader to grasp the underlying structural relationship of the capitalist system of production. In terms of systematisation, consistency and detail, there is no A.M.P. equivalent of Marx's comprehensive and extended structural analysis of the capitalist mode of production. While references to the 'Asian form'; 'Oriental society'⁷; 'Asiatic despotism'; 'Asiatic empires'; 'Asiatic society'; 'Indian communities' are scattered throughout his work, there are only two explicit references to the A.M.P. the Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy (1968) and *Capital I* (1954).⁸ "Even in the 1859 Preface, however, Marx fails to develop an adequate conceptualisation of either the conditions of existence of the A.M.P. or its contextual relevance in relation to other modes. All we learn from the Preface is that:

In broad outlines Asiatic, ancient, feudal and modern bourgeois modes of production can

be designated as progressive epochs in the economic formation of society'

Neither here nor anywhere else in his writings does Marx provide a clearly articulated construct of the A.M.P. His discussion in the Preface does not extend beyond the assumption that the A.M.P. is one of several 'progressive epochs in the economic formation of society'.¹⁰ In relation to the A.M.P. this assumption creates difficulties even if we accept that the theory of historical materialism only stipulates that there should be a succession of modes. In the first place, the A.M.P. does not even feature in Marx's 1846 work on *The German Ideology*¹¹ in which tribal, ancient communal and feudal forms of property are distinguished as 'various stages of development in the division of labour'. Secondly, at various stages in history ancient, feudal and capitalist modes have been dominant in Europe whereas the A.M.P., in its pure form, has only emerged in the context of Asia, Africa and South America. If we assume that modes are not geographically specific¹² - and this is certainly the impression Marx creates in the *Grundrisse*, Preface and *Capital I* - then the dialectical relationship between different modes must be theorised. In the work of Marx this relationship, insofar as it relates to the dynamic between the A.M.P. and other modes, remains unclear. The problem cannot be resolved simply by identifying the contradiction between the unilinear evolutionary schema (so prevalent amongst

nineteenth century social theorists) of the *German Ideology* and Preface on the one hand, and the multilinear schema of the *Grundrisse*, on the other. Both unilinear and multilinear approaches leave unanswered the question of the dialectical relationship between the A.M.P. and other modes.¹³

It can be argued, and this argument is one favoured by Anderson (1989), that the Asiatic mode or form of production is the stage in the development of productive forces preceding the ancient mode. While this interpretation is certainly difficult to sustain in the light of the *New York Daily Tribune* articles of the 1850's and *Capital III*, where the static nature of the Asiatic form is stressed, it does have some foundation in the dynamic accounts of the 1857 *Grundrisse* and *Capital I*. Here, the thrust of the argument is that the Indian form of common property was the original form out of which Slavonic, Roman, Teutonic and Celtic forms emerged and, in consequence, such forms are deducible from Indian common property:

A ridiculous presumption has latterly got abroad that common property in its primitive form is specifically a Slavonian, or even exclusively Russian form. It is the primitive form that we can prove to have existed amongst Romans, Teutons and Celts, and even to this day we find numerous examples, ruin though they may be, in India. A more exhaustive study of Asiatic, and especially of Indian forms of common property, would show how from the different forms of

*primitive common property, different forms of its dissolution have been developed. Thus, for instance, the various original types of Roman Teutonic private property are deducible from different forms of Indian common property.*¹⁴

The locations of Marx's theoretical analysis of the Asiatic form (of the division of labour) are the Grundrisse¹⁵ and Capital III. In the Grundrisse¹⁶, however unsuccessfully, he attempts to situate the Asiatic form contextually whilst in Capital III he attempts a tentative articulation of the mode. In the Grundrisse Marx suggests that the Asiatic form (of the division of labour) is simply one of four routes out of primitive communalism (the others being: the ancient; the Germanic and Slavonic). The main problem with the Grundrisse account is that Marx slips between theoretical (attempts to conceptually locate the mode and articulate its structure) and empirical categories (in this instance, often fairly non-specific descriptions of pre-capitalist social forms). The account is heavily empiricist in that it draws substantially on pre-existing description of a wide range of societies including ancient Mexico, Peru, India, Germany and Rome. This conflation of theoretical and empirical categories has created confusion and ambiguity since it is never entirely clear whether Marx is discussing the mode in general or, a society in which the mode is dominant. One consequence is that interpretation of the Grundrisse-despite Hobsbawm's excellent

introduction to the section on pre-capitalist formations (published separately under that title)- is fraught with problems. In the discussion of the relationship between state and economy under the Asiatic form of property, Marx's major preoccupation is with the relationship between appearance and reality. A simple interpretation of Marx's Grundrisse view is that while the ruler appears to be the owner of all land, this is but a mask for a reality in which tribal-communal ownership of land prevails.

*...the all-embracing unity which stands above all these small common bodies may appear as the higher of sole proprietor.... Oriental despotism therefore appears (my italics) to lead to a legal absence of property. In fact (my italics) however, its foundation is tribal or communal property, in most cases created through a combination of manufacture and agriculture within the small community which thus becomes entirely self-sustaining and contains within itself all conditions of production and surplus production.*¹⁷

An interpretation based on a more detailed reading suggests a considerably more complex relationship between the state (higher) and village (smaller) community. Here, Marx juxtaposes state and village, higher and smaller in an almost Durkheimian fashion. To illustrate this point I shall continue the quotation:

The despot here appears as the father of the numerous lesser communities, thus realising the common unity of all. It, therefore, follows that the surplus product belongs to this highest unity. Oriental despotism therefore appears to lead to a legal absence of property. In fact, however, its foundation is tribal or communal property... Part of its surplus labour belongs to the higher community, which ultimately appears as a person. Thus surplus labour is rendered both as a tribute and as common labour for the glory of the unity, in part of the despot, in part of the imagined tribal entity of the god.¹⁸

Marx goes on to point out that variations in the internal structure of the little communities will vary between despotic and democratic forms. Hence, the despotism of the higher unity is not necessarily reflected in the organisational form expressed within the village community. The juxtapositioning of state and village is clear. For the community, both despot and tribal god personify the underlying tribal unity and, in this sense, provide means whereby that unity is realised or expressed.

I have already drawn attention to the non-correspondence between the account of forms or stages in the division of labour appearing in the 1846 German Ideology and the 1859 Preface to a Critique of Political Economy. Marx's Grundrisse analysis points to the way in which inconsistencies in other accounts can be

resolved by effectively collapsing the two alternative formulations. Hence, in the Grundrisse Marx distinguish two major types of pre-capitalist socio-economic formation:

- (a) 'primary', encompassing Asiatic property and other communally based forms of property.
- (b) 'Secondary', encompassing both slave and serf based forms of the division of labour.

This characterisation of forms of property constitutes the basis for the multilinear schema but, as Sawyer(1977) correctly points out, there remains the tension, still unresolved in the Grundrisse, between the extent to which different forms of economic organisation pose real alternatives or are simply different stages of a universal historical progression.

While the focus in the Grundrisse is on the contextualisation of the Asiatic form, it is only in Capital III that we can locate an attempt at theoretical articulation of the mode. The thrust of Marx's arguments in this text is that the method of appropriation of the surplus product from the direct products entails a convergence of rent and taxes. Here, a quotation is relevant:

Should the direct producers not be confronted by a private land-owner, but rather, as in Asia, under direct subordination to a state which stands over them as their landlord and simultaneously as sovereign, then rent and taxes coincide,

*there exists no tax which differs from this form of ground-rent. Under such circumstances, there need exist no stronger, political or economic pressure than that common to all subjection to that state.*¹⁹

The main problem with this formulation - and it is a problem that underlies much of Marx's work on the A.M.P. - is, again, the conflation of theoretical analysis and substantive description. Is Marx actually analysing the mode or a particular society? I shall return to this question at a later stage.

THE SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION

In his substantive discussion of India Marx is preoccupied with providing an explanation of what he believed to be the underlying stationariness²⁰ of that society. At the level of description, i.e. the account of stagnation, his argument is explicit and consistent:

*The whole of her past history, if it be anything, is the history of the successive conquests she has undergone. Indian society has no history at all, at least no known history. What we call its history is but the history of the successive intruders who founded their empires on the passive basis of that unresisting and unchanging society.*²¹

The simplicity of the organisation for production in these self-sufficing

*communities that constantly re-produce themselves in the same form, and when accidentally destroyed, spring up again on the spot... this simplicity supplies the key to the secret of the unchangeableness of Asiatic societies, an unchangeableness in such striking contrast with the constant dissolution and refounding of Asiatic states, and the never-ceasing changes of dynasty.*²²

The hiatus between state and society expressed in these two passages and quite clearly be traced to Hegel's Philosophy of History:

*If China may be regarded as nothing else but a State, 1-Hindu political existence presents us with a people, but no State. Secondly, while we found a moral despotism in China... in India, is a arbitrary, wicked, degrading despotism has its full swing.*²³

For Hegel, the state in India, unlike most states in the Hegelian schema, did not constitute the embodiment of the 'spirit' of society but was rather superimposed upon society, hence, the introduction of the notion 'despotism without principle'. In the Indian instance, it is not the state form which constitute the embodiment of 'spirit' but society, itself, which reproduces its own essence and, in so doing, creates a continuity of form which contrasts sharply with dynastic changes. The similarity with Marx is obvious as is the legacy of the European Enlightenment tradition in which a rational, individualistic, progressive western social

order is contrasted with an irrational, collectivistic, stagnant Eastern world. The Europocentrism of this position, at any level of analysis, is clearly untenable. In addition to Hegel's Philosophy of History, an important work emanating from the Enlightenment tradition-and certainly one Marx consulted-is James Mill's 1819 History of British India. Marx was also influenced by reports of travellers and administrators. Here, it is worth mentioning Bernier's Travels in the Mogul Empire (1656-1658) and the 1812 Fifth (Parliamentary) Report from the Select committee on the Affairs of the East India Company.²⁴ After the publication of Capital, Marx returned to a more detailed study of pre-capitalist social formations, but died before this study has been published under the title of The Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx (1972)²⁵ It is clear from these notes that Marx consulted in detail Phear's study of the Aryan Village in India and Ceylon (1980) and Morgan's Ancient Society (1877). These notes are relevant in that they establish without doubt Marx's continuing scholarship in the general area of pre-capitalist social formations. Had Marx lived long enough to work on the material, these notes might well have provided the basis for a publication of tremendous theoretical significance. As it is, they simply establish his continuing interest in the field.

The emphasis on the unchanging nature of the social form together with the unity of industry and agriculture, which is

first introduced in the 1853 'British Rule in India' article, reappears in Capital III, where Marx presents his view of a self sufficient village economy independent form and outside of market forces:

The form of rent in kind, being bound to a definite type of product and production itself and through its indispensable combination of agriculture and domestic industry, through its almost complete self-sufficiency whereby the peasant family supports itself through its independence from the market... in short owing to the character of natural economy in general, this form is quite adapted to furnishing the basis for stationary social conditions as we see, e.g. Asia²⁶.

Marx's explanation of stagnation is directly related to the absence of private property in land on this issue he is unequivocal:

Bernier rightly considers that the basic form of all phenomena in the East-he refers to Turkey, Persia, Hindustan - is to be found in the fact that no private property in land existed. This is the real key, even to the Oriental heaven.²⁷

A degree of uncertainty regarding the genesis of this phenomenon, (the lack of private property in land) is expressed, however, in a letter to Engels, dated 14 June, 1853²⁸. Here, Marx suggests that it was the Mohammedans 'who first mainly established the principle of no property in

land throughout the whole Asia'. On the basis of available documentation this view appears incorrect since, at least under the Mughals, there certainly existed a hierarchy of land rights.²⁹ At the level of causation there is an underlying tension since this particular feature of Indian society, i.e. the lack of private property in land, is accounted for by reference to two empirically distinct phenomena:

- (a) the existence of a centralised despotic state holding a monopoly of land.
- (b) the existence of self-sufficient village communities based on common ownership of land.

Vacillation between these two explanations of the absence of private property in land underlie Marx's writings on the A.M.P. form the 1850's onwards and the problem is not resolved by the imposition of any artificial epistemological break between early and later works. What does seem clear is that Marx shared, or even adopted, Engel's underlying ambiguity made explicit in Anti-Duhring³⁰ where it is argued that the term landlord is absent in 'the whole of the Orient, where the village community or (my italics)the state owned the land'. This ambiguity pervades Marx's work. In the Grundrisse the reference is to defacto ownership of the commune, in Capital I the reference is to possession and in Capital III the reference is to common ownership of land. Capital III is highly relevant to the discussion since it is the location of two apparently conflicting accounts of the

foundation of the mode. In Marx's discussion of merchant capital in this work, the unity of agriculture and industry constitutes the basis of the A.M.P.

The broad basis of the mode of production here is formed by the unity of small - scale agriculture and home industry, to which in India we should add the form of village communities built upon the common ownership (my italics) of land.³¹

Further on in Capital III, it is the Asiatic despotic state itself, by virtue of its concentration of land ownership, that constitutes the basis of the mode. At this point, Marx attempts to clarify the ownership/possession distinction and relate it to the apparent state/village dichotomy and, in so doing, hints at a possible resolution of the problem:

*The state is then the supreme lord. Sovereignty here consists in the ownership (my italics) of land concentrated on a national scale. But, on the other hand, no private property in land exists, there is both private and common possession and use of land.*³²

If the absence of private property in land accounts for stagnation- and this is the thrust of Marx's argument-British rule, by the very introduction of private property in land, laid the foundation for economic development. This, then, is the source of Marx's ambivalent attitude to the British

presence in India. For Marx, the development of independent private ownership in land arose only with the dissolution of the organic order of society. With the introduction of zamindari and ryotwari settlements³³ the British established two distinct forms of private property in land and, as a consequence, paved the way for complex commodity production.

In Marx's substantive writings on India in the New York Daily Tribune, he adhered to the view that Indian society had failed to create the conditions for the transition to capitalism and it is this belief that provides the clue to his partial endorsement of European colonialism:

*England, it is true, in causing a social revolution in Hindustan, was actuated only by the vilest interests, and was stupid in her manner of endorsing them. But that is not the question. The question is, can mankind fulfil its destiny without a fundamental revolution in the social state of Asia. If not, whatever may have been the crimes of England she was the unconscious tool of history in bringing about that revolution.*³⁴

*England has to fulfil a double mission in India: one destructive the other regenerating-the annihilation of old Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia.*³⁵

In the very same article, Marx shifts his focus to the negative side of the imperial balance sheet:

*The British were the first conqueror superior, and, therefore, inaccessible to Hindu civilization. They destroyed it by breaking up the negative communities, by uprooting the native industry, and by levelling all that was great and elevated in the native society.*³⁶

The English bourgeoisie, then, fulfil an historical mission but the fruit of that mission can only be reaped when the British ruling class is supplanted by the proletariat and the yoke of colonialism overthrown. Only then is it possible for the mass of the people to benefit from what Marx believed to be a social and economic revolution in Asia: All the English bourgeoisie may be forced to do will neither emancipate nor materially mend the social condition of the mass of the people... But what they will not fail to do is to lay down the material premises for both. Has the bourgeoisie ever done more?³⁷

CRITICAL COMMENTS-AREAPPRAISAL

Thorner (1966) has commented that as far as the A.M.P. is concerned 'there is no single authoritative book, chapter or article by Marx or Engels on this subject'. Certainly, there is a sense in which Thorner's comment is accurate since Marx's detailed elaboration of the structural dynamics of the capitalist mode of production has no parallel in the scattered and schematic references to the A.M.P., in spite of the fact that references to the: 'Asian form'; 'Oriental despotism'; 'Asiatic despotism'; 'Asiatic empires'; 'Asiatic societies'; 'Indian communities' etc. can be readily located in his work. The

constant slippage between theoretical and empirical categories dominates discussion and culminates in the confluence of analytic and substantive argument. Essentially, the problematic status of the A.M.P. in Marx results from his failure to: (a) distinguish between the various descriptive categories (b) provide an adequate conceptualisation (c) analytically explore the nature of the relationship (if any) between the concept of the A.M.P. and the descriptive categories (d) analyse the conditions of the mode. i.e. consider the issue of the dialectic. In spite of these lacunae there is a striking disposition among commentators to transcend the various and qualitatively different conceptual problems. This has led to two main tendencies (a) the re-production of the collapse of theoretical/empirical categories (e.g. Melotti (1977) equates the A.M.P. with specific Asian socio-economic structures) (b) the elevation, concretisation and systematisation of inadequately structured and, often ambiguous, formulations of both the concept and the social formation(s).

Interestingly enough, the criteria which are seen to define the mode for one writer are strikingly similar to the features which, for another writer depict the archetypal Asian social formation. Mandel (1991), for instance argues unequivocally that the 'fundamental characteristic of this mode of production (the A.M.P.) were set out exhaustively enoughly (my italics) in the three letters of June 1853... and in four

articles published in the New York Daily Tribune.³⁸ The fundamentals of the mode are conveniently summarised by Mandel in terms of: the absence of private ownership of land; the cohesion of the village community; the union of agriculture and craft industry; geographic and climatic conditions precipitating the development of hydraulic agriculture (regulated by a central authority under taking large-scale irrigation work) and the acquisition of the greater part of the surplus product by the state. The foregoing are mirrored in Anderson characterisation of the Asian social formation. Anderson (1974) acknowledges both the ambiguity and lack of systematisation which impair Marx's discussion of the A.M.P. However, this awareness does not discourage him from identifying the 'fundamental elements'³⁹ of the Asian social formation, namely: the absence of private property in land: the presence of large-scale irrigation systems in agriculture: the existence of autarchic village communities combining crafts with village and communal ownership of the soil: the stagnation of passively rentier or bureaucratic cities and the domination of a despotic state machine which syphons off the bulk of the surplus and, as a consequence, functions not merely as the main repressive apparatus of the ruling class but also as its principal instrument of economic exploitation.

It is hardly surprising that Marx's constant shifting between theoretical and empirical spheres is reproduced in a variety

of guises. For Melotti, it is the historical and geographical peculiarities of Asia⁴⁰ (i.e. descriptions of specific societies) that structure the A.M.P. In developing this point Melotti effects the collapse of the theoretical/abstract formulation of the A.M.P. and the empirical/concrete description of Asian socio-economic forms) Thus, we find that the various page references to the A.M.P. in Melotti's index relate only to descriptive aspects of concrete Asian social formations. Wittfogel (1957), in his chapter 'The Rise and Fall of the Theory of the Asiatic society'. Lichtheim (1953), in an article entitled "Marx and the Asiatic Mode of Production" refers to Marx and Engels' account of 'Oriental society'. In a later collection of essays (1967), this article is actually reprinted under the most appropriate and accurate title of 'Oriental Despotism'. Sawyer (1978) in chapter on 'The Marxian Concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production', specifically focuses on the descriptive categories of: Asiatic despotism'; 'Oriental despotism'; 'Asiatic society'; 'Oriental society'; 'Oriental world' and 'Asiatic state'. Even in the work of Krader (1975), whose analysis of Marx on the A.M.P. is the most comprehensive to date, there is still a tendency to equate the Indian village economy with the mode of production. Thus Krader can argue: 'Much has been written about the stagnation of the A.M.P.; to be sure, these societies (my italics) showed a backward form to the outside observer and 'As a category of the Asiatic societies and economies it (the

A.M.P.) accounts primarily for the external relations of the Asiatic peoples and secondary for their internal relations and developments'.⁴¹

A contemporary instance of the inability to come to terms with the exceedingly problematic status of the A.M.P. in Marx's writings is well illustrated by Bailey and Llobera (1975) who argue that:.....we see in the different works of Marx and Engels, the genesis and development of the concept of the Asiatic mode of production'. But, where precisely, in the works of Marx and Engels do we find this concept 'developed'? Further on in the same article, in a paraphrase of Capital III, Bailey and Llobera claim 'When the state is the landlord, as happens with the Asiatic mode of Production, there is no distinction between ground rent and tax.'⁴² Now in the original text, the reference is not actually to the A.M.P. but rather to Asia. Here, my argument is that while the tax/rent couplet might suffice to define the mode (and this is another question) it is still quite misleading to substitute the notion A.M.P. for the descriptive category 'Asia'. The terms refer to different level categories: they are not synonymous.⁴³

STATE AND ECONOMY - THE UNRESOLVED RELATIONSHIP

The problem of the relationship between theoretical and empirical in Marx and subsequent commentaries is most

marked in discussion of the status of hydraulic agriculture in the A.M.P. and Asia. Hydraulic agriculture, as the central feature of the A.M.P. (Or 'oriental despotism', depending on one's inclination), is the key factor in many of the reconstructions. Yet, Marx mentions hydraulic agriculture in only two contexts. 'The British Rule in India' article:

*This prime necessity of an economical and common use of water... necessitated in the Orient...the interference of the centralizing power of Government. Hence an economical function devolved upon all Asiatic Governments, the function of providing public works.*⁴⁴

and, more obliquely, the Grundrisse:

*The communal conditions for real appropriation through labour, such as irrigation systems (very important among the Asian peoples), means of communication, etc. Will then appear as the work of the higher unity-the despotic government which is poised above the lesser communities.*⁴⁵

In neither work does Marx suggest that the genesis of the Asiatic state form is explicable in terms of an institutional response to climatic conditions of aridity. Nonetheless, albeit in varying degrees, Wittfogel; Godelier; Thorner; Lichtheim; Mandel; Anderson and Sawyer all emphasize the indispensability of hydraulic agriculture in Marx's characterisation of Asiaticism. In consequence, hydraulic agriculture has become generally accepted as a necessary

condition of existence of the mode.⁴⁶. According to Wittfogel (1957) and Andreski (1964) Marx was attempting to establish a causal link between irrigation agriculture and the emergence of the Asiatic despotic state. This claim, at least in unqualified form, is difficult to sustain since Marx did not establish a causal connection between conditions of irrigation agriculture and the emergence of the Asiatic despotic state form but rather suggested-at least in the New York Daily Tribune article-a link between conditions of irrigation agriculture and the extension of state control. In this sense, the Asiatic state is simply a noncapitalist interventionist state. A detailed articulation of the precise relationship between condition of aridity and Asiatic despotism is nowhere to be found in the works of Marx. In 'The British Rule in India' article Marx does argue that the necessity of economic and common use of water devolved upon all Asiatic governments the function of providing public works, but this argument does not imply, as Wittfogel would have it, a theory of the genesis of the state. Wittfogel's claim that 'it was the need for government-directed water works that according to Marx gave birth to the Asiatic state'⁴⁷ is certainly overstated. In a discussion of the relationship between economic base and superstructural forms in Volume III of Capital, and immediately following on the discussion of the tax/rent couplet, Marx indicates the complexity of the relationship between economy and polity:

*It is always the direct relationship of the conditions of production to the direct producers... which reveals the innermost secret, the hidden basis of the entire social structure, and within the political form of the relation of sovereignty and dependence, in short, the corresponding specific form of the state. This does not prevent the same economic basis - the same from the standpoint of its main conditions-due to innumerable different empirical circumstances, natural environment, racial relations, external historical influences, etc., from showing infinite variations and gradations in appearance, which can be ascertained only by analysis of the empirically given circumstances*⁴⁸

Clearly, in the light of the foregoing, the crude teleological determinism implicit in Wittfogel's portrayal of Marx is without justification.

Setting aside the distortion introduced by Wittfogel, the explanation of the genesis of the state in the Orient, nonetheless, poses a number of problems for the Marxist theory of the state. According to the materialist view of history expressed by Engels in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1948) the state 'is a product of society at a certain stage of development' i.e. the stage at which a class of non-labourers engage in extracting the surplus product from the direct producers. Within the context of the classical West this process is associated with both the expansion

of the division of labour and the development of the private property. In consequence, the state emerges in response to class antagonisms and in midst of class antagonisms. Here, it is not difficult to detect an underlying functionalist leading in Engels' 'alleviate the conflict' - by appearing to transcend society - and maintain it within the bounds of order. Thus, the function of the state is the 'orchestration' of class conflict and the maintenance of social order. While the state appears to transcend class interests, in effect, the very structure of the state is itself shaped by the interests of the economically dominant classes. In *Anti-Duhring* (1859) the same functionalist tendency reappears. In this work, Engels argues that 'the exercise of a social function was every where the basis of political supremacy; and further that political supremacy has existed for any length of time only when it discharged its social functions'⁴⁹. Now, if we accept his emphasis on universal 'social function' it becomes possible to locate the genesis of the Asiatic state in Engels' general theory. For Engels - whose position is actually very close to that attributed by Wittfogel and Andreski to Marx-the function of the Asiatic state is the provision of centralised irrigation works, whereas the function of the state in the West is the containment of class antagonisms. Whereas both Marx and Engels associate the expansion of the division of labour in the West with the development of private property, the East is characterised, in contrast, by the lack of

correspondance between these two phenomena. Certainly both writers are well aware of the extension of the division of labour in classical, medieval and early British India. Marx, for instance, in 'The British Rule in India' draws on an old official report of the British House of Commons on India, affairs to provide a detailed outline of such an occupational division:

*The Kurnum keep the accounts of cultivation, and registers every thing connected with it. The tallier and the totie, the duty of the former of which consists in gaining information of crimes and offences, and in escorting and protecting people traveling from one village to another; the province of the latter appearing to be more immediately confined to the village.... The boundaryman, who preserves the limits of the village.... The superintendent of tanks and watercourses distributes the water for the purposes of agriculture. The Brahmin, who performs the village worship. The schoolmaster, who is seen teaching the children in a village to read and write in the sand.*³⁰

Neither Marx nor Engels, however, believe that the extention of the division of labour in the East has implications for the development of private property and the concomitant emergence of class antagonism. This position is defensible only if the state - as is the case in their analysis of Asia - is both part of the superstructure and part of the productive base itself. This is effected

through the state as 'owner' of the dominant means of production, i.e. the state as landlord. Under such conditions, the surplus product is appropriated by the state, hence rent and taxes coincide and the development of private property is curtailed.

Marx's analysis of the Oriental state poses a further problem for the Marxist theory of the state. According to Marx, Indian village communities were both exploited by and dependent upon the centralised state while concurrently remaining self-sufficient and isolated. The conditions of co-existence of exploitation, dependency, isolation and self-sufficiency need to be explained. The exploitative relationship between state and society and the variation in that relationship in specific empirical instances is omitted from Marx's analysis. If we accept that the economic surplus is extracted from the direct producers by a parasitic non-productive and exploiting class, then this fact must have implications for (a) the internal economic organisation of the village and (b) the maintenance reproduction of the isolated village complex. If land is held in common possession - and this is the argument developed by Marx regarding village India in the Grundrisse and Capital I- then it is possible that tension may develop at the point of intersection between the non-productive and exploitative state class on the one hand, and the seemingly 'classless' and productive village communities on the other. The source of such tension could derive either from the form and

method of extraction of the economic surplus or the form and method of mobilisation of labour for public works.

Of course, the whole question of communal ownership within the Indian village context is exceedingly problematic. Marx's failure to specify the period to which his data relates does not help. Under the Mughals, available evidence (Habib, 1963) indicates that peasant cultivation was essentially individualistic. Marx's characterisation of a communally based form of property holding was most probably reinforced by nineteenth century British officer reports of communal ownership and redistribution in the North West provinces which arose out of a misunderstanding of the occasional practice in which a tenant, rather than paying rent directly to an individual peasant proprietor, might opt to contribute to a common pool covering village expenses. In the pre-Mughal period there is evidence of both individual and communal ownership in various regions of India. Under the Cholas of South India, for instance, whilst individual land holding did exist, communal holding was predominant. Again, under the Gupta Empire, there is evidence that patterns of both communal and individual land holding co-existed.

For Marx, the method which unpaid surplus labour is extracted from the direct producers is seen to correspond to a definite stage in the development of the productive process which, in the absence of the class

struggle, guarantees the re-production of the mode. This assumption - which appears in the Preface to a Critique of Political Economy, the Grundrisse and Capital III - does not correspond with that static characterisation of Asiatic despotism popularised in the New York Daily Tribune articles on the nature of British rule in India and, paradoxically, reappearing in Capital III. For if the Asiatic form is immanently static how then can it constitute a progressive stage in the development of productive forces? The contradiction is explicit. If we shift the focus to village India, the contradiction in Marx's analysis is evident in that he fails to resolve the underlying tension between two conflicting postulates: those of the classes and hierarchical models of village social structure, respectively. In Capital I, for example, he focuses on the classless egalitarian model:

Those small and extremely ancient Indian communities, some of which have continued down to this day, are based on possession in which have common of the land, on the blending of agriculture and handicrafts, and on an unalterable division of labour, which serves, whenever a new community is started, as a plan and scheme ready cut and dried.⁵¹

In 'The British Rule in India' article the accent is on the delineation of classes and /or ranks within the village context:

We must not forget that these little

*communities were contaminated by distinctions of caste and by slavery... that they transformed a self-developing... social state into never changing natural destiny, and thus brought about a brutalizing worship of nature, exhibiting its degeneration in the fact that man... fell down on his knees in adoration of Hanuman, the monkey, and Sabbala, the cow.*³²

Now, if we assume a class/status model then there is no necessary contradiction between the two approaches. For Marxist theory, however, the problem remains unresolved. Of course, if it can be established that: (a) class struggle is absent, therefore, (b) the mode of production is reproduced unimpeded then, at least, the context of Marx's seemingly Europocentric analysis of the effect of British rule in India becomes clear.

RIGOUR MORTIS

To date, theoretical objections to the A.M.P. have been most vigorously expressed by Hindess and Hirst (1975). Hindess and Hirst are exclusively concerned with concept formation, that is, they are concerned with providing formalistic definitions which have theoretical validity in Marxist theory. What actually constitutes Marxist theory is determined in relation to the Althusserian notion of the epistemological break. This thesis is itself highly ideological. Essentially, Hindess and Hirst are concerned with

developing a critique of empiricism. In *Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production* (1975) they argue that 'Our constructions.... are theoretical and can only be evaluated in theoretical terms, i.e. in terms of their rigour and theoretical coherence. They cannot be refuted by an empiricist recourse to the supposed 'facts' of history'.³³ Now I would like to suggest that their critique of Marx on the A.M.P. falls short of their own methodological structures since it entails a discrepancy between intention and practice. This means that on occasions their constructions are, indeed, derived from the supposed 'facts' of history.

Hindess and Hirst reject the theoretical validity of Marx's formulation of the A.M.P. on the grounds that where rents and taxes coincide, i.e. where the state is both landlord and sovereign, it is not possible to deduce an articulated combination of forces and relations of production. Since it is the unitary articulation of forces and relations of production which define the mode and since the tax-rent couplet could be arbitrarily conjoined with either the forces of production of independent cultivation or communal cultivation such an articulation is absent and, in consequence, the mode is theoretically invalid. The Hindess and Hirst position can be conveniently simplified. The main thrust of their argument is that in the absence of a ruling landlord class independent of the state the means used to appropriate the surplus product from the direct producers are identical to those used

by all states to levy taxes, hence, it is theoretically possible to establish that the subordination of peasants is identical to that of all subjects of the state. Moreover, once the absence of a landlord class is assumed, it can be argued that the tax/rent couplet (defining relations of production) may be coterminous with two distinct sets of productive forces: independent peasant cultivation and communal production. For Hindess and Hirst, and this is the argument propounded in *Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production*⁵⁴, it is the absence of a unitary relationship between forces and relation of a unitary relationship between forces and relations of production that invalidates the concept of the A.M.P. According to their argument, since the same relation of production can co-exist with both independent peasant production and communal productions, a unitary relation between relations and forces is absent and, in consequence, the concept A.M.P. lacks theoretical validity. Why- in the context of the A.M.P.- do Hindess and Hirst assume the absence of the necessary unitary relation? Clearly, there is no obvious theoretical explanation and Hindess and Hirst are, after all, concerned with theoretical explanation. Arguably, the absence of a unitary relation is assumed because Hindess and Hirst implicitly accept one particular interpretation of Marx's view of Asian social formations namely, that which features the absence of property but the existence of both private and common possession of land. An alternative theoretical formulation of the

A.M.P. might assume a unitary relationship and, in terms of their criteria, this would assure the validity of the concept.

The problem of Hindess and Hirst's implicit empiricism is not just restricted to the formulation of the A.M.P. They could well have argued, for instance, that a unitary relation between forces and relations of production is absent in the ancient mode since the relations of production (i.e. the extraction of the economic surplus by the state and redistribution among citizens) could co-exist with both independent peasant production and communal production. However, that is not the case and they do assert that a unitary relation exists between forces and relation of production. Why? Arguably, because such a theoretical position can be derived from and is not at variance with Marx's *Grundrisse* account of the ancient world.

Despite protestation to the contrary, the construction which result in the non-formation of the concept A.M.P. and the formation of the ancient mode are derived from descriptions of concrete social formations. This failure to comply with their own methodological prescriptions highlights the problems of theoretical abstractionism. While it is important to maintain a distinction between concepts as analytic tools and descriptions of reality we must not forget that we develop concepts for the very purpose of illuminating our understanding of that reality. This is

precisely what Hindess and Hirst fail to grasp.

CONCLUSION

The tendency on the part of Kosambi, Joshi and Alavi to characterise pre-colonial India as predominantly feudal can be appreciated in the context of a critique of colonialism. The problem of the transformation of the A.M.P. has been left largely unanswered by Marx who vacillates between two accounts of this question. In the New York Daily Tribune the A.M.P. is perceived as inherently static and it is this statism that legitimates the colonial intervention. By contrast, in the Grundrisse and Capital I, a more dynamic view is expressed in which the AMP gives way other models. Marx's thesis provides an indirect justification of colonialism and imperialism, but that justification cannot be upheld if it is established that the prevailing mode in the immediate pre-British India era was feudal rather than Asiatic. By claiming a feudal heritage, Kosambi and Alavi can maintain a position in line with Marxist analysis while rejecting Marx's legitimation of imperialism. If, however, it can be established that the A.M.P. does have an inherent dynamic then the defence of the feudal view is weakened. Arguably, the maintenance of massive standing armies-which consumed two thirds of the surplus product but were essential for the reproduction of the mode-constitute the location of such a dynamic. The point at which the maintenance of armies becomes

prohibitive is the point at which the mode must start to disintegrate since its reproduction can no longer be guaranteed. In the case of the A.M.P. unlike the capitalist mode of production, there are no offsetting factors.

The explicitly ideological and geographical connotations of the term 'Asiatic', which are central to Melotti's characterisation of Marx's analysis, are both misleading and unessential. It is difficult to (a) reject the term 'Asiatic' without (b) negating the mode to which that term has been applied. The rejection of the term, however, does not necessarily entail the negation of the mode. For Marx it is the tribute raising state which appropriates the surplus product from the direct producer and which stands in the same objectively antagonistic relationship to that producer as does the slave-owner to the slave, the feudal lord to the serf, and the capitalist to the wage labourer. Thus, it is the means whereby the surplus product is appropriated which sets apart the mode in question-which may legitimately be designated 'tributary'⁵⁵ - from other modes. This is the sense in which the tax/rent couplet does have theoretical validity. However, that the tax/rent couplet may constitute the dominant mode of appropriation of the surplus product in a particular geographical location - Asiatic or otherwise - at a specific point in time does not justify the conflation of mode and society.

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Notes

1. For a good resume of the debates culminating in the Leningrad Conference decision of 1931 see: Bailey and Llobera (1975) and Sawyer (1977)
2. Stalin's unilinear progression of historical stages is made quite explicit in 'Dialectical and Historical Materialism' (1938). According to this thesis, the socialist system replaces the capitalist system as the capitalist system replace the feudal before it. The A.M.P. is conspicuous only by its absence.
3. Dobb in a reply to Sweezy's critique of Studies in the Development of Capitalism (1946) refers to 'Asiatic feudalism' where Kuo Mojo and Mao Tse Tung identify the pre-capitalist mode of production in China as feudal. Stalin, of course, in his 1927 article, 'Notes on Contemporary Themes: China', affirms that same position (Franklin, 1973).
4. Among the most theoretically significant contributions to this debate are: Frank, (1967,1969); Moore (1969); Laclau(1971); Banaji (1972,1973,1977); Anderson (1974);

Alavi (1975); Hindess and Hirst (1975); Taylor (1975,1979). Amin (1976); Asad and Wolpe (1976); Melotti(1977); Omwvedt and Patankar (1977); Foster-Carter (1978); Kahn (1978); Omwvedt(1980).

5. Hindess and Hirst(1975:181)

6. Banaji (1972) suggests a basis for the further delineation of modes of production by distinguishing the category of 'relations of exploitation' from that of 'relations of production'. Serfdom constitutes the dominant relation of exploitation under the feudal mode; tribute or corvee labour the dominant relation of exploitation under Asiatic mode; and wage labour the dominant relation of exploitation under the capitalist mode.

However, neither serfdom, tribute nor wage labour suffice to define the conditions of existence of feudal, Asiatic and capitalist modes. It is only when relations of exploitation are contextualised within the general development of the productive forces - as, for example, is the case where wage labour exists under conditions of generalised commodity production - that they constitute relations of production proper, i.e. relations that define the mode.

7. References to 'Oriental despotism' for example, feature in The 'British Rule in India' (New York Daily Tribune, 1853); Grundrisse (1857); Engels' article 'On social Conditions in Russia' (1875) and Anti Duhring (1878).

8. *As the reference to the A.M.P. in Capital (1954) is not widely known it is worth quoting: In the ancient, Asiatic and other ancient modes of production, we find that the conversion of products into commodities, and therefore the conversion of men into producers of commodities, holds a subordinate place, which, however, increases in importance as the primitive communities approach nearer and nearer to their dissolution(79).*

9. Marx, K and Engels, F: Selected Works (1968,183).

10. The term 'society' is actually much more frequently employed by Marx than the recently discovered notion of 'social formation' popularised by Althusserian influenced writers such as Poulantzas (1974) and Hindess and Hirst (1975), and now in common usage among contemporary scholars.

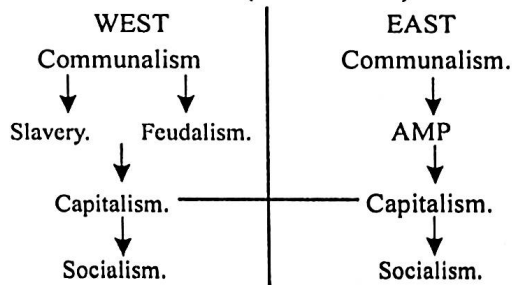
11. Marx, K: The German Ideology (Part I, 1970, pp. 43-45).

12. The explicitly ideological and geographical connotations of the term 'Asiatic' are unfortunate. As Hindess and Hirst(1975,180) correctly argue:... concepts can no more be 'Asiatic' than they can be green or feline'. It is difficult (a) to drop the term 'Asiatic' without (b) negating the very mode which that term represents. The rejection of the term, however, does not necessarily imply the negation of the mode, a position which at times would seem to be implied by Hindess and Hirst. The resolution of the problem lies in the adoption of the term 'tributary' in lieu of 'Asiatic'. The use of this term is firmly grounded in Marx's writings (1962:321,325,771: 1973:473). For Marx it is the tribute raising state which appropriates the surplus product from the direct producer and which stands in the same objectively antagonistic relationship to that producer as does the slaveowner to the slave; the feudal lord to the serf and the capitalist to the wage labourer. This question is discussed further in: Amin (1976), Trimberger (1977) and Currie (1980).

13. Both Melotti (1977) and Sawyer (1977) address this question and develop diagrammatic reconstructions of both types of schema. In both works, problems of the dynamic of change remain largely unresolved. For the interest of the reader, I have included Sawyer's reconstruction of Marx's multilinear (Grundrisse) schema (see

below). I have chosen to omit Melotti's more complex reconstruction since Melotti has developed the model well beyond Marx's own analysis.

Marx's Multilinear (Grundrisse) Schema.



14. Capital I(1954:77)

15. The relevant section of the Grundrisse is Section II, 'Original Accumulation of Capital' (Forms which Precede Capitalist Production). My references to the text are drawn from: Marx, K (1964): Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations (with an introduction by Eric Hobsbawm).

16. Here, it is only fair to note that, for Marx, although the Grundrisse was an important text which lie valued highly, it was not intended for publication. This view is clearly expressed in a letter to Lasalle (November 12, 1858) in which Marx describes the Grundrisse as, monographs, written at widely varying periods, for my own clarification and not for publication; Marx, K(1964:10).

17. Marx K: Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations (1964; PP.69-74).

18. Lbid.

19. Marx, K: Capital III(1962:PP 771-772).

20. In this paper I am not primarily concerned with evaluating the accuracy of Marx's descriptions of Indian society. It is my belief, however, that he over emphasised and exaggerated the extent of stagnation, isolation,

and the degree of village independence from market forces. This theme is explored in a paper on petty commodity production in Mughal India (Currie:1981).

21. Marx, K: 'The Future Results of British Rule in India', New York Daily Tribune, August 1853, cited in Marx, K and Engels: F: On Colonialism (1959:81) and reproduced in Avineri, S: Karl Marx on Colonialism and Modernization (1969).

22. Marx, K: Capital I(1954:358).

23. Hegel, G: The Philosophy of History (1956:161).

24. To my knowledge, amongst the best commentaries on the 'intellectual heritage' of the India writings are Hobsbawm's 1964 introduction to Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations. Thorner's 1966 Contributions to Indian Sociology article and Anderson's 1974 note on the A.M.P. in Lineages of the Absolutist State.

25. This work is transcribed, edited and introduced by Krader (1972)

26. Marx, K: Capital III(1962:776). Gupta (1980:251) argues that by 1858 Marx 'no longer considered despotism and stagnation to be the essential features of societies characterized by the Asiatic mode of production'. I find no evidence for this assertion.

27. Letter to Engels, June 2 1853 in Marx, K and Engels, F: Correspondence 1846-1895(1934:66).

28. Lbid: 70.

29. To my knowledge, the best and most fascinating source relating to the existence of private ownership of land in an earlier period of Indian history (A.D.800-1200) is Gupta's Land System in South India (1926). In this work, Gupta cites the instance of a gift of land made by temple trustees to a dancing girl for acting in a play at a religious festival; other grants of land being made

to teachers giving lessons to the youths of a monastery; and the grant of land from temple trustees to fan bearers, musicians and stone cutters... Under the Cholas, when a private person made a grant of land he first had to gain permission from the King. When the grant was for religious purposes, permission was rarely refused. Here, I am not claiming that private property existed in the context of a legal framework approaching that of bourgeois property law either under the Mughals or in earlier periods of Indian history. My point is simply that the laws governing ownership of land were both more complex and more fluid than Marx assumed.

30. Engels, F: Anti-Duhring (1959-243).

31. Marx, K: Capital III (1962:328).

32. Lbid:772.

33. More of the standard sources on the early British colonial period contain accounts of the two major types of settlement. Essentially, zainindari settlements (mainly in the East) involved the incorporation of local officials into the process of tax collection in a system in which the zamindar received a property right. By contrast, in ryotwari settlements (mainly in the South) revenue was collected directly from the peasants rather than through official intermediaries. In both cases, settlements were not nearly as secure as Marx seemed to have assumed. Arguably, dispossession of zamindars was an important factor in the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny.

34. Marx: 'The British Rule in India', New York Daily Tribune, June 25, 1853 cited in Marx, K and Engels, F: On Colonialism (1959:41).

35. Marx, K: 'The Future Result of the British Rule in India', New York Daily Tribune, August 08, 1853, lbid:82

36. Ibid : 82
37. Ibid : 85
38. Mandel 1991 : 121
39. Anderson 1989 : 483
40. This is the position adopted by Melotti in spite of the fact that Marx's use of the terms 'Asiatic Despotism' and the 'Asian form' encompassed : Egypt, ancient Mesopotamia, Persia, Mexico and ancient Celtic society (Marx and Engels : On Colonialism (1959 : 37) and Marx Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations (1964 : 70)
41. Krader 1975 : 292,176
42. Bailey and Llobera 1975: 95,100
43. I have considered this question in some detail elsewhere. See Manivasagar 1997 : 28-30
44. Op. Cit : 37
45. Op. Cit: 71
46. Krader (op cit : 290) is an important exception to the trend in that he does not accept that the centralisation of the management of water control is a specific and determining feature of the A.M.P.
47. Wittfogel : 1957 : 374
48. Marx, K: Capital III (1962 : 772)
49. Engels, F: Anti-Duhring (1959 : 248)
50. Marx, K: op. Cit: 39. This description also appears in Capital I. (op. cit : 357)
51. Ibid
52. Op. Cit : 41. This passage provides a further illustration of Marx's ethnocentrism. The similarity with Hegel's view of the East (op. cit. : pp. 166 - 167) is quite striking.
53. Hindess and Hirst (1975 : 3)
54. By 1977 the positions advanced in Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production are revised. The necessity of maintaining a correspondence

between forces and relations of production is dropped and new grounds are established for invalidating the A.M.P. In the recent account it is argued that the state forms a necessary part of economic relations crucial to the existence and re-production of the productive process only if we assume conditions of hydro-agriculture. This would involve accepting a simple functionalist theory of the state and must, therefore, be rejected. In consequence, the tax/rent couplet cannot constitute relations of production so the mode cannot be constituted.

55. I have discussed this notion elsewhere : see note 12 and Manivasagar 1997 : 17 - 19

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