

UNDERDEVELOPMENT, STATE AND MODE OF
PRODUCTION IN BANGLADESH

By

HASANUZZAMAN CHOWDHURY

A thesis submitted to the Faculty
of Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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Hasanuzzaman Chowdhury

ABSTRACT

The focus of the present study in underdevelopment is Bangladesh. Viewing underdevelopment as a process of continuity in change, the study has analysed how the process itself is sustained through a determinate mode of reciprocity between the state and the mode of production. For the concrete study of a social problem the Marxian perspective provides for and underscores the needs of giving due weight to the effects of all the levels, viz, the economic (mode of production), political (state) and ideological, comprising a social formation. By conducting the present study in accordance with this perspective, it is found that in the early Asiatic form of the indigenous society the economic level attributed to the political level, i.e., the state, reached a very high degree of autonomy, which has been sustained by the state in the subsequent periods as well. Later, the state itself introduced important changes into the indigenous social economy. But instead of facilitating the unfolding of new modes of production, those changes reinforced the hold of the precapitalist forces and relations of production which, in themselves, coincide with the autonomous power of the state as well as with the phenomenon of underdevelopment. The ideological subterfuge contrived by the state in furtherance of its autonomy, however, manifests the contradictions and tendencies encompassed by the conjuncture of underdevelopment itself. Indeed, the contradictions accompanying the sustained autonomy of the state vis-a-vis the social polarization emanating largely from its policies, have precipitated the crisis Bangladesh faces today.

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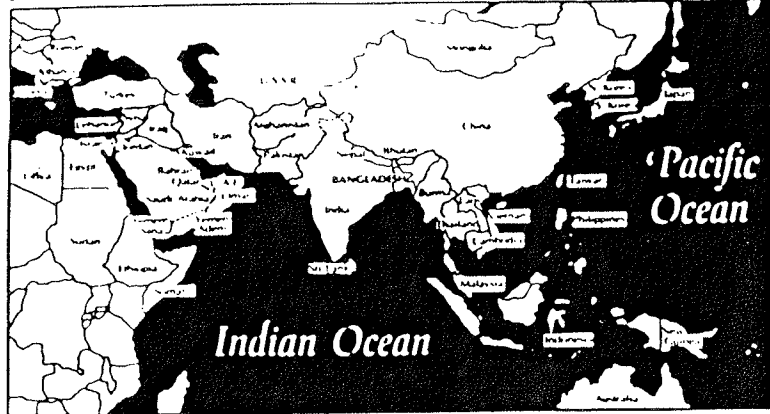
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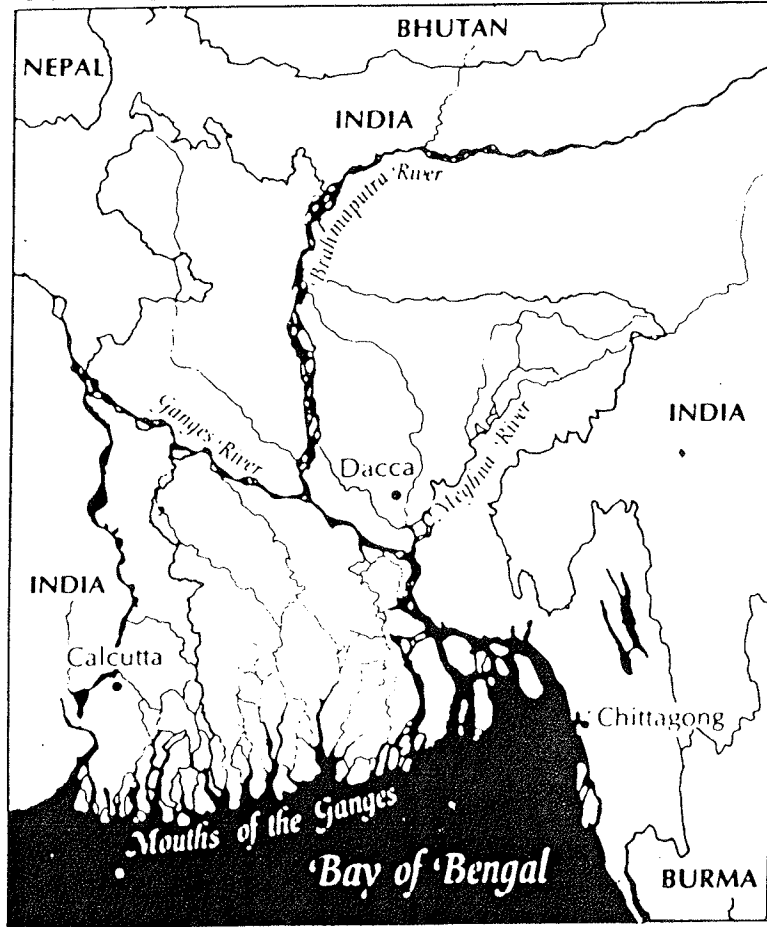
ASIA

Map: Agency for International Development



BANGLADESH

Map: Department of State, U.S.



Asia, Bangladesh

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INTRODUCTION

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND PURPOSE OF STUDY

The phenomenon of underdevelopment constitutes the problematic of the present study.¹ From the Marxian perspective the problematics of development and underdevelopment basically entail the analysis of class structure and state in a concrete social formation.² Indeed, Marx and Engels viewed development (1962, Vol. 1: 34-65) as the synonym of the dominance of a determinate class over the social formation (for example, dominance of the bourgeoisie in capitalist societies and that of the "proletariat" in socialist societies). By extrapolating this view, contemporary Marxists have explained underdevelopment as the synonym of the dominance of state vis-a-vis the social classes in the post-colonial social formation (Alavi 1972, Brenner 1977, Sen 1982). However, the problem of underdevelopment of societies like Bangladesh calls for further probing into the mode of reciprocation³ between the classes and mode of production and the state.

Prior to the advent of colonialism the productive forces and the classes in Bengal and in India are said to have reached the threshold of the capitalist transition. Thus it is noted that in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries a section of the indigenous merchants had "metamorphosed themselves into industrial capitalists" which was combined with their "simultaneous attempt to weaken the central power of the state" (Sen 1982: 4). But the Asiatic state which had established its sway over the social classes of the indigenous society thwarted this development and instead ushered in colonialism. Thus,

. . . even in decline . . . the autonomous state power in India operated as a fetter on the growth of the capitalist class, thus resisting the unfolding of the incipient capitalist mode of production which - deriving impetus from the demand of Indian goods in the World market - was greatly undermining the existing Asiatic mode of production. This failure of the state in India to follow the economic movement not only obstructed the growth of the capitalist mode of production but also ushered in its own disintegration and defeat at the hands of the colonizing countries (Sen 1982: 4).

The English mercantile bourgeoisie which first colonized Bengal and then the whole of India, had brought its colonial state to bear upon the acceleration of capitalist development in England at the expense of the indigenous artisan industry (which was first expropriated and then destroyed) and agriculture (where rack-renting landlordism was introduced in place of the former free peasant economy). Consequently, there occurred what is called the "development of underdevelopment" (Frank 1969a). But, more important, underdevelopment has persisted even after the dissolution of colonialism itself. And compared with India or Pakistan, in the post-colonial era underdevelopment has been a more pervasive phenomenon in Bangladesh. It is also noteworthy that compared with the formers, Bangladesh has had to bear the brunt of the longest colonial (English) and sub-colonial (Pakistani) dominations. The more important point, however, is that she still recapitulates internally the social formational features of colonial times whereby the conjuncture of underdevelopment persists

unabated. The purpose of this study is to probe into this conjuncture of underdevelopment by systematically analysing the mode of reciprocation between the mode of production and the state during the successive periods of the social formation in Bangladesh.

REVIEW OF THEORIES

The adherents of the Weberian-Parsonian tradition in the sociology of development have viewed problems of development and underdevelopment in terms of a series of interrelated phenomena ranging from the ideal-typical "pattern-variables" to "achievement motivation" (Nash 1963: 3-4). The assumption of the ideal-typical scheme was that economic development is

. . . associated with a transformation of social behaviour from a form which . . . is oriented towards ascription, particularism and functional diffusiveness to a form of social behaviour oriented towards achievement, universalism and functional specificity (Hoselitz 1968: 155).

McClelland, as the best known exponent of the "motivational" or psychological theory of development, maintains that ". . . achievement motivation is an important factor affecting the rate of economic development" (McClelland 1961: 61). According to him, rather than the "external events" it is "the 'internal' psychological concerns that in the long run determine what happens in history" (McClelland 1961: 105). The implication of such theories is that the typical characteristics of development of the Western developed societies could be diffused in the underdeveloped societies and that would generate the "need for achievement" in those societies and enable them to 'grow' from the "traditional"

through the "precondition of take-off, the take-off, the drive to maturity" to the "age of mass consumption" (Rostow 1968:39). Such views are too well known and therefore require no restatement here. However, on critical examination they are

. . . found to be empirically invalid when confronted with reality, theoretically inadequate in terms of their own classical social scientific standards, and policy-wise ineffective for pursuing their supposed intentions of promoting the development of the underdeveloped countries (Frank 1967: 20).

Nevertheless, since their inception these theories have broadly shaped the policies and strategies of development in the underdeveloped countries. And corresponding to these theories lately there emerged the so-called Green Revolution theory. The latter emerged from the accelerated grain production in few underdeveloped countries which adopted the new seed, fertilizer and irrigation technology. But the "political, economic, and social changes which have produced and accompanied it" were counterbalanced by massive rural unrest and violent uprisings wherever the Revolution was exported. Thus it is noted that,

The Green Revolution provides a striking illustration of how imperialist intervention, no matter how well intentioned, can have far-reaching negative effects on the Third World (Cleaver, Jr. 1972: 103).

While the development theories outlined above have been consistent with the interests of the concerned circles (governments, business, donor agencies etc.) of the capitalist countries

and of the governments and their beneficiaries in the underdeveloped countries, they however, failed to explain as well as to solve the problem of persistent underdevelopment. In this regard, certain other theories, labelled as the neo-Marxist theories, have explained the problem more cogently. The latter, as a sub-set of Marxist thought, are said to have emerged in the backdrop of the ". . . notorious paradox of Marxism's practical success [Marxism-as-practice] in underdeveloped countries and its comparative failures in more developed ones" (Foster-Carter 1974: 67). Further, it is noted that the neo-Marxist treatment of the problem of underdevelopment ". . . must be seen against a backcloth of the perceived inadequacy, not only of bourgeois descriptions and prescriptions, but also of traditional Marxist ideas about 'backward' countries" Foster-Carter 1974: 69).

By employing various conceptual models the neo-Marxist theorists have, indeed, explained underdevelopment in terms of colonial and capitalist exploitation. Thus Baran observed that, Indeed, there can be no doubt that had the amount of economic surplus that Britain tore from India been invested in India, India's economic development to date would have borne little similarity to the actual somber record . . . the fate of the successive Indian generations would not have resembled even remotely the chronic catastrophe of the last two centuries (1968: 148).

In the same vein, A.G. Frank noted that: "I believe, with Paul Baran, that it is capitalism, both world and national, which produced underdevelopment in the past and which still generates

underdevelopment in the present" (Frank 1969b: xi). Indeed, the central focus of such theories is the mechanism of expropriation and transfer of surplus from the colonial or neo-colonial countries to the metropolitan centres. Accordingly, the theorists view the severance of the economic ties with the capitalist world market as the main precondition for the development of underdeveloped countries. Thus, for example, Amin noted that, ". . . so long as the underdeveloped country continues to be integrated in the world market, it remains helpless . . . the possibilities of local accumulation are nil" (1974: 131). The neo-Marxist theories have thus emphasized on the exogenous causes of underdevelopment and the causes lying in the domestic structure of the underdeveloped countries themselves, though not entirely neglected, but have not been adequately explained by these theories. Regarding these theories it is observed that having only offered "a macro-framework they did not facilitate the shift from general statement to micro-fieldwork" (Oxaal 1975: 2). They have been even viewed as posing a "difficult problem for Marxist theory", often leading to "a strong tendency sharply to revise Marx's conceptions regarding economic development" (Brenner 1977: 25). The latter critic has expounded the Marxian view of the capitalist development as a self-centric process of growth based on "capitalist social productive (class) relations", and by extrapolation has propounded that underdevelopment was "rooted in the class structure of production" of the underdeveloped societies themselves. Thus it is argued that,

. . . the development of underdevelopment was rooted in the class structure of production based on the extension of

absolute surplus labour, which determined a sharp disjunction between the requirements for the development of the productive forces (productivity of labour) and the structure of profitability of the economy as a whole. . . . And this, in turn, posed powerful barriers to development throughout the economy, through making difficult the application of fixed capital and the rise of cooperative labour, as well as, more generally, the full emergence of labour as a commodity (Brenner 1977: 85).

Indeed, the class structure referred to in the above passage had originated under colonialism and may be said to persist in determinate form even after the dissolution of colonialism. The underdevelopment of post-colonial societies like Bangladesh should therefore be approached from the perspective of this class structure albeit in conjunction with its reciprocation with the state. This, indeed, is the Marxian perspective and is evident from the following:

The conditions under which determinate productive forces can be used are also the conditions for the dominance of a determinate social class, whose social power, derived from its property ownership, invariably finds its practical and ideal expression in a particular form of the State (Marx 1963: 80).

However, it should be noted that "Marx admitted several possibilities of historical development" implying several forms of reciprocation between the productive forces and class and the state. While elaborating the possibilities admitted by Marx, Lefebvre noted that "the historical possibilities Europe realized were not

exactly paralleled in the history of the other continents" (1972: 159). Albeit some societies of the "other continents", notably of Asia, by skipping one historical possibility (capitalism) of Europe have realized the other (socialism) and have thereby developed (for example, China, Vietnam, North Korea, etc.). But a large number of others have realized neither and are therefore underdeveloped. The latter provide the appropriate grounds for testing the Marxist theory.

HYPOTHESIS AND METHOD

The present study is a concrete study of the Bangladesh society and is based on the following hypothesis:

The mode of reciprocation between the elements of the mode of production and the state attributed to the state an independent role which has been coextensive with the retarded transition or underdevelopment of the Bangladesh society.

This generic hypothesis has entailed specific investigation of the nature of and reciprocation between the mode of production and the state during the successive periods of the social formation in Bangladesh viz, the pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial and the post-independence.

The problematic addressed in the study called for historical investigation and hence is based on library sources. It is noted that,

To analyse a problem historically is to study contradictions and change, not simply to uncover 'origins'. While it is true, that an historical investigation will typically involve gathering data from the past, the critical issue is not the

temporality of the data but the way in which they are used. it is entirely possible to conduct ahistorical investigations of the past and historical investigations of the present (Wright 1979: 13n).

NOTES

1. In recent times 'underdevelopment' is found to have been paraphrased as 'least development' which enables one rather conveniently to describe the phenomenon somewhat quantitatively as well as ahistorically. Thus in 1975 the Committee for Development Planning (CDA) included the "mass-poverty country" Bangladesh on the list of the "hard-core least developed countries". Such countries were identified according to three common indicators: "per capita gross domestic product of less than 100 dollars (1969 dollars); contribution of the manufacturing sector to GDP of less than 10 per cent; and adult literacy (age group 15 years and over) of less than 20 per cent" (Weiss, 1983: 338).
2. A socio-economic formation or, in brief, a social formation is a concrete-specific society with an economic basis comprising the mode or modes of production, and a politico-ideological superstructure comprising the apparatuses of administration or rule (state), values, ideas, beliefs etc. The basis is the site of change wherein the arrival of new productive forces lead to change of the existing relations of production. The changes at the basis then bring about corresponding changes in the superstructure and consequently, a new social formation comes into existence, and so on (see Marx 1970: Preface). However, in all his works Marx noted that change is a function of class struggle and therefore depends

on the nature of class formations in specific societies. For instance, the differential nature of class formations in the Asiatic and the European societies led to the evolution of different social formations in the two continents.

3. Mode of reciprocation is used here to mean the interrelation of the classes and mode of production and the state, and the reproduction of the two in determinate forms. This reciprocation-reproduction process is to be explored through the comparison of the operations of the mode of production and the structure and policies of the state. Indeed, the concept 'articulation' is used for analysing the reciprocation between two different modes of production (for example, articulation of capitalism and feudalism) and not between two levels or structures of the same social formation. Indeed, the concept 'articulation' is reserved for the "modes of production controversy" (Foster-Carter: 1978).

I. TRANSFORMATION OF THE ASIATIC FORM OF SOCIETY
 IN BENGAL UNDER BRITISH COLONIALISM

NATURE OF THE ASIATIC FORM OF SOCIETY

The Asiatic form of society in India, as distinct from the semi-Asiatic society in Russia or the slave-based ancient Greek and Roman societies, had evolved from the modification of the Asiatic commune. The evolution itself was, however, influenced by various natural and social conditions of the existing commune itself.¹ The distinctive feature of this society was the persistence of communal ownership of land which in other societies had dissolved with the dissolution of their communes: "In the Asiatic form (at least, predominantly), the individual has no property but only possession; the real proprietor, proper, is the commune - hence property only as communal property in land" (Marx 1974a:484). In this society, the individuals or direct producers were not "confronted by a private landowner", nor were they faced with any "stronger political or economic pressure than that common to all subjection to the state" which stood over them, as the "sovereign" and "the supreme landlord" (Marx 1977, vol. III: 791). As the supreme landlord, the state was also the sole claimant of the surplus which was realized as tax or ground rent.²

Indeed, the supreme dominance of the state in the Asiatic society was coextensive with its functions, particularly those relating to the large-scale public works. As explicated by Marx:

Climate and territorial conditions . . . constituted artificial irrigation by canals and waterworks the basis of

Oriental agriculture . . . this prime necessity of an economical and common use of water, which in the Occident, drove private enterprise to voluntary association, as in Flanders and Italy, necessitated, in the Orient . . . the interference of the centralizing power of Government. Here an economical function devolved upon all Asiatic Governments, the function of providing public works (Marx 1962a: 393).

However, to collect the taxes due the state in the Asiatic society of India, it maintained a stratum of intermediaries (the zamindars and jahgirdars) which did not have any independent power. As noted by Shelvankar: "Their authority is derivative. It is dependent on the fulfilment of prescribed conditions" (1940: 93). Hence they were neither "co-sharers in the sovereignty of the state", nor could alienate the direct producers from their means of production i.e., land (Sen 1982:17-18). This subservient position of the indigenous revenue collectors did not allow them to engage in any struggle for power or to facilitate the transformation of the mode of production by way of combining their interest with that of a rising class as had occurred in Europe.³ Indeed, the state in India held all classes and strata in its sway and thereby contained their struggles for power as well as the change of the mode of production and social formation. As noted by Mandel,

. . . confronted with the hypertrophy of the state authority, they [the classes of peasants, public functionaries, land-owners - illegally appropriating ownership of land, merchants, bankers, etc., in India] can never acquire the social and political power which, in other countries, gives rise first to feudalism and then to modern capitalism (1977: 129-30).

Consequently, the indigenous society persisted as a stable and retarded system. However, apart from the "hypertrophic state", the village civilization, the towns, the use of surplus, etc., were also conducive to the continuity of this system. As to the nature of the village, Marx noted that,

These two circumstances - the Hindu, on the one hand, leaving like all Oriental peoples, to the central government the care of the great public works, the prime condition of his agriculture and commerce, dispersed, on the other hand, over the surface of the country, and agglomerated in small centres by the domestic union of agricultural and manufacturing pursuits - these two circumstances had brought about, since the remotest times, a social system of particular features - the so-called village system, which gave to each of these small unions their independent organization and distinct life (Marx 1962a: 395).

The Indian society also lacked the "free towns" like those of the medieval Europe. In the late medieval Europe, in a relatively congenial social atmosphere of the "civil society", private property and private economic pursuits were gradually freed "from the ideological bonds of the church" and "from the bonds of feudal subjugation" (Melotti, 1977:98). This facilitated the growth of the bourgeoisie and the "free towns" in the tottering feudal society of Europe. It was this bourgeoisie of the European free towns which then 'created' "a world after its own image" and 'subjected' "the country to the rule of the towns" (Marx and Engels 1962, vol. 1: 38). The circumstances in India were, however, too

different to permit an analogous development. As described by Shelvankar:

. . . the State, whose fortunes were bound up with the land, never relaxed its hold on the towns which were the bases of its action. . . . And the Indian bourgeoisie, lacking the means to break down the opposition of the village and turn the countryside into its market, as the European bourgeoisie had been able to do, had perforce to submit to this situation and resign itself to playing a subordinate role to the counts and noblemen, the soldiers, officials, priests and pilgrims, who collectively constituted the consumer class and who were in possession of the towns. (1940: 142-43)

Indeed, Max Weber spoke of another important "obstacle", "formed by ideas and institutions connected with magic", which had weakened the townspeople in India before the state. This obstacle was the caste segregation of the people that debarred them from uniting or forming "brotherhood in arms for mutual aid and protection, involving the usurpation of political power" (1966: 236). Thus, according to Weber: "In India the castes were not in a position to form ritualistic communities and hence a city, because they were ceremonially alien to each other" (1966: 238). Nevertheless, there occurred great accumulation of wealth in the hands of such classes as merchants, bankers, officials, etc., in the Indian towns. But owing to the social constraints the wealth of these classes have hardly had any productive use. As was noted by Bernier:

It should not escape notice that gold and silver, after circulating every other quarter of the globe, come at length

to be swallowed up, lost in some measure, in Hindustan (1972: 202).

These precious metals were "swallowed up" as "hoarded treasure" for fear of royal appropriation.⁴ And this concealment of wealth i.e., its withdrawal from circulation and productive use, is said to have retarded the social development in India. Bernier, indeed, attributed the great poverty of the people of India amidst abundance of wealth to ". . . this habit of secretly burying the precious metals, and thus withdrawing them from circulation" (1972: 225-26).

From the above it follows that the state, the village, the towns as well as the use of surplus, etc., in their combination had produced a stable and retarded social formation in India. But, from the beginning of the eighteenth century the consolidation of power by the provincial rulers, and their modification of the existing land tenure system, on the one hand, and the growing power of the indigenous and foreign merchants, on the other, set in motion a process of destabilization of Indian society. Indeed, of all the forces of destabilization it was the English mercantile bourgeoisie that had increasingly brought its power and speculative genius to bear upon the tottering Asiatic society in India. And Bengal constituted the principal arena of its struggle for power as well as the site of change.

DEVELOPMENT OF COMMODITY PRODUCTION AND INDIGENOUS CLASSES

Like all other regions of the vast Mogul empire Bengal was primarily an agricultural society. But compared with other regions she had relatively a more prosperous industrial as well as an agricultural economy. Indeed, she was the "paradise of India": "No

official farman, parwana or other official papers of the Mughal Empire ever mentioned Bengal without adding 'the Paradise of India' . . ." (Chaudhury 1975: 1). Francois Bernier had also conceded to Bengal the pre-eminence ascribed by others to Egypt as the "finest and most fruitful country in the world". He noted that, ". . . the knowledge I have acquired of Bengale, during two visits paid [third quarter of the seventeenth century] to that Kingdom, inclines me to believe that the pre-eminence ascribed to Egypt is rather due to Bengale" (1972: 437). Indeed, the development of commodity production and the brisk mercantile activities of the indigenous and foreign trading classes in Bengal were the basis of Bernier's "believe". He described the development in Bengal in the following way:

In regard to valuable commodities of a nature to attract foreign merchants, I am acquainted with no country where so great a variety is found. Besides sugar . . . there is in Bengale such a quantity of cotton and silks, that the Kingdom may be called the common storehouse for those two kinds of merchandise, not only of Hindustan or the Empire of the Great Mogol only, but of all the neighbouring Kingdoms, and even of Europe. I have been sometimes amazed at the vast quantity of cotton cloths, of every sort, fine and coarse, white and coloured, which the Hollanders alone export to different places, especially to Japan and Europe. The English, the Portuguese, and the native merchants deal also in these articles to a considerable extent. The same may be said of the silks and silk stuffs of all sorts. It is

not possible to conceive the quantity drawn every year from Bengale for the supply of the whole of the Mogol Empire as far as Lahore and Kabul, and generally of all those foreign nations to which the cotton cloths are sent . . . Bengale is also the principal emporium for saltpetre . . . the Dutch and English send large cargoes [of saltpetre] to many parts of the Indies, and to Europe. Lastly, it is from this fruitful Kingdom, that the best lac, opium, wax, civet, long pepper, and various drugs are obtained; and butter . . . is in such plenty, that although it be a bulky article to export, yet it is sent by sea to numerous places (1972: 439-40).

From the above passage it appears that the forces of commodity production, of commerce and expanded markets were forging the social economy of Bengal in the seventeenth century toward capitalism. However, certain other factors may be said to have still fettered the progress of capitalism. The social position of the producer himself was the first obstacle. The producer had indeed, occupied a perpetually subordinate position vis-a-vis the community or the village, a position which was antithetical to his independence and even to his existence. Explaining the implications of this Marx noted that,

The Asiatic form necessarily survives longest and most stubbornly. This is due to the fundamental principle on which it is based, that is, that the individual does not become independent of the community; that the circle of production is self-sustaining, unity of agriculture and

craft manufacture, etc. If the individual changes his relation to the community, he modifies and undermines both the community and its economic premise; conversely, the modification of this economic premise - produced by its own dialectic, pauperisation etc. (1965: 83).

The individual-community relation thus continued unmodified alongside the development of commodity production and commerce, owing mainly to the absence of those antagonistic features which were typical of feudal society. By comparing the structural features of the indigenous village with those of the feudal manors in Europe Shelvankar showed that,

The manor, it is true, was in some respects, similar to an Indian village, but it was a less stable organization. It was based on serfdom and ruled over by a feudal baron; and to serf and baron alike the development of urban trade and industry held out advantages, either of personal freedom or pecuniary gain. Hence, when these forces came into play, the manor succumbed, not perhaps without a struggle, but in comparatively short period. The village, on the other hand, which had in general no room for serfdom or baronial exploitation, was the more firmly articulated in its inner structure and therefore succeeded, where the manor had failed, in maintaining its distinctive character (1940: 139).

The cohesion of the "inner structure" of the village may be said to have hindered the mobility of the producers. Thus they always preferred to organize and carry on industrial activities in their homes or the localities and avoided any change of the place of work. Thus,

Despite the promise of 'great wages' the English Company failed to persuade the Bengal weavers to go and settle down in Madras. 'Such was their caste and lineage' that they feared by crossing the salt water they would lose their birth right. The Company even failed to persuade the 'taffeta-weavers' to move from Kashimbazar and settle in Hugli [Both in Bengal] Chaudhuri 1975: 234-235).

Apart from the ritualistic immobility of the producers, the indigenous merchant and traders were also structurally alienated from the production process as such. Thus although the latter often made advances (dadni) to the producers for specialized commodities but had never interfered in the act or manner of production. As noted by Chaudhuri:

But though merchant capital was highly developed, it had no control over the production system. The entire credit machinery seems to have been formed primarily to meet the requirements of commerce only. No provision for any long term investment or credit was there and the efficient and advanced methods of financial organization failed to bring about any significant change in the technique of production (1975: 235).

Indeed, merchants' capital as such does not interfere with the process of production, it only carries on the process of circulation.⁵ And particularly under the dominance of the Asiatic state it was all the more impossible for the Bengal merchants to make an exception to this rule. Further, "an interesting feature in the composition of Bengal merchants engaged in overseas trade in

the seventeenth century was the presence of subadars [governors], faujdars [military commanders] and other members of the ruling class" (Chaudhuri 1975: 91). However, the ruling nobility's involvement in the mercantile activities had neither led to any change of the subservient position of the merchants and artisans (vis-a-vis the state) nor to any diminution of their extortions by the former. Few examples may illustrate this point. In 1672, a wealthy merchant of Bengal (Khemchand) approached nawab Rashid Khan for obtaining a 'parwana' on behalf of an English merchant. But the nawab instead of issuing the 'parwana', imprisoned the merchant. And "Khemchand had to buy his release" by paying to the nawab "rupees 30,000" (Chaudhuri 1975: 94). In 1674, the same merchant was subjected to a more severe extortion:

The hungry Nawab . . . demanded one lakh [100,000] of rupees from him. Before he appeared in front of the Nawab, Khemchand took off his gold turban, jewels and rings, put on mean clothes, thereby to plead poverty. Then he began to bemoan his sad accident and loss he had lately suffered. . . . But the nawab was little moved by the story. . . . After many apologies, and after feasting the nawab's courtiers, he got off by paying rupees 50,000 to the nawab (Chaudhuri 1975: 95).

During early eighteenth century.

. . . Mir Jumla [the governor of Bengal] once demanded Rs 50,000 from the merchants of Dacca. On refusal they were threatened with death by being trampled by elephants and compromised for Rs 25,000 while the bankers of the

city appeased his wrath by paying Rs 300,000 without much further ado (cited in Sen 1982: 44).

The above examples bear testimony to the fact that while the Bengal merchants did not lack in wealth or entrepreneurship, they greatly lacked in security of their wealth and this had retarded their potentials as bourgeoisie. This perhaps also accounts for the individualistic nature of business operation by the indigenous merchants. Thus they were not inclined to form anything like the joint stock companies, in vogue among their European counterparts. As observed by Chaudhuri,

In Bengal, trade or business was the concern of individual rather than of groups acting in common interests. . . .

They operated with their own capital and there was hardly any close financial link between the merchant and the public - a feature which was fast developing in England in the seventeenth century through the joint stock Companies. . . .

It is true that sometimes the merchants acted as depositors of funds or even traded with capital supplied by the nobility for investment in the trade but the risk of any disaster or loss was his own (1975: 97).

These circumstances, outlined in the above paragraphs, explain the built-in weaknesses of the indigenous bourgeoisie in hastening the capitalist transformation of the society. However, the main source of its weakness was the power of the state itself which might even have induced its increased cooperation with the local European merchants who were evidently more advanced and aspiring. Indeed, from the late sixteenth century the activities of the

Bengal merchants became closely linked with the commercial pursuit of the European merchants. By the second half of the eighteenth century, a large number of Bengal merchants were serving as the agents of the British East India Company which emerged as the most powerful among the European companies operating in Bengal. At this time the English company had also involved itself in the affair of the succession (to office) of the nawab of Bengal. However, on his accession to the throne, Nawab Siraj-ud-daulah who was aware of the intrigues of the English, brought his heavy hand on the activities of the latter. In the face of such a situation the company contemplated to replace Siraj by a nawab more amenable to their control. Accordingly, it hatched up a conspiracy with the help of the disaffected chiefs and some rich bankers and merchants. As noted by Mukherjee:

. . . the prime movers from the Indian side in the conspiracy launched by the Company to overthrow the last independent Nawab of Bengal were those who were foremost in banking and commerce in that period. Jagat Seth, who was probably the brain behind the conspiracy from the Indian side, was a reputable banker; his name signified: 'The Banker of the World'. Omichand or Amirchand, who played the biggest part in the conspiracy from Calcutta - the seat of the Company in Bengal - was 'one of the wealthiest native merchants resident at Calcutta' (1973a: 239-40).

This conspiracy led to the treacherous Battle of Plassey in 1757, in which "a handful British merchant adventurers of Calcutta, winning a battle of unprecedented scale against a huge medieval army", brought about "the transfer of power from the hands of

patrimonial state to a foreign bourgeois business company" (Karim 1982: 6). While the "transfer of power" first occurred in Bengal, the rest of India followed suit. It should be noted that with this transfer of power to the English bourgeoisie the prospect of the indigenous bourgeoisie was doomed. Indeed, the latter, as an accomplice of the English conspiracy not only doomed its own future but also, perhaps as the "unconscious tool of history", had paved the way for the capitalist development of England at the expense of similar development of Bengal in particular, and of India, in general.⁶

COLONIAL STATE AND THE FEUDALIZATION OF THE SOCIAL ECONOMY

With the advent of colonialism Bengal had become an arena of primitive accumulation of the English bourgeoisie. In proportion as it was "destructive" for the indigenous society, it was "regenerating" for England. Indeed, long before the establishment of the colonial state the English mercantile bourgeoisie had begun its accumulation through trade in the products of Bengal, which is evident from the increases in its annual exports. Thus, the total value of the company's annual exports from Bengal increased from £24,199 in 1663/64 to £336,973 in 1719/20 (Chaudhuri 1975, appendix B, Table 1). But after 1757 the volume and value of such exports increased manifold and it was realized through more oppressive means. An English merchant "who saw things with his own eyes", narrated that,

Inconceivable oppressions and hardships have been practised towards the poor manufacturers and workers of the country,

who are, in fact, monopolized by the Company as so many slaves. . . . Various and innumerable are the methods of oppressing the poor weavers, which are duly practised by the Company's agents and gomastas [native sub-agents] in the country; such as fines, imprisonments, floggings, forcing bonds from them, etc., by which the number of weavers in the country has been greatly reduced (cited in Mukherjee 1973a: 302).

Through such violence and oppression the ruling company brought about the ruination of artisans and merchants as well as the manufacturing towns of Bengal. Thus in 1840, the Select Committee of the British House of Commons reported that,

The decay and destruction of Surat, of Dacca, of Murshidabad, and of other places where native manufactures have been carried on, is too painful a fact to dwell upon (Mukherjee 1973a: 338).

Indeed, by the time these destructions were completed the Industrial Revolution had already taken place in England, and by the 1820s the English merchants had inverted the flow of commodities from the industries of England to the captive markets of Bengal and India. The consequence was as follows:

In 1787 the exports of Dacca muslin to England amounted to 30 lakhs of rupees [three million]; in 1817 they had ceased altogether. . . . Families which were formerly in a state of affluence have been driven to desert the towns and betake themselves to the villages for a livelihood. . . . This decadence had occurred not in Dacca only, but in all districts (Mukherjee 1973a: 338).

Alongside the manufacturers, the Bengal peasants were also subjected to extortions and destruction by the ruling company. The latter, indeed, subjected the peasantry to a double oppression: by neglecting the "hydraulic functions" which were efficiently discharged by the former rulers, and by rampaging plunder of the peasants' products. As to the former Marx noted that: "Now, the British in East India accepted from their predecessors the department of finance and of war, but they have neglected entirely that of public works" (1962a: 394). A renowned English hydraulic engineer, Sir William Wilcocks, who studied the ancient system of irrigation in Bengal observed that,

. . . innumerable small destructive rivers of the delta region, constantly changing their course, were originally canals which under the English regime were allowed to escape from their channels and run wild. . . . Some areas, cut off from the loam-bearing Ganges water, have gradually become sterile and non-productive; others, improperly drained, show an . . . accompaniment of Malaria. Nor has any attempt been made to construct proper embankments for the Ganges in its low course, to prevent the enormous erosion by which villages and groves and cultivated fields are swallowed up each year (cited in Mukherjee: 341).

The catastrophe which thus befel Bengal, however, did not stop the English company from racking the peasantry. Thus after the scourge of the famine of 1770, Governor General Warren Hastings wrote to the Company's Court of Directors that: "Notwithstanding the loss of at least one-third of the inhabitants of the province,

and the consequent decrease of the cultivation, the nett collections of the year 1771 exceeded even those of 1768" (Mukherjee: 353). Such rapacious collection of revenues from the peasantry continuously increased despite the fall in productivity. Thus, for example, the land revenue collection in the year 1790-91 rose to £2,680,000 from £818,000 in 1764-65 (p. 359). More important, the revenues thus collected were either entirely transferred, or diverted to use having little beneficial effect on the indigenous economy. Thus in a report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, it is stated that,

The goods from Bengal, purchased from the territorial revenues, from the sale of European goods, and from the produce of the monopolies . . . were never less than a million sterling.

This million is the lowest value of the goods sent to Europe, for which no satisfaction is made. About £100,000 a year is also remitted from Bengal on the Company's account to China, and the whole of the product of that money flows into the direct trade from China to Europe. Besides this, Bengal sends a regular supply in time of peace to those Presidencies (in India) which are unequal to their own establishments (cited in Mukherjee: 361).

And thus the English company carried on its China trade, purchase of indigenous commodities for export (which was hypocritically termed as "investment"), maintenance of its establishments in the vast colony of India, etc., with the revenues squeezed out of Bengal.

In 1793, the ruling company introduced a new land tenure system called, the Permanent Settlement, through which the former

zamindars or revenue collectors were turned into landlords and the free peasants, into their tenants. As observed by Marx, ". . . a curious sort of English landlord was the zemidar, receiving only one-tenth of the rent, while he had to make over nine-tenths of it to the Government" (1974b: 78). As he noted further, "Thus, in Bengal, we have a combination of English landlordism, of the Irish middlemen system, of the Austrian system, transforming the landlord into the tax-gatherer and of the Asiatic system making the state the real landlord (1974b:79).

However, the 'real landlord' i.e., the colonial state, endowed its subordinate landlords, the zamindars, with enough coercive power which the latter exercised for timely collection of rents from the tenants (see Banerjee, 1981). The new land tenure system was, indeed, presumed to encourage the landlords to undertake the improvement of agriculture and thereby the augmentation of productivity while the demand for rents remained high and constant. But two other important considerations had necessitated the introduction of the new system. One was the security of the ruling class threatened by frequent peasant revolts⁷ and the other, the diversion of the indigenous urban merchants to land to the advantage of the English merchants' own monopoly. With regard to the former the following remark by Governor-General Lord William Bentinck is worth quoting:

If security was wanting against extensive popular tumult or resolution, I should say that the Permanent Settlement, though a failure in many other respects in most important essentials, has this great advantage at least of having

created a vast body of rich landed proprietors deeply interested in the continuance of the British Dominion and having complete command over the mass of the people (Mukherjee 1973a: 408).

The "vast body of rich landed proprietors" were, however, constituted by the former revenue collectors as well as the native loyal agents, the "baniyans and gomastahs", of the English company.⁸ The latter found in its native agents a means of buttressing the social base of its rule and also thereby a way of diverting their wealth to land. As noted by Marx,

Results of the 'settlement': First product of this plunder of 'communal and private property of the ryots : Whole series of local risings of the ryots against the 'landlords' (conferred on them), involving: in some cases, expulsion of the zemindars and stepping of the East India Co. into their place as owner; in other cases, impoverishment of the zemindars and compulsory or voluntary sale of their estates to pay tax arrears and private debts. Hence greater part of the provinces land holdings fell rapidly into the hands of a few city capitalists who had spare capital and readily invested it in land (Marx 1960: 101).

probing further into the pre-colonial system of revenue-farming Karim (1983) noted that a distinctive type of "waddederism" was in vogue in Bengal. Under this system the "waddaders" i.e., promise-holders constituted the revenue collectors of the state on a contractual basis and subsequently, they filled the ranks of landlord under the British colonial rule. As noted by Karim,

The waddaders did not belong to hereditary landed aristocracy as such; they belonged to the class of speculators and business community, such as orories, shroffs, shahukars, mahajans, etc. . . . The Merchant adventurers and speculators of the British East India Company found in these Bengali (Hindu) speculators their own image and was therefore fearful of their competition with them. Hence they diverted their attention from the field of business and commerce to landholding by granting of the Permanent Settlement in 1793 (1983: 3-4).

Further, it is suggested by the author that: "If . . . continued unabated, waddaderization would doubtless have transformed the society into a modern bourgeois society or it would have created conditions for that" (p. 7); and thereby, "it would have created a Bengali national state" (p. 8). However, the process did not at all continue unabated nor, therefore, could the Bengali national state come into existence before two hundred years more of colonial rule.

NOTES

1. The transition to settled agriculture and particularly, the development of productive forces had led to the dissolution of various forms of primitive communes viz, the slav, the Asiatic, classical, the Germanic etc. But the natural and social conditions had made for diverse or multilinear development of the societies on the dissolution of their respective communes. Thus Marx noted that, "when they finally do settle down, the extent to which this original community is modified will depend on various external, climatic, geographic, physical etc. conditions as well as on their particular natural predisposition - their clan character" (1974: 472).
2. Pointing to the relations of the state and the direct producers, and to the nature of tax/ground rent due to the former, Marx observed that: "Should the direct producers not be confronted by a private landowner, 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, or rather, 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 the state. The state is then the supreme landlord. Sovereignty here consists in the ownership of land concentrated on a national scale. But, on the other hand, no private ownership of land exists, although there is both private and common possession and use of land" (Marx 1977, vol. III: 791).

3. The transition from feudalism to capitalism in Europe is said to have entailed an articulation of the two, whereby the interests of the landlords and the capitalists had coincided in production but diverged in distribution (since rent is a deduction from profit). P.P. Rey viewed this articulation as passing through three stages: first, the landlords evicted the peasants (primitive accumulation) and thereby created the proletariat as well as the market for agricultural and industrial commodities; in the second stage, the division of labour between capitalist industry and partly peasant agriculture forced the latter to compete with the former in the market; and in the final stage, the penetration of capitalism in all branches of agriculture destroyed peasant production, like the artisan industry was destroyed by capitalist industry (see Brewer, 1980: 190-91).

4. In India the king or the emperor had the sole right of owning and inheriting property and even the great Mogul noblemen were no exception to this rule. Bernier cited many examples of clandestine attempts by wealthy merchants and noblemen to bequeath their wealth to their 'heirs'. But those attempts were just foiled by the law "... that the Great Mogul constitutes himself heir of all the Omrahs, or lords, and likewise of the Mansebdars, or inferior lords, who are in his pay; and what is of utmost importance, that he is proprietor of every acre of land in the Kingdom (1972: 204).

5. Explicating the nature and role of the merchant's capital Marx showed that: "And when in the 16th, and partially still in the 17th, century the sudden expansion of commerce and emergence

of a new world-market overwhelmingly contributed to the fall of the old mode of production and the rise of capitalist production, this was accomplished conversely on the basis of the already existing capitalist mode of production" (1977: 333). He further noted that merchants' capital, ". . . cannot by itself contribute to the overthrow of the old mode of production, but tends rather to preserve and retain it as its precondition" (1977: 334).

6. Indeed, the capitalist development of England and the simultaneous underdevelopment of Bengal and India were effected by the English bourgeoisie itself through its rampaging plunder of the indigenous society. To quote Brooks Adams: "Very soon after Plassey the Bengal plunder began to arrive in London, and the effect appears to have been instantaneous, for all authorities agree that the "industrial revolution", the event which has divided the nineteenth century from all antecedent time, began with the year 1760. Prior to 1760 . . . the machinery used for spinning cotton in Lancashire was almost as simple as in India. . . . Plassey was fought in 1757, and probably nothing has ever equalled the rapidity of the change which followed. In 1760 the flying-shuttle appeared, and coal began to replace wood in smelting. In 1764 Hargreaves invented the spinning-jenny, in 1779 Crompton contrived the mule, in 1785 Cartwright patented the power-loom, and, chief of all, in 1768 Watt matured the steam-engine, the most perfect of all vents of centralizing energy. But though these machines, served as outlets for the accelerating movement of the time, they did not cause that acceleration. In themselves inventions are passive, many of the most important having lain dormant for centuries, waiting for a sufficient store of force to have

accumulated to set them working. That store must always take the shape of money, and money not hoarded, but in motion. . . . To the capitalist, then, rather than to the inventor, civilization owes the steam-engine as a part of daily life . . ." (1959: 255-57).

The 'money' that was set in motion since the Battle of Plassey may be estimated from the following: "The volume of wealth that Britain derived from India and that was added to Britain's capital accumulations has to my knowledge never been fully assessed. Digby [William Digby, "Prosperous British India, London, 1901, p. xii] notes that estimates had been made according to which between Plassey and Waterloo - a period of crucial importance for the development of British capitalism - between £500,000,000 and £1,000,000,000 worth of treasure was taken by Britain from India. The vastness of this sum can be visualized when it is considered that at the turn of the nineteenth century the aggregate capital of all joint stock companies operating in India amounted to £36,000,000" (Baran, 1968: 145).

This money was very ingeniously harnessed to the Industrial Revolution in England albeit in a manner that thwarted the progress of India itself, and the policies of the British East India Company and of the British Parliament were particularly instrumental in that respect. As noted by Romesh Dutt: "Their fixed policy . . . was to make India subservient to the industries of Great Britain, and to make the Indian people grow raw produce only, in order to supply material for the looms and manufactories of Great Britain. This policy was pursued with unwavering

resolution and with fatal success; orders were sent out, to force Indian artisans to work in the Company's factories; commercial residents were legally vested with extensive powers over villages and communities of Indian weavers, prohibitive tariffs excluded Indian silk and cotton goods from England; English goods were admitted into India free of duty or on payment of a nominal duty When in recent years the power-loom was set up in India, England once more acted towards India with unfair jealousy. An excise duty has been imposed on the production of cotton fabrics in India which . . . stifles the new steam-mills of India. Agriculture is now virtually the only remaining source of national wealth in India. . . . It is true that the British Government only followed the precedent of the previous Mahomedan rulers who also claimed an enormous Land Tax. But the difference was this, that what the Mahomedan rulers claimed they could never fully realise; what the British rulers claimed they realised with rigour. The last Mahomedan ruler of Bengal, in the last year of his administration (1764), realised a land revenue of £817,553; within thirty years the British rulers realised a land revenue of £2,680,000 [1790-91] in the same province. . . . But what the British Government does take as Land Tax at the present day sometimes approximates to the whole of the economic rent, leaving the cultivators little beyond the wages of their labour and the profits of their agricultural stock. The Land Tax is revised once every thirty years. . . . This uncertainty of the Land Tax paralyses agriculture, prevents saving, and keeps the tiller of the soil in a state of poverty and indebtedness" (1960, vol. 1: xxiv-xxvii).

While Bengal and India suffered this damage at the hands of the progressive bourgeoisie and the bourgeois state like that of Great Britain, the unpalatable truth is that even the 'despots' of the Oriental state (considered as the epitome of stagnation) did not do so. The latter, on the contrary, in many ways fructified the economy. As noted by Dutt: "The vast sums which the Afghan and Mughal Emperors spent on their armies went to support great and princely houses, as well as hundreds of thousands of soldiers and their families whose attachment to society was not lost as it was by Indian soldiers under British rule. The gorgeous palaces and monuments the Indian rulers built, as the luxuries and displays in which they indulged, fed and encouraged the manufacturers and artisans of India. Nobles and Commanders of the army, Subahdars, Dewans, and Kazis, and a host of inferior officers in every province and every district, followed the example of the Court; and mosques and temples, roads, canals and reservoirs, guest houses on the roadsides and other buildings etc., attested to their interest in the country's welfare, their wide liberality to the people, and even to their vanity as efficient rulers and officers. In any case, under wise rulers as well as under foolish kings, the proceeds from the people in the form of taxes and tributes flowed back to them and fructified their trade and industries" (1960: xxvii-xxviii).

7. Ever since the assumption of 'dewani' i.e., the revenue administration, by the English East India Company (following the Battle of Plassey in 1757), peasant revolts became a recurrent phenomenon in Bengal. The most extensive of these revolts were: the Sanyassi

revolts of 1770s, Rangpur-Pabna (districts) revolts of 1783, Wahhabi movement of 1830-31, Faraidi movement of 1838-48, Santal Insurrection of 1855-56, Indigo Revolt or Blue Mutiny of 1860 and the Tebhaga movement of 1946-47.

Sanyassi revolts occurred in the North-Eastern districts of Bengal immediately after the Great Famine of 1770. The nature of the revolts has been described in the following way: "Lawlessness breeds lawlessness, and the miserable peasantry, stripped of their hoard for the winter, were forced to become plunderers in turn. . . . They formed themselves into bands of so-called houseless devotees (Sanyassis), and roved about the country in armies fifty thousand strong. . . . On the 31st March 1773, Warren Hastings plainly acknowledges that the commander who had succeeded Captain Thomas 'unhappily underwent the same fate', that four battalions of the army were then actively engaged against the banditti [i.e. the peasant rebels or Fakirs and Sanyassis], but that, in spite of the militia levies called from the landholders, their combined operations had been fruitless. The revenue could not be collected . . . the whole rural administration was unhinged" (Hunter, 1975: 70-72).

The Indigo Revolts followed the Santal Insurrections of 1855-56 and the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. Before the use of artificial bluing dyes Bengal weavers used to dye cotton cloths with the extracts of indigo plants, and the surplus of this indigo used to be collected by the traders for export. As the expansion of the English textile industry demanded a large supply of this natural dye, English officers, speculators, experienced slave-drivers all scrambled for indigo plantations. Taking vast leases of agricultural land they

compelled the peasants to grow indigo instead of food crops. Consequently, "The indigo trade reached a dizzy height in 1842 when it constituted 46 per cent of Calcutta's exports by value and amounted to £18,433,565 in money value in 1844-45" (Palit, 1972: 97). This vigorous indigo trade, however, brought in its wake a reign of terror for the peasantry. But the peasantry responded to it first by organizing local resistance and then by open revolt in all the twenty indigo districts of Bengal. However, all the peasant revolts of Bengal, irrespective of their scale, were mainly spontaneous in character and centered around the economic grievances. But the Tebhaga Movement was different from them in that it combined economic demands (e.g. two-thirds share of the produce while the tenants provided all inputs) with the political struggles of anti-colonialism and anti-feudalism. Arising on the eve of the political independence of India the Movement proceeded under the leadership of the Bengal kishan Sabha and the Communist Party of India. However, this conscious and organized movement of the peasantry had ultimately floundered on the issues of the partition and independence of India. And the involvement of the political leadership of the movements in those issues as well as its weaknesses of leadership have been held responsible for balking the movement (Roy: 1972, and Desai: 1979).

8. The baniyans and gomastahs constituted a category of compradors in that their interests and wealth were constitutively linked to the English merchants' capital and were completely bound politically and ideologically to this capital formed locally through primitive accumulation. Mukherjee described the emergence of these

compradors in this way: "Gone were the days of prosperity and mounting influence of Indian merchants. Henceforth, they were allowed to exist only as petty intermediaries between the English and the Indian artisans and peasants, in the form of banyans and gomastahs of the former. . . . Subservient to the needs of the English, as against those of the Indians, these banyans and gomastahs could prosper only through roguery and anti-popular activities" (1973a: 312).

II DECOLONIZATION OF INDIA AND RECOLONIZATION
OF BANGLADESH FOR THE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF PAKISTAN

TRANSFORMATION OF CLASS STRUGGLE INTO COMMUNAL STRUGGLE

The successive peasant revolts of Bengal in the second half of the eighteenth century were followed by anti-colonial movements in several parts of India as well as in Bengal itself. The more militant of these movements were organized along religious lines. For example, the Tariqah-i-Muhadiyah movement, known as the Wahhabi movement, constituted an armed holy war (jihad) against the British. Compared with this the Faraizi movement had a broader base among the peasants of Bengal and its ". . . members sought vengeance against the hated landlords whether they be Hindus, Moslems or British planters" (Antonova et al., 1978:67-68). The localised actions of the peasants and religious groups had finally culminated into the great popular uprising, known as the Sepoy Mutiny, of 1857 which Marx described as the "first Indian war of independence". It first started in the Bengal army in early 1857, the hundredth year of the Battle of Plassey (1757), and then quickly spread to the other parts of India. But in spite of the fact that by its extent and intensity this uprising had virtually dwarfed all the previous uprisings, it was ultimately quashed by the organized force of the colonial state.¹ However, two very important consequences followed from it: one was the transfer of power from the East India Company to the British Crown itself in 1858, that marked the end of the direct rule of India by the

merchant company and the beginning of the exploitation by the British industrial capital; the other was the adoption of the policy of "divide et impera" by the colonial state. The latter was effected through driving the religio-ideological wedge between the two major communities of India, the Hindu and the Muslim. While this move greatly hindered the political development of India in general, it proved particularly so for that of Bengal.

Indeed, prior to the advent of colonialism there was little communal discord between the Hindus and Muslims in spite of the fact that the members of the two communities widely diverged in their beliefs and practices. Sometimes, even the state on its own undertook to promote the religio-ideological harmony of the people which was conducive to the latter's productive pursuits and prosperity.² But from the last quarter of the eighteenth century the colonial state took to deliberate policies of reversing such achievements of the people. In accordance with its divisive policy it revived the religio-ideological orthodoxies in the name of patronizing the sacred laws and customs of the indigenous communities. As noted by Mukherjee,

. . . what Warren Hastings [Governor-General of Bengall from 1772 to 1785] and his successors persisted in putting forward as Indian laws and custom took the direction of patronizing religious orthodoxy instead of encourageing the liberal ideas which had gained ground in Indian society in previous period and which . . . were ushering in a progressive life in India with a permanent rapproachment between the Hindus and Moslems and the eradication of decadent customs and institutions (1973a: 316).

Even a permanent rupture was forced upon the communities through the Act of Settlement of 1781 whereby,

. . . Warren Hastings had made a rule that as regards inheritance, marriage, caste and other religious usages and institutions the laws of the Koran were to be administered for the Mohammedans and the laws of the Shastra for the Hindus (1973a: 317).

It may be maintained that by patronizing the religious laws and customs of the Hindus and Muslims in this way, the colonial rulers had socially set these communities apart and thereby made them amenable to political manipulation. Indeed, this ideological division was contrived to facilitate the colonial exploitation whose material basis was laid with the introduction of the Permanent Settlement that created new social classes cutting across the communal boundaries. The educated 'middle class' which was an off-shoot of the new class structure as well as an indispensable means of the colonial rule, also reflected the divisive policy of the colonial state itself.³ However, it should also be noted that the determinate attitudes of the members of the major communities, viz. Hindu and Muslim, towards the colonial state were also responsible for instigating the latter to adopt various divisive policies. For example, the attitude of the Hindu community toward the colonial state has been expressly positive (at least, for a long time) while that of the Muslim has been expressly negative. As noted by an English civil servant:

Under Muhammadan Rule the Hindus accepted their fate exactly as they have done under our own. At present, preferment

depends upon a knowledge of English, and they learn English. Formerly, preferment depended upon a knowledge of Persian, and they learned Persian (Hunter 1968: 151).

By thus learning English and accepting the English rule, the members of the Hindu community rapidly acquired important positions in the set-up of the colonial state. The members of the Muslim community, on the other hand, owing to their indignant attitude toward the English language and the English rule, lagged behind. Consequently, as noted by Hunter, the "distribution of state patronage in Bengal" skewed toward the English and the Hindus. Thus, in 1871, out of the 2111 "gazetted appointments for which Englishmen, Muhammadans, and Hindus are alike eligible", the Englishmen and the Hindus occupied 1338 and 681 appointments respectively, while the Muslims occupied only 92 (Hunter 1968: 144). Commenting on the lag of the Muslim community, Hunter observed that it failed to "divest itself of the traditions of its nobler days" and therefore "refused a system which gave them no advantages over the people whom they had so long ruled". (Hunter 1969: 152-53)

However, more than the disadvantage of the Muslim nobility or the relative advantage of the certain sections of the Hindus, the discontent of the exploited masses of both the communities under the colonial rule had led to mass uprisings that threatened the stability of the colonial state itself. Obviously, the colonial rulers perceived that if the advanced sections of the Hindus and Muslims had as well joined their forces in the popular movements then the dissolution of the colonial rule would not be far off. And in order to avert that possibility and thereby protract the colonial rule, the colonial state undertook to politically

unite the advanced and dominant sections of these communities. The formation of the Indian National Congress is said to be the first outcome of such initiative by the colonial state:

Finally, in 1885, the first conference of the National Congress was convened in Bombay; it was the first all-India political organization of the landlords and the bourgeoisie. It was set up with the approval of the authorities, and Hume [Allen Octavian Hume, a retired English civil servant], at the request of the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin (1884-1888), was made its General Secretary (Antonova et al., 1979: 114).

But afterwards the Congress, instead of being an instrument of domination and political disorganization of the ruling class, emerged as a viable political force for promoting the causes of Indian nationalism as well as of the Indian bourgeoisie. It voiced strong demands for the protection and development of national industry, reduction of taxes, creation of capitalist credit in India, termination of discriminatory tariff policy, introduction of 'permanent zamindari settlement' throughout the country, reform of the legal system, etc. (Ibid.) The ruling class had, no doubt, perceived a distinct bourgeois nationalist threat from these demands of the Indian National Congress. And to encounter this threat the ruling class now turned to the 'progressive' Muslim leaders of India. These leaders (the most prominent among them was Sir Sayyad Ahmad Khan) lately emerged as the spokesmen of the backward Muslim community as well as the champions of the Muslim loyalty to the British power in India.

Although "Musalmans of India are and have been for many years, a source of chronic danger to the British Power in India" (Hunter, 1968: 3), however, the 'British Power' now came to value the loyalty of the Muslims, i.e. of the Muslim landlords and Muslim merchants. Indeed, the educational and cultural organizations set up by the promoters of 'Muslim' progress facilitated the growth of a Muslim middle class comprising the office employees, business class, men of liberal professions etc. However, at its inception the Muslim middle class faced the dominant and advanced Hindu middle class as a source of threat to its continual progress. This threat was aggravated with the outbreak of communal violence at the beginning of the twentieth century. Such communal tensions and violence were, however, said to have been deliberately instigated by the colonial state in the face of organized anti-colonial movement, particularly in Bengal (Antonova et al. 1978: 128).

In the backdrop of the changes, as outlined above, the colonial rulers announced the partition of Bengal. Thus in 1905, Viceroy, Lord Curzon divided Bengal into West Bengal (incorporating Bihar and Orissa) and East Bengal (incorporating Assam) for "administrative reasons". But the decision was less induced by administrative efficacy, rather it was impelled by political exigencies. Indeed, on the eve of the announcement of partition several "extremist" groups combined their forces to launch an organized attack on the altar of the colonial rulers in Bengal. And apprehending the impending threat, the latter quickly made the announcement of partition as a counter-attack on the solidity of the combined anti-colonial forces. Thus, "in an attempt to forestall a possible outbreak of revolution, the British colonial

authorities decided to deal a pre-emptive blow at the national patriotic forces". (Antonova 1978: 124). However, the 'pre-emptive blow' of the colonial authorities brought in its wake violent protests from all sections of the society and the anti-colonial sentiment thereby became more intense and widespread. The latter then culminated into the Swadeshi Movement (1906-8) i.e., the movement of boycotting everything British. But "as the movement gathered momentum it increasingly acquired symbols associated with Hinduism . . . and contributed towards the alienation of Muslims". (Sen, 1976: 35) The alienation of the Muslims, however, was a windfall gain for the ruling class as well as for the Muslim loyalists who welcomed the partition of Bengal into Hindu and Muslim territories. The Muslim loyalists thus capitalised the opposition to partition as the opposition to the opportunities of Muslim progress offered by the British power. Consequently, they resolved to fight for their rights and opportunities by forming a separate political organization. Accordingly, a convention of the Muslim leaders of India was called at Dacca in December 1906 and at this convention, the All-India Muslim League was formed. The principal objectives of the League were:

- (a) To promote, among the Musalmans of India, feelings of loyalty to the British Government and to remove any misconception that may arise as to the intention of the government with regard to any of the measures;
- (b) to protect and advance the political rights and interests of the Mussalmans of India and to respectfully represent

their needs and aspirations to the Government. . . .

(cited in Rajput 1948: 1920).

However, despite the expressed loyalism of the League and its confidence in the British government as regards the protection and promotion of the interests of the Muslims, the British government, however, frustrated its loyalty and confidence by proclaiming the annulment of the partition of Bengal in 1911 (albeit yielding to the pressure of the opponents of partition, mainly the Hindus). The event led to changes in the League's policy toward the colonial government. Thus in the Lucknow session of the All-India Muslim League (March 1913) a new constitution was adopted which underscored the needs of discarding the old policy of loyalism and, more important, of collaborating with the Congress for the achievement of Swaraj (Self-Rule). Indeed the Congress had earlier adopted the demand for Swaraj at the instance of the Swadeshis. The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 further contributed to the collaboration of the two parties regarding the achievement of Swaraj. And leaders of the two parties concluded the Lucknow Pact (1916) and resolved to launch joint struggle for attaining India's Self-Rule. However, the collaboration of the two and their combined struggle against colonialism suffered a major set-back in the early 1920s when the countrywide Non-Cooperation Movement suddenly came to an end following the retreat of its pacifist leader, Mahatma Gandhi, who abhorred the violence brought by government repressions in the wake of the Non-Cooperation. The end of this Movement not only brought about the end of the Hindu-Muslim unity but also marked the beginning of increased communal conflicts. As noted

by Antonova:

It was in these conditions that the British, with the help of the communal organizations of these two religious groups, were able in the period 1923-1927 to provoke a whole series of Hindu-Moslem clashes and mass killings (p. 172).

Further, the scenario had completely disillusioned some of the Muslim leaders (such as M.A. Jinnah) who formerly stood for Hindu-Muslim unity and for joined struggle against colonialism. However, they were won over by forces of reaction and disunity; communal patriotism loomed large in their thoughts and actions.

By the 1930s, complete independence, instead of the former swaraj demand (self-rule within the framework of the British Empire), surfaced as the principal issue before both the Congress and the League leaders. However, as independence was approaching, the Congress pressed for a rapid transfer of power to itself while the League demanded simultaneous formation of a separate federation of Muslim states (with the Muslim majority provinces of India). The proponent of the League's view, M.A. Jinnah (once called the "ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity"), put forward a "two-nation theory" on the basis of which he argued that the Muslims of India constituted a nation vis-a-vis the Hindus. He asserted that, "by all canons of international law we are a nation. We know, united India can never be free and it is an impossibility". (Cited in Rajput, p. 73) Accordingly, in the Lahore session of the Muslim League (March 1940) a resolution (known as the Pakistan Resolution) was adopted which provided that,

. . . the areas in which the Muslim are numerically in a majority, as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute 'Independent States' in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign. (Cited in *ibid.*, p. 79).

It should be noted that at the Delhi session of the Muslim League (April 1946), the concept of 'states' was replaced by the word 'state' so that the original resolution now stood for a single independent state of Pakistan, albeit with the self-same Muslim majority zones of India. (See Sen 1976: 204-5)

It is alleged that most of the prominent League and non-League Muslim leaders of Bengal lacked a clear vision of the proposed Pakistan state, or, the position of Bengal therein. As observed by Sen:

In the All India League politics as it emerged during 1946-47 they [the Bengali Muslim leaders] had to acquiesce in Jinnah's authority over League politics and League politicians but there is no indication that they held even a private discussion with Jinnah about this matter or that they had ever tried to explain this point to Bengal Muslims as such (Sen 1976: 207-8).

However, on the eve of the decolonization of India when it became inevitable that roughly on the basis of the religious composition of the population, India was going to be partitioned into two independent states (India and Pakistan), some of the prominent leaders of Bengal came out with an improvised demand for the independent state of Bengal.⁴ But owing to the divided opinion of the

Muslim leaders in Bengal, indifference of the Muslim masses vis-a-vis the general opposition of the Hindus, and the antagonistic attitude of the central leadership of both Congress and League, the issue failed to gain ground.⁵ Thus the departing colonial rulers by overlooking the matter simply redivided Bengal to apportion it to India and Pakistan. It was according to the Mountbatten Plan, ratified by the British Parliament in August 1947 as the Independence of India Act, that the two states of India and Pakistan were created which entailed the division of Punjab as well as of Bengal. Thus the Eastern part of Bengal (with the Sylhet district of Assam) formed the numerically major Eastern Province of Pakistan, being separated from the Western part by more than twelve hundred miles of Indian territory. The creation of the two states was thus the consummation of the colonial policy of dividing the indigenous people along communal lines and thereby thwarting their development through class struggles.

Indeed, owing to the colonial state's policy of divide and rule, not only the Hindus and the Muslims became mutually alienated but, more important, the Muslims (the dominant section) became altogether alienated from their own society. The latter was manifest in the fact that although the Indian Muslims were by and large Indians, the dominant section of the Muslim community lately became eager to trace their ethno-cultural origin to the Middle and West Asian countries. (See Karim, 1976: Ch. vi) It is noteworthy that the ruling clique in Pakistan being thoroughly imbued with this ideology had from the beginning despised the East

Bengal (East Pakistan) Muslims for not "having" the similar ethno-cultural heritage. This clique had, indeed, founded its semi-colonial domain in East Pakistan by doping the masses with the promises of Islamic justice, freedom from the exploitation of the Hindu landlords and moneylenders and all out welfare in Pakistan. Consequently, in the new state the Bengali Muslims were subjected to a second term of internal colonial exploitation by the ideologies of Pakistan who, however, freed themselves from the agony of competition with the Hindus in business, industry, administration and similar activities.

THE MILITARY BUREAUCRATIC STATE OF PAKISTAN
AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT OF BANGLADESH

At independence Pakistan was a multinational country⁶ whose political destiny fell to the discretion of the bureaucracy. The Constituent Assembly comprising the members of the former (pre-independence) provincial assemblies was, indeed, responsible for administering the country during the first decade of independence. However, chronic instability of the government throughout the period (1947-58) enabled the bureaucrats to consolidate their position and to emerge as the central force in the country.⁷ In 1958 the state was taken over by the army under General Ayub Khan which marked the beginning of the bureaucratic strong state albeit through "a partnership between the Army and the Civil Service." (Syed 1960: 402-3) Although the military rule was further civilianized through the constitution of 1962, the important ministries like those of finance, defense, home affairs and important government divisions like those of economic affairs, cabinet, establishment, etc., were vested in the bureaucrats. Likewise, the state policy-making bodies such as the national economic council, the central secretariat, the planning commission, etc., as well remained the domains of the bureaucrats. (Ahmed 1980: 40)

The dominance of the bureaucracy is, however, attributed to the fact that at independence Pakistan lacked a dominant ruling class (like the bourgeoisie) to command its service, or, a sovereign parliament (like that of the post-colonial India) to maintain it as a body of public functionaries. Indeed, compared

with India, at independence Pakistan inherited a relatively organized bureaucratic structure but an extremely backward economy. This led to the development of an inverted social formation in Pakistan characterized by the over-dominance of the state superstructure. Arguing from the Marxian perspective, Alavi analysed the problematic in the following way:

The classical Marxist theory conceives of the development of the superstructures of the state in keeping with the development of the infra-structure of the economic foundations of society, namely the capitalist relations of production and the ascendant bourgeoisie. But, in post-colonial societies we find the contrary, namely that the development of the super structure of the state, has taken place in advance of the development of the indigenous bourgeoisie. The superstructure of the state, in the post-colonial state is, therefore, relatively overdeveloped i.e. in relation to the underdeveloped economic infra-structure and the domestic bourgeoisie. (Malavi 1971: 303)

In a later work, Alavi further noted that,

The post-colonial state was established by the foreign imperialist bourgeoisie and not by an ascendent native bourgeoisie. The post-colonial society thereby inherited a state characterized by an overdeveloped bureaucratic-military oligarchy which previously was an apparatus of the imperialist bourgeoisie's domination over native classes. From the inception of the new state this oligarchy has enjoyed relative autonomy and regulated the operations of indigenous classes. (Alavi 1972: 60-61)

In Pakistan, this bureaucratic-military state undertook the task of developing the backward economic infra-structure of the society. Indeed, at independence Pakistan got some one-fifth of the total population and one-fifth of the total land area of the undivided India. But out of the total 14,677 industrial units of undivided India (1945), only 1,414 (i.e. 9.6 per cent) fell to the share of Pakistan. (Bhatia 1979:28-29) In fact, the distribution of religious communities, on the basis of which India was partitioned, did not at all coincide with the regional distribution of industries which flourished before the partition. Thus, "if almost all of the world's jute grew in East Bengal, all the factories which transformed it into rope, sacks, and cloth were clustered around Calcutta in West Bengal." (Collins and Lapierre 1981: 109) About other industries as well, it is found that out of a total of 1583 units with 710,000 workers in Bengal (1945), East Bengal had only 83 units with 26,000 workers while the rest were in the West Bengal. (Mukherjee 1973b: 408) Furthermore, the industrial units which fell to the share of Pakistan (in both the eastern and western region) were far less diversified and smaller in size than those of India; basic industries like steel and engineering works were totally absent. (Vakil 1950: 247-250)

However, after independence the government of Pakistan resolved to attain rapid industrial development by giving free play to private enterprise and individual initiative. Thus the First Five Year Plan singled out private enterprise as the "agency for performing the tasks which it can competently discharge." (Government of Pakistan 1957: 4) The Second Five Year Plan, accordingly,

adopted a tax policy that aimed at facilitating the rapid accumulation of private capital. It stated that,

the tax system should take account of the needs of capital formation. It will be necessary to tolerate some initial growth in income inequalities to reach high levels of savings and investment. (Government of Pakistan 1960: 49)

The 'entrepreneurs' to whose advancement the government adopted such a beneficial policy were the immigrant (Muslim) merchants from India. Later, a Punjabi trading minority joined these merchants and together they formed the initial nucleus of the entrepreneurial class in (west) Pakistan. (Nation 1971:4) For accelerating the primary accumulation of this class the military and bureaucratic state of Pakistan had, indeed, turned East Pakistan into an internal colony. The state pursued resolute policies to enable the West Pakistani entrepreneurs to appropriate the economic surplus of East Pakistan, particularly its jute (a fibre crop used in a wide variety of textile products) in which she had nearly a world monopoly.

Before partition the jute grown in East Bengal would go to the adjacent industries in West Bengal. Even after partition a large quantity of jute would still be smuggled into West Bengal and would fetch a high profit to the jute growers and the traders. But by promulgating the Jute Ordinance of 1949 the government of Pakistan gave a free hand to the West Pakistani permit holders and 'entrepreneurs' to appropriate the profit of the jute growers and traders in East Pakistan. (Chakrabarti 1978:88) Besides jute, the West Pakistan based central government of Pakistan

adopted various other measures to divert the economic surplus from East Pakistan. And,

this involved three tasks: (1) expropriating the agrarian surplus to provide initial 'risk' capital for industry; (2) centralizing the foreign exchange earned by agriculture to pay for the necessary imports; (3) reorienting rural commodities to become raw materials for domestic manufactures. (Nations 1971: 6)

These measures had led to the achievement of spectacular industrial development in West Pakistan since the late 1950s. As noted by Lewis:

The principal tool of economic policy which affected the rate of growth of manufacturing industry was the system of exchange control and import licensing, which transferred large amounts of resources from agricultural sectors and from urban consumers to the new industrialists who were given access to foreign exchange at prices well below its opportunity cost to the economy. These industrialists were then able to sell in highly protected markets. (Lewis 1970: 161)

The differential benefit accrued to the new industrialists via exchange control is evident from the fact that on average from 1951 to 1964 the agricultural exporter received about rupees 4.25 while the manufacturer received over rupees 8.61 for one dollar of foreign currency. (Ibid.: Ch. 4) The new industrialists were also provided with the necessary foreign exchange from the central reserve to import consumers' as well as producers'

goods to meet the current consumption needs and to industrialize the country (West). The importers/manufacturers were further patronized by the government through holding down the prices of agricultural subsistence goods. Thus compulsory food procurements in the country and their sale in the city below market prices subsidized the city incomes at the expense of the peasant surplus. When the procurement was poor it was compensated by PL-480 food commodities from the US. Indeed, "these three mechanisms: adverse terms of trade, forced procurement and pressure from Nebraskan hand-outs, were orchestrated by the Centre to hold agricultural prices to a bare minimum." (Nations 1971: 8) In addition to these services to the entrepreneurial class the government also handed over industries established by itself to the members of this class. Thus industries set up by the Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation, which included sugar mills, jute textile mills, fertilizer and cement factories, and basic industries like machine tools, electrical equipment, petrochemical complexes etc., were later transferred to private owners. The latter were further patronized by the state through tax holidays, depreciation allowances, and multiple concessions. (Nations 1971:10) This is how the entrepreneurial class had developed in Pakistan and its bastion, West Pakistan, had achieved rapid economic development. However, it was the "class and colonial" power of the military and bureaucratic state which ushered in both the developments in one region at the expense of similar developments in the other. As explained by Nations: "The East Bengali worker and peasant was thus plundered by a

double articulated structure of exploitation, built on class and imperial domination" (1971: 18).

The military and bureaucratic 'ruling bloc' which epitomized the "double articulated structure of exploitation" in Pakistan drew its members almost exclusively from the numerically smaller western part of the country. Thus,

Military rule not only precluded any possibility of East Pakistan asserting its demographic strength in Parliamentary elections, but the army's growth also led to more brutal exploitation of East Pakistan. The overgrown military establishment consumed as much as 60% of the country's revenue budget. Not only did it consume resources of both regions, but East Pakistan's foreign exchange was vital to its survival. . . . Since military headquarters were located in West Pakistan and 90% of its ranks and almost 100% of its top positions were held by West Pakistanis, East Pakistan was denied a share in the local expenditure of the military and the job opportunities it created. (Ahmed 1972: 7)

Like the military, the civil bureaucracy was also an exclusive domain of the West Pakistanis. Up to the mid-1950s, 95 per cent of the civil servants at the Central Secretariat were West Pakistanis (Franda, 1971: 246-247), but subsequently the proportion of the East Pakistanis had increased remarkably. By 1968, the total number of class 1 civil servants was 450 wherein the proportions of the East and West Pakistanis were respectively, 42 per cent (Nos. 190) and 58 per cent (Nos. 260) (Ahmed, 1980: 65-66). However, from the perspective of state policies the

increase in the proportion of East Pakistanis in the civil bureaucracy was only of peripheral importance in that all the policy-making bodies of the state were dominated by the West Pakistani civil servants.⁸ By virtue of its exclusive control over the state the West Pakistani military and bureaucratic 'ruling bloc' was thus able to produce combined and uneven development in the country. The patterns of regional allocations of resources and revenue expenditure bear testimony to the power and policy of this 'ruling bloc'.

At the instance of the military and bureaucratic state 70 per cent of the foreign aid and 72 per cent of the revenue, development plan and outside plan outlays, were diverted to West Pakistan. As to the foreign aid, it is found that between 1950 and 1970 Pakistan received a total of \$6,499,000,000 under various heads of foreign assistance. Of this only \$1,941,000,000, or about 30 per cent of the total, were assigned to East Pakistan while the rest fell to the share of West Pakistan.⁹ Similarly, almost three-fourths of the total revenue, development-plan and outside-plan expenditures which, between 1950 and 1970 amounted to Rupees 158,060,000,000, were allotted to West Pakistan. East Pakistan's shares of revenue, development-plan, and outside-plan outlays were respectively 23 per cent, 34 per cent and 7 per cent.¹⁰ This differential allocation of resources resulted in the different rates of development of the two parts of the country. This is revealed in the structure of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of the two regions. At independence (1947) both regions showed the preponderance of agriculture in their GDP, but in two

decades (1949-50 to 1969-70) West Pakistan reduced the sectoral share of agriculture from 55 per cent to 39 per cent and increased that of industry from 9 per cent to 16 per cent. As to the latter, more remarkable is her achievement in large-scale industries which grew from 2 per cent to 13 per cent. Similarly, the service sector including banking and insurance among others, expanded from 36 per cent to 45 per cent in West Pakistan. Compared to the West, agriculture remained the main sector in the composition of East Pakistan's GDP - 53 per cent in 1969-70 as against 65 per cent in 1949-50. Although the sectoral share of industry marked an increase from 3 per cent to about 9 per cent of the GDP the increase of large industries was quite negligible. Furthermore, the new industries which were set up in East Pakistan mostly belonged to the West Pakistani owners. The expansion of the service sector in East Pakistan from 31 per cent in 1949-50 to about 40 per cent in 1969-70 should also be understood as a ramification of the dominance of the western part on the economy of the country as a whole.¹¹ And owing to this dominance the western ruling bloc was able to transfer Rupees 31,120 million's worth of resources from the eastern part between 1949-50 and 1968-69. (Government of Pakistan, 1970, vol. 1: 84-86)

However, the state's mediation in the transfer of resources as well as the patronization of a class of private entrepreneurs in the West led to the conspicuous concentration of wealth in the hands of a small cluster of families based in West Pakistan. Thus the then chief economist of Pakistan's Planning Commission revealed that:

twenty families controlled 80 per cent of Pakistan's banking, 97 per cent of its insurance and 66 per cent of all the industrial capital. Of the remaining 34 per cent of Industrial capital, more than half was controlled by foreign firms. (Bhatia 1979: 123)

This enormous concentration of wealth augmented the economic power of the Pakistani bourgeoisie, but it was not combined with the parallel political power which remained as the prerogative of the ruling military and bureaucratic apparatus of the state. As summarized by Nations:

. . . the bureaucratic state relied on the trading communities as agents of its industrialization programme and and provided them with the privileges and protection necessary for accumulation. . . . Thus however wealthy Pakistani businessmen became, their direct political power was always truncated: for rather than an independent capitalist class, government patronage produced a bourgeoisie tied to the pre-existent structures of the military brass and bureaucracy. . . . The comparative 'social' weakness of the West Pakistani business has persisted; but today it is compensated by its economic power within the country (1971: 5).

It is noted that the economic progress of the (West Pakistani) bourgeoisie had occurred without any remarkable impact on the standard of life of the working masses of West Pakistan. But nevertheless, it progressively widened the gap in the material conditions of life of the people of eastern and western parts

of the country itself. Thus, for example, "in 1949-50 per capita income in West Pakistan was 17 per cent higher than in the East. This difference increased to 32 per cent by 1959-60 and to 60 per cent by 1969-70." (Griffin and Khan 1972:3)

STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE

The national question in East Pakistan had, indeed, surfaced immediately after the establishment of Pakistan in 1947. It emerged in response to Governor-General M.A. Jinnah's proclamation of Urdu as the only state language of Pakistan in early 1948. It implied the elimination of Bengali language (spoken by 55 per cent of the people of Pakistan) as well as that of the national identity of the people of East Pakistan as a whole. However, the people of East Pakistan defied this move and thereby put Jinnah's so-called "two-nation theory" for Pakistan, to a severe test in Pakistan itself. Indeed, the popular resistance against the cultural onslaught in East Pakistan finally culminated in what is called the Language Movement of 1952. The context and the implications of the historic Language Movement have been summarized as follows:

The main struggle of the Language Movement was directed against the West Pakistan-based comprador capital and bureaucracy. But, since anti-imperialist and anti-feudal resistances were not combined with this struggle the democratic base of the whole movement was rather weak. . . . In spite of that the Language Movement of 1952 is of profound historic significance. It is through this Movement that the trust of the

people in Pakistan as an Islamic state was first shattered. . . . Indeed, the consciousness and resistance aroused by the Language Movement were reflected in the general election of 1954.¹² The elimination of the Muslim League through this election was, in turn, a historical prelude to the termination of Pakistan's rule over East Bengal in 1971. (Omar 1980: 75)

In an earlier writing, Omar succinctly observed that, "the struggle of the Bengali Muslims for their language and culture since 1947 has, indeed, been a struggle for returning to their homeland." (1969: 11) But the 'return' was deliberately obstructed by the ruling bloc of (West) Pakistan which was determined to rule East Pakistan as an internal colony. This bloc always veiled its colonial exploitation of East Pakistan with the mantle of Islam and suppressed the demands of the people for their democratic rights or economic shares by frequently describing them to be impaired by 'divisive provincialism', 'anti-Islamic provocations', etc. However, these repressions gradually aroused the anti-colonial and national consciousness of the people and finally culminated in the political demand of full regional autonomy of East Pakistan.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the leader of the Awami League (AL), launched a six-point programme in early 1966 precisely outlining the nature of the autonomy of East Pakistan.¹³ It immediately won the support of the large section of the masses and triggered a province-wide movement. However, the ruling bloc at the Centre branded the six-point programme as a separatist design and at once took to repressive measures. But in proportion as the

repressions increased, the movement became more widespread and intensified. The Bengali students having launched their eleven-point demands were virtually acting as the militant vanguards of the movement.¹⁴ Nevertheless, in early 1968 a good number of Bengalis (from cross-section of services and professions) including Sheik Mujibur Rahman, were arrested on account of their alleged involvement in a secessionist plot (the Agartala Conspiracy). But before their trial in the martial-law court was finished, mass upsurge in both the provinces of Pakistan brought an end to the decade-long dictatorial regime of General Ayub Khan who, however, abdicated power to General Yahya Khan in March 1969. The new General promised early restoration of democracy and, accordingly, announced that elections would be held in December 1970. The elections to the National and Provincial Assemblies were, indeed, held on December 7, 1970. The Awami League (AL), led by Shiek Mujibur Rahman, won almost a total victory in these elections (first ever held in Pakistan on the basis of universal adult franchise). It captured 167 seats out of a total 313 at the National Assembly, and 298 seats out of a total 310 at the East Pakistan Provincial Assembly. (Government of India 1971, vol. 1: 130) Thus the AL won 53.4 and 96.1 per cent of seats respectively at the National and Provincial (East Pakistan) Assemblies. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) based in West Pakistan and led by Z.A. Bhutto, however, emerged as the major opposition party at the National Assembly by capturing 88 seats (28.1 per cent).

But soon after the elections, debates and dubieties clouded the summoning of the National Assembly into session and the

transfer of power to the victorious AL. On the one hand, Z.A. Bhutto complicated the process by demanding the unification of the five units of West Pakistan into one province and thereby claiming to be appointed as its prime minister. It is observed that Bhutto's claim was instigated by the fact that ". . . he was sitting over two powerful provinces, Punjab and Sind, one being the main recruiting ground for the army and the other having concentration of wealth." (Gupta 1974: 230) On the other hand, the military regime delayed the transfer of power to the AL as the latter declined to comply with the provisions of the pre-election Legal Framework Order (LFO).¹⁵ However, a series of dialogues were held in Dhaka between Sheikh Mujib, Z.A. Bhutto and General Yahya Khan to evolve a unanimous formula for the transfer of power. But neither did Mujib make any concessions on the six-point programme which constituted his election manifesto and now, a public mandate, nor did the other parties accept his mandate unamended. While negotiations were still going on, violent confrontations between the students and workers and the armed forces became a regular phenomenon. West Pakistani troops were being increasingly flown in and deployed all over East Pakistan. The military preparations as well as actions were indicative of provoking the AL for "a unilateral declaration of independence" of East Pakistan, which would enable General Yahya to go for total military action and avoid the transfer of power to any civilian government. Indeed, there was intense pressure on the AL leadership for such a declaration of independence. (Jahan, 1980: 47) The Dacca University students were foremost in pressing for inde-

pendence and the flag of Bangladesh, designed by the students Action Committee (SAC), had fluttered on nearly every house-top in East Pakistan by the third week of March 1971. In the background of this development, the Mujib-Yahya talks suddenly ceased, while Yahya Khan abruptly left Dhaka on the night of March 25. He, however, left orders with the junta of generals in Dhaka to launch Operation Genocide the same night. Indeed, "Yahya was using the talks as a cover for reinforcements to his troops as much as for an opportunity to alienate Mujib from potential support in the West." Government of India 1971: 277-79)

On the eve of the military crackdown Sheikh Mujib was arrested and flown to West Pakistan while most of his colleagues had gone underground. However, immediately after the crackdown, Bengali members of the armed forces revolted in several places of the country. On March 27, in a radio broadcast from Chittagong a Bengali officer, Major Ziaur Rahman (later Major General and President of Bangladesh), proclaimed the independence of Bangladesh on behalf of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. (Bhuiyan 1972: 29)

Thus what was demanded by the octogenarian peasant leader, Mowlana Bhashani, before the December election¹⁶ was now, ". . . forced upon the people of East Pakistan by the savage and atrocious action of the West Pakistani army government." (Government of India 1971:15)

The AL leaders who escaped arrest formed an underground cabinet of independent Bangladesh with Tajuddin Ahmed as the prime minister. It took the oath of office in early April and proclaimed the independence of Bangladesh, effective from March 26, 1971. The cabinet then moved into India where it was received by

the Indian authority, the exiled government organized the Mukti Bahini (freedom fighters) to liberate Bangladesh from the occupation of the Pakistani forces. The defectors from the Pakistani forces constituted the regular force of the Mukti Bahini while the students and youths who fled to India with millions of others, constituted its guerrilla contingents. The guerrilla force numbered about 250,000 and were selected from the AL followings. They were trained in the Indian forces' camps before being sent to operate inside Bangladesh. Indeed,

The Indian government's decision to help the Bangladesh liberation struggle was conditional on its being led by the Awami League, whose general ideological position was similar to that of India's ruling Congress Party.

(Maniruzzaman 1980: 112)

In order to ensure the loyalty of the guerrillas to Sheikh Mujib and the AL and to supervise their activities, a special force called the Mujib Bahini, was also formed. Thus,

. . . college and university students belonging exclusively to the students' League [students' front of the AL] were recruited to the Mujib Bahini from youth reception camps throughout 1971, until total strength was reported to have reached 7,000-8,000 in November. (Maniruzzaman 1980: 115)

It is thus evident that the whole leadership of the liberation struggle was concentrated in the AL and its forces. The AL's election victory as well as its parallel ideological position with ruling Congress Party of India had accorded the due legitimacy to the AL leadership.¹⁷

It should be noted that besides the partisan forces (i.e., forces recruited from the followings of parties and factions) the liberation struggle also gave birth to non-partisan guerrilla forces.¹⁸ These forces greatly eroded the aggressive spirit of the Pakistani army and its local collaborators within a relatively short period of time. Indeed, by October 1971, the guerrillas were 'swimming like fish in the sea of their people' in the towns as well as in the villages. And although these guerrillas were becoming increasingly radicalized by their existence and actions, the absence of a unified central command with radical ideology as well as the presence of the AL and the Indian forces behind the border greatly retarded their prospect of ultimately emerging as an independent force. Indeed, the prospect was altogether doomed by the out-break of the full-scale war between India and Pakistan on December 3, 1971. Given the geo-physical as well as the political situations, in this war, a humiliating defeat of Pakistan was just inevitable. And it befell her in only eleven days: on December 16, 1971 the Commander, Eastern Command of Pakistan, General Niazi, signed the instrument of surrender in Dhaka and presented it to General Aurora, "GOC in Chief of the Indian and Bangladesh Forces in the Eastern Theatre". (Government of India, N.D. vol. 11: 549) The surrender of the Pakistani army marked the end of the Indo-Pak war as well as the birth of Bangladesh as an independent state.

The birth of Bangladesh was, indeed, hastened through the midwifery or intervention of India. Such intervention had a

democratic or humanitarian as well as a political dimension. The former impelled India to open its borders to the Bangladeshi refugees who fled for their lives after the March (1971) massacre perpetrated by the Pakistani army. About one million refugees ultimately took shelter in India, which according to the Indian prime minister, Indira Gandhi, posed ". . . a real threat to Indian democracy and Indian stability". (Mullick 1972: 55) Consequently, ". . . the Indian government had no alternative but to see that Bangladesh was liberated". (Maniruzzaman 1980: 124) Politically, the Indian intervention became necessary for thwarting the increased domination of the struggle inside Bangladesh by the guerrilla units:

. . . there were predictions - both in the Indian and Western press - that if the war continued for long, the leadership of the liberation struggle would pass from the centrist Awami League to more radical groups in Bangladesh. (Maniruzzman 1980: 152)

India's ruling Congress Party could hardly afford to see a protracted liberation war on its sensitive eastern border, let alone a revolutionary government in power there. It therefore intervened in due time to consummate what has been described as "international counter-revolution". Thus it is noted that,

India's intervention in 1971 in the former East Pakistan essentially interrupted a revolutionary process which threatened to turn the struggle for Bangladesh's independence into a true people's war. (Monthly Review 1975: 27)

The interruption of the "revolutionary process" which India had "carried out in the classic fashion of a pre-emptive counter-revolution" was, however, induced by specific economic strategic, political and similar advantages to herself.¹⁹

NOTES

1. The immediate cause that triggered the uprising was the compulsory biting of beef fat and lard smeared cartridges for the Enfield rifles. Both Hindu and Muslim sepoys considered beef fat and lard as strictly forbidden. When they were subjected to punishments for disobeying the sacrilegious order of the British officers to use the cartridges they rose in armed revolt. Although the revolt spread from Bengal to all the major garrisons in India, ultimately it succumbed to its own weaknesses. Heterogeneity of the soldiers, spontaneity of the uprising lacking a unified command, indifference of the nascent bourgeoisie about the causes of the sepoys, constituted some of these weaknesses. More important: "Although the main fighting force had consisted of peasants and artisans, it had been led by the feudal nobility. These leaders however had shown themselves to be incapable of leading the national liberation struggle. . . . When the British government made concessions to the feudal lords, the latter dissociated themselves from the uprising. . . . Finally the insurgents did not come forward with clear goals. They had called for a return to the independent India of the Mughal empire, although in the middle of the nineteenth century a return to feudal society was quite unreal." (Autonova et al. 1978:76)

2. It is noteworthy that the Mughal rulers from Akbar to Shah Jahan (1556-1658) had endeavoured "either to do away with the diversity of religion and gather all the subjects round one faith or assume a liberal attitude to different faiths". Such endeavours,

indeed, were preceded by the changing socio-economic and spiritual values (e.g., the Bhakti Movement) of the artisans and trading castes and communities which were looked upon favourably by the ruling class. In this respect Mukherjee noted that, ". . . one essential social demand could have been to create conditions for further promotion of industry and trade by bringing the artisans and traders belonging to different religions under one system or under equal control irrespective of their diversity of faith, so that there could be no hindrance put before their productive and commercial pursuits. . . . And it is of interest to note here that this was a demand which had the possibility of receiving active support from the Mughal rulers, from Akbar to Shah Jahan. For, as facts bear out, trade was a profession in which the Mughal Government, some of its officers, and even the Great Mughals themselves were no less interested than the merchants in the empire". (1973a: 203) However, during the reign of Emperor Aurangzeb (1658-1707), the tradition of religious liberalism was broken. Indeed, ". . . he reversed the policy laid down by Akbar and for fifty years toiled unceasingly to impose upon all, Hindu and Moslem alike, conformity to the religious principles of Islam, as interpreted by himself and the Moslem sect of the Sunnis to which he belonged. (Mukherjee 1973a: 243) At the time of Aurangzeb's death in 1707, the Mughal power was already in decay and subsequent decades witnessed the rapid disintegration of the Mughal state and its system until the English East India Company seized power in 1757 in Bengal.

3. The introduction of English as the language of all public business and as the medium of education greatly facilitated the

emergence of this subservient middle class. Indeed, the first Governor-General of India, Lord William Bentinck, wrote to the Committee of Public Instruction that: ". . . it is the wish and admitted policy of the British Government to render its own language gradually and eventually the language of public business throughout the country. . . ." And the Chairman of the Education Committee, Lord Macaulay himself, argued in his Minute of 1835 that: "We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, a class of persons Indian in blood and colour but English in tastes, in opinions, morals and intellect". (Quoted by Bottomore 1964: 247-48n)

4. Sarat Bose (leader of Congress Bose Group) and Abul Hashim (Secretary, Muslim League) initiated the move for an independent Bengal in early 1947. However, in the backdrop of severe communal riots of 1946 it was hard to convince the Hindu leaders that an undivided and independent state of Bengal would guarantee peace and progress for all. On the other hand, many League leaders opposed both the idea of partition and the move for an independent Bengal; they wanted Bengal to form an autonomous unit of the state of Pakistan. (It may be noted that in 1941, the Bengal population was composed of 54.7 per cent Muslims, 29.3 per cent Hindus, and 16 per cent of other denominations.) However, the proponents of the independent state of Bengal had evolved a draft plan in May 1947 and it was approved by H.S. Suhrawardy, Fazlur Rahman, Mohammad Ali, Abul Hashim, Sarat Bose, Kiran Shankar Roy, Satya Ranjan Bakshi. (Sen, 1976: Ch. VII) The concrete proposals

of the plan were as follows: "1. Bengal would be a Socialist, Independent, Sovereign state. . . . 2. Members of the Bengal Legislature would be elected on the basis of adult franchise and joint electorate. 3. . . . A new Council of Ministers would take . . . place as soon as the British Government would accept the plan of sovereign Bengal. In the new Council of Ministers, barring the post of the Prime Minister, Muslims and Hindus (including the Scheduled Castes) would have an equal number of members. The Prime Minister would be a Muslim but the Home Minister would be a Hindu. 4. Muslims and Hindus (including the Scheduled Castes) would have equal representation in the services under provisional Government. . . ." (Chakrabarti 1978: 25-26)

5. Sen enumerated the reasons as to why "the ill-fated move could not develop into a well-organized movement" as follows: "first, total opposition by the Congress leaders, second, riots and third, the gap between the declared objectives and profession of the League leaders and their supporters." (1976:243)

6. The multinational nature of Pakistan is evident from the following Table showing the linguistic distribution of the population (1951):

	Population (millions)	Language spoken (per cent)			
		Bengali	Punjabi	Urdu*	Others
Pakistan	75.8	54.6	28.4	7.2	9.8
East Pakistan	42.1	98.0	-	1.1	1.3
West Pakistan	33.7	-	63.7	14.7	21.6

*It is noted in the census report that Urdu and Hindi speaking people were amalgamated into a common linguistic group.

Source: Government of Pakistan 1951 Vol. 1: Table 1 and statement 4-B.

7. The political instability of Pakistan after independence can be grasped from the changes of seven prime ministers between 1947 and 1958: Liaquat Ali Khan: August 1947 - October 1951; Khwaja Nazimuddin: October 1951 - April 1953; Mohammad Ali: April 1953 - August 1955; Choudhury Mohammad Ali: August 1955 - September 1956; H.S. Surawardy: September 1956 - October 1957; L.L. Chaundrigar: October 1957 - December 1957; and Malik Feroz Khan Noon: December 1957 - October 1958.

8. The dominance of the state policies by the West Pakistani bureaucrats was maintained through their numerical preponderance in the important Divisions of the central government. The distribution of East and West Pakistani bureaucrats in those Divisions is shown in the following Table:

Divisions	East Pakistanis		West Pakistanis	
	Number	per cent	Number	per cent
A. Economic Affairs, Commerce, Establishment and Planning	68	32.2	137	66.8
B. Finance, Industries, Information and Broadcasting, Labour and Social Welfare	28	27.2	75	72.8
C. Agriculture and Cabinet	7	13.0	47	87.0
D. Defense	4	10.0	35	90.0

Source: Ahmed 1980: 67 (adapted from Table 2.5).

9. The distribution of foreign aid in the two regions is shown in the following Table:

Foreign Economic Assistance in Pakistan, 1950-70
(in millions of U.S. dollars)

Type	East Pakistan	West Pakistan	Centre*	Total
Project Loan	417	608	108	1133
Non-Project Loan	408	673	53	1134
PL-480 Food	445	791	5	1241
Guaranteed Loan	352	623	11	986
Project Grants and Technical Assistance	56	140	200	396
Total	1941	4166	392	6499
Per cent of Total	29.9	64.1	6.0	100.0

*Centre allocations imply allocations for West Pakistan for Centre was located in West Pakistan.

Source: Government of Pakistan 1970, vol. 1: 279.

10. The patterns of expenditures in the two regions are shown in the following Table:

Revenue and Development Expenditures in Pakistan,
1950-1970 (Total expenditures, in millions rupees)

Region	Revenue Expenditure	Development Plan Expenditure	Outside Plan Development Expenditure	Total
East Pakistan	15,070 (22.7)	29,510 (34.5)	450 (7.3)	45,030 (28.5)
West Pakistan	51,250 (77.3)	56,070 (65.5)	5,710 (92.7)	113,030 (71.5)
Total	66,320	85,580	6,160	158,050

Note: Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage.

Source: Government of Pakistan 1970, vol. 1: 25.

11. The changes in the structure of GDP of the two regions over two decades are shown in the following table:

Structure of Gross Domestic Product of East and West Pakistan, 1949-50 and 1969-70 (Percentage)

Sector	1949-50			1969-70		
	East Pakistan	West Pakistan	Pakistan	East Pakistan	West Pakistan	Pakistan
Agriculture	65.4	54.6	60.0	53.3	39.3	46.3
Manufacturing	3.0	8.8	5.8	7.8	15.6	11.7
a) Large-scale	.6	2.2	1.4	3.6	13.4	8.5
b) Small-scale	2.4	6.4	4.4	4.2	2.2	3.2
Services	31.6	36.6	34.2	38.9	45.1	42.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Alamgir and Barlage 1974, No. 1: 170-71.

12. After the independence of Pakistan in 1947, the first election of the East Bengal Provincial Assembly was held in 1954. In this election the United Front (of the Krishak Sramik Party led by A.K. Fazlul Huq, and the Awami Muslim League led by Maulana Bhashani) completely routed the ruling Muslim League. The Front won 218 seats in a House of 310. The position of others were: Muslim League - 9; and Khilafat-e-Rabbani Party - 1. However, when the Front formed the (provincial) government with A.K. Fazlul Huq as its Prime Minister, it faced a very hostile central government

seemingly determined to wreck it abinitio. Indeed, Huq's ministry was formed on April 3, 1954 and in two weeks it was dissolved by the central government on the pretexts of possible 'communist take-over' and/or 'secessionist plot' in East Bengal. To combat these alleged threats to the 'national integrity' of Pakistan, the Centre imposed governor's rule in East Pakistan. And the appointment of General Iskander Mirza as the governor of East Bengal, it may be noted, was immediately followed by a Mutual Security Pact between Pakistan and the United States, signed on May 19, 1954. (Gupta 1974: 52-58)

13. The six-point programme was issued by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as President of the Awami League on March 23, 1966. Briefly, the points were: "1. Establishment of a constitution that will provide for a Federation of Pakistan on the basis of the Lahore Resolution, and a Parliamentary form of Government with supremacy of Legislature directly elected on the basis of Universal adult franchise. 2. Federal Government shall deal with only two subjects, viz: Defence and Foreign Affairs, and all other residuary subjects shall vest in the Federating states. 3. There shall be either two separate but freely convertible currencies for the two wings, or one currency for the whole country provided that effective constitutional provisions were made to stop the flight of capital from East to West Pakistan. There shall be separate banking reserves and a separate fiscal and monetary policy for East Pakistan. 4. The power of taxation and revenue collection shall vest in the federating units and the Federal Centre will have no such power. The Federation will have a share in the state taxes

for meeting their required expenditure. The Consolidated Federal Fund shall come out of a levy of certain percentage of all state taxes. 5. As to foreign trade: a) there shall be two separate accounts for foreign exchange earnings of the two wings, b) earnings of East Pakistan shall be under the control of East Pakistan and the same for West Pakistan, c) foreign exchange requirement of the Federal Government shall be met by the two wings either equally or in a ratio to be fixed, d) indigenous products shall move free of duty between two wings, e) the Constitution shall empower the unit Governments to establish trade and commercial relations with, set up trade missions in and enter into agreements with foreign countries. 6. Setting up of a militia or a para-military force for East Pakistan." (Government of India 1971, vol. 1: 24-30)

14. The student parties in East Pakistan had formed a united platform called the Students Action Committee (SAC) and jointly launched an eleven-point programme which broadly included the six-point programme of the AL as well as some other demands. The SAC in its eleven-point programme had, indeed, adopted the basic programmes of nearly all the major political parties and groups in East Pakistan and thereby it succeeded in broadly uniting the diversified political forces and the followings in a common struggle for the regional autonomy of the province as well as the end of the military-bureaucratic rule.

15. The December elections were, indeed, held under the provisions of the LFO (the President's Order No. 2 of 1970). The Order actually precluded the possibility of framing any new

constitution on the basis of the AL's six-point programme.

(Government of India 1971, vol. 1: 49-65) It may be noted here that the major left-oriented parties in East Pakistan had boycotted the December election in protest of the LFO which imposed so many restrictions on the election and the sovereignty of the future parliament. However, the AL, presumably being confident of its victory, and of popular resistance against official foul play with the transfer of power, went to the polls accepting the LFO.

16. Moulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani is the widely recognized leader of the peasant masses of Bengal. However, he has also been the central figure among the democratic and nationalist leaders of the country for long. In 1957, Bhashani forced a split in the then Awami League on the issue of Pakistan's foreign alignments, particularly its entry into the US-sponsored military pacts. In the same year he founded the National Awami Party (NAP) with the left-oriented forces of the Awami League. Since the Communist Party (Communist Party of East Pakistan) and its activities were banned in early 1950s, the Party itself and its front organizations (e.g., East Pakistan Mazdoor Federation, East Pakistan Peasant Association, etc.), conducted their mass works from within Bhashan's NAP. However, the Sino-Soviet split in the international Communist Movement (1963) led to a split in the NAP itself (1965) on which Bhashani emerged as the leader of the pro-China faction (called NAP-Bhashani) and Muzaffar Ahmed emerged as that of the pro-Soviet faction (called NAP-Muzaffar) of the NAP. The former was large but subsequently became divided into factions while the latter was small but remained unified. However, after the cyclone of

November 12, 1970 which hit the coastal belts of East Pakistan, "leaving approximately half a million people dead and another three million marooned", Bhashani severely charged the West Pakistani ruling bloc for neglecting to take due steps before (since the forecast was there) or after the catastrophe. Thus after visiting the cyclone-hit areas he addressed a mammoth public meeting in Chittagong where he categorically denounced Pakistan and called for the establishment of 'azad purba Bangla' (independent East Bengal). On December 4, he addressed a similar public meeting in Dhaka and reiterated the same demand. (The Pakistan Observer, Dacca, December 6, 1970)

17. Indeed, the nature of the Communist Movement (i.e., the actions of various leftist parties) itself and its position on the national question in East Pakistan considerably facilitated the rise of the AL to a position of absolute dominance. Compared with the AL led by Sheikh Mujib, the Communist Movement has been progressing through successive splits and, more important, it almost entirely floundered on the national question which was singularly forged ahead by the AL (albeit in terms of regional autonomy). However, when the struggle for national independence was 'forced upon the people' and the AL assumed its leadership, the Communist Movement generally accepted that leadership fait accompli. The pro-Soviet parties like the East Pakistan Communist Party and the NAP-Muzaffar tagged themselves with the AL and entirely moved into India. The leader of the pro-China NAP, Moulana Bhashani who demanded independence before the December election, also moved into India and appealed to the world leaders

to help the liberation struggle and recognize Bangladesh. The leaders of other pro-China parties, viz., Coordination Committee of East Bengal Communist Revolutionaries, East-Bengal Communist Party (Daben-Bashar group), NAP-Bhashani, Bangladesher Communist Party,, East Pakistan Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist, Amal-Nazrul group) etc., as well moved into India and extended their allegiance to the exiled AL government. But these parties also had formed their Coordination Committee of Bangladesh Liberation Struggle whose guerrilla units independently (from Mukti/Mujib Bahini) fought against the Pakistani army inside Bangladesh. However, two other militant pro-China parties, Communist Party of East Pakistan (Matin-Alauddin-Huq-Toaha group) and East Bengal Workers Movement (later, Purba Banglar Sorbohara Party) waged a combined national and class war inside Bangladesh. These groups totally denounced the AL government in exile and its leadership under the Indo-Soviet hegemony (Ahmed 1980: 133-34; Rono, 1982: 149-50).

18. One of such non-partisan forces was the Kader Bahini organized in the Tangail district by Kader Siddiqui. It emerged as the largest and most formidable guerrilla unit during the liberation struggle. It was "an organized force of some 17,000 young men. . . . In addition, the auxiliary volunteer force of the Kader Bahini numbered over 72,500, consisting mostly of rural school students. The majority of the 95 company commanders of the Kader Bahini were college students in the age-group 20-24." (Maniruzzaman 1980: 117) Kader Siddiqui equipped his unit wholly by seizing the arms of the regular Pakistani forces. Thus, by attacking an arms-loaded ship

members of his Bahini managed to ". . . capture Chinese arms valued at Rs. 21 crores [rupees 210 million]. Arms and ammunition captured had to be taken away in 103 boats." (Gupta 1974: 377)

19. Ahmad noted that: "Economically, India uses Bangladesh as much as Pakistan used to: for cheap raw materials, mainly jute, and as a protected market for manufactured goods. In addition, Bangladesh can also absorb part of the surplus production of India's expanding capital goods industry and provide valuable jobs for unemployed Indian technocrats. Strategically, Bangladesh serves as a buffer between India itself and the spreading Southeast Asian revolution. . . . A dependent Bangladesh also strengthens Indian control over the Bay of Bengal and the trade routes of the eastern Indian Ocean. . . . Politically, a reliable Bangladesh offers numerous advantages, not the least being the encirclement of the Bengali Communist movement as a whole. . . . The choice for India was either to allow the growth of a revolutionary movement in a very populous region on its immediate borders, or to install a protectorate in Bangladesh under the internal hegemony of a comprador petty bourgeoisie." (1975:37).

III CLASS CHARACTER OF THE BANGLADESH

STATE AT INDEPENDENCE

PETTY BOURGEOIS PARTY IN POWER

In the light of the analysis in the foregoing chapter it may be maintained that the emergence of Bangladesh as a national state was not the outcome of movement for "national self-determination" as was the case with the early European national states which emerged in the wake of the capitalist transformation of the European society.¹ Bangladesh, was an outcome of the movements for "freedom from national oppression",² which provoked the most "wrathful, fanatical rebellion" of nearly all classes and strata of the society. Although the Bengalis had to sustain the longest colonial domination in British India, in the sub-colonial set-up of Pakistan this domination was metamorphosed into total national oppression in that it encompassed the suppression of language, culture and "intellectual life in general" as well as the political and economic domination. The question of freedom from this domination and national oppression had emerged quite early and became more pressing with the magnitude of oppression. The AL by resolutely steering the question along the line of regional autonomy, finally won the decisive victory in the election of December 1970 and became the ruling party in Bangladesh at its independence (albeit telescoped through the Indian intervention) in 1971.

The AL government, led by Sheikh Mujib, promptly framed the constitution of the country, adopting the "high ideals of nationalism, socialism, democracy and secularism" as the fundamental principles of the state policy. (Government of Bangladesh 1972a: 10) It pledged that: "It shall be the fundamental aim of the State to realize through the democratic process a socialist society, free from exploitation. . . ." (Ibid.) The constitution at once provided for the citizens' "right to acquire, hold, transfer or otherwise dispose of property" and, "for the acquisition, nationalization or requisition with or without compensation" of such property. (Ibid. 22) In this way, the AL constitutionally cloaked itself in petty bourgeois socialism. Indeed, the AL structurally enclashed ". . . an amorphous petty bourgeoisie of traders, functionaries, professionals, intellectuals and rural notables, who float uneasily above the swelling peasant sea below them." (Nations 1971: 6) Thus its social root lay both in the "traditional petty bourgeoisie" and the "new petty bourgeoisie".³ Nevertheless, the AL has often been characterized as a party of the bourgeoisie. Thus it is argued that,

It always had powerful elements of a bourgeoisie whose independent development had been woefully obstructed; it has increasingly incorporated within itself elements from all sections of the Bangladesh ruling class. . . . By the middle 1960s, the party had solid connections with the Indian bourgeoisie and international reaction: the United States, which sponsored the military regime in Pakistan, always considered the Awami League as its

"second option". . . . By 1972, when Mujib formally took over the government of Bangladesh, the Awami League was truly the party of the Bangladesh ruling class as a whole, with the kulaks, the traders, the bureaucrats, the armed units, the technocrats, the opportunists solidly behind it, and revisionist Communists allied with it. (Ahmad, 1975: 41-42)

The attribution of bourgeois class character to the AL is entirely unfounded in that an indigenous independent bourgeoisie, in the then East Pakistan, was non-existent. Neither the components of the so-called "Bangladesh ruling class as a whole" were bourgeoisie, they were only the components of the 'new petty bourgeoisie' and not all of them were "solidly behind" the AL itself. Indeed, it was the non-Bengalis from the dominant West Pakistan who constituted the "bourgeoisie" of the then East Pakistan and, it should be noted, that by challenging the exploitations of this bourgeoisie the AL led by Sheikh Mujib had gradually established its political influence which proved so decisive on the eve of the independence of Bangladesh. On the eve of independence non-Bengali business houses controlled 47 per cent of the total fixed assets and 72 per cent of the total private industrial assets (excluding the public sector) in East Pakistan. Among the largest importing firms, Bengali Muslims accounted for only 7 per cent while the rest lay with the non-Bengalis. The latter were similarly dominant in banking, insurance, inland water transport, foreign trade and constructions. (Sobhan and Ahmad 1980: 57)

However, during the reign of General Ayub Khan a class of rural rich was brought into being through the Basic Democracies system and the Public Works Programmes⁴. The surplus farmers who occupied elected positions as Basic Democrats were generously supplied with and given control over the Works Programme funds and the agricultural inputs. By "utilizing" these resources, the former enriched themselves enormously and propped up the Ayub regime in rural East Pakistan. (Sobhan 1968: Ch. 6) At this time, the state financing agencies also came forward to patronize the growth of a Bengali entrepreneurial class in the urban areas. Thus the Industrial Development Bank of Pakistan (IDBP) and the Pakistan Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation (PICIC) financed the establishment of 272 industrial units while the East Pakistan Small Industries Corporation (EPSIC) financed that of another 1008 manufacturing enterprises under Bengali ownership. The median figure of state loan granted to all these establishments (except in jute and textiles) averaged below rupees 150,000 which implies that the bulk of the nascent industrial bourgeoisie were still in the category of small to medium entrepreneurs. (Sobhan and Ahmad 1980: 64-65) However, at independence there were about 81 Bengali 'capitalists' (with fixed assets worth over taka 1.5 millions) who could be classified as the upper category of indigenous capitalists. This category could be enlarged with the inclusion of 16 big jute exporting firms (each exporting over 20,000 bales of jute per year), 12 firms in Inland Water Transport (each having a total cargo capacity of over 6,000 tons), 12 insurance companies and 1 bank owner.

A parallel category of Bengali 'capitalists' consisted of the indentors who were drawn since the middle 1960s, from the Bengali ex-civil servants, professionals, business classes, etc. (Sobhan and Ahmad 1980: 65-66) These categories of the Bengali 'bourgeoisie' were, however, still qualitatively inferior to their West Pakistani counterparts and were therefore altogether dependent on, or subservient to the ruling bloc of the West. Indeed,

. . . the enterprising, upward mobile entrepreneur was a far cry from the class of surplus extractors, social failures and opportunists who constituted the reservoir from which the Bengali capitalist class emerged. (Sobhan and Ahmad 1980:67)

Further, the Bengali bourgeoisie was doubly comprador in its constitution in that its existence and advancement were contingent upon West Pakistani capital which, in turn, was tied to the capital of Western metropolitan countries.⁵

It is thus obvious that the Bengali bourgeoisie could not yet aspire to establish its independent base in East Pakistan by freeing the latter from the domination of the West and thereby champion the cause of the "national self-determination" of the Bengalis at large. Indeed, the AL instead of being a party of this bourgeoisie, was a threat to its continual progress. And the threat was aggravated before the December election when the AL proposed to nationalise the commanding heights of the economy, promote the workers' rights etc., in its election manifesto. However, in view of the AL's popularity and mounting power, at

this time many Bengali bourgeois "... sought to infiltrate the Awami League and to identify the interests of the leadership with their own class aspirations." (Sobhan and Ahmad 1980: 73) And, no wonder, many non-Bengali bourgeois (in East Pakistan), too, sought to court the favour of the AL by generously contributing to its party fund (Ibid. 575n). Thus, it follows that owing to the structural position (i.e., the weaknesses and interests) of the nascent Bengali bourgeoisie, the Bangladesh state at its inception had little bourgeois backing. And after assuming power, the AL through its state policies as well proved that as a petty bourgeois party it did not serve the bourgeoisie even if it was and is Bengali.

ANTI-BUREAUCRATIC AND ANTI-BOURGEOIS STATE POLICY

As the avowed champion of democracy the AL has always had an anti-bureaucratic stance and when came to power it showed an inclination to subordinate the state bureaucracy to the dictates of the party apparatus. Indeed, at independence, Bangladesh did not inherit a large civilian or military apparatus or, in other words, an "overdeveloped superstructure". The upper rung of the civil bureaucracy (comprising the 'class I' officers) was about 2.4 per cent of the total civil employees which numbered 454,000. (Government of Bangladesh 1972b: 2) The civil bureaucrats were denied any security of their jobs. Thus the President's Order No. 9 of 1972 provided that,

Where in the opinion of the Government, a government servant is not required in the interests of the People's

Republic of Bangladesh, the Government may . . . remove such person from service without assigning any reason therefor. (Government of Bangladesh 1972c: 126)

The ruling party viewed the bureaucrats as ". . . neither innovators nor catalytic agents of social change." (Government of Bangladesh 1973: 4) Consequently, the government order No. 9 was frequently applied to remove such 'agents' from their offices, and between the months of July and November, 1974, over 300 civil servants were thus dismissed. (Maniruzzaman 1974: 125) While the ruling party thus kept the civil bureaucracy under its control through induced insecurity, it kept the army under relatively more restricted budgetary provisions as well as in discrepant attention compared with the Rakhi Bahini (a para-military security force) attached to the party itself. Consequently, even in 1975, the army consisted of only 36,000 men in the regular defense forces though in addition, there were 20,000 men in the Bangladesh Rifles (border security force) and another 16,000 men in the Rakhi Behini. (IISS 1975: 52-53)

The anti-bourgeois stance of the ruling petty bourgeois party was manifest in its nationalisation policy. Immediately after assuming power the party brought large numbers of industrial units and commercial firms, all banks and insurance companies under state control.⁶ It should be noted that over one-third of the industries nationalised belonged to the public sector enterprises of the former government. Indeed, more than the fulfilment of the (pre-independence) election commitment, the nationalisation of enterprises became obligatory on the AL in that at independence the state inherited 53 former EPIDC (public sector) units as well

as 725 former non-Bengali private units. These units together constituted over 97 per cent of the industries in Bangladesh with 81 per cent of the total value of fixed assets. The position of the private and public sector enterprises before and after nationalisation is shown in the following Table -(1):

Table 1
Private and Public Sector Industries
in Bangladesh at Independence

Sector	Number of Units	Value of Fixed Assets (million taka)	Per cent share of Fixed Assets
A. Position in 1969-70:			
1. EPIDC ownership	53	2097.0	34.0
2. Private non-Bengali ownership	725	2885.7	47.0
3. Private Bangali ownership	2253	1118.8	18.0
4. Private foreign ownership	20	36.0	1.0
Total Industrial Sector	3051	6137.5	100.0

Sector	Number of Units	Value of Fixed Assets (million taka)	Per cent share of Fixed Assets
B. Position in 1972:			
1. Nationalised EPIDC and non-Bengali units	316	4726.7	77.0
2. Nationalised Bengali units	75	910.8	15.0
3. Private Bengali units	2178	208.0	3.0
4. Private foreign units	20	36.0	1.0
5. Abandoned (non-Bengali) units for disinvestment	462	256.0	4.0

Source: Sobhan and Ahmad 1980: 192

Although the table shows that 74 per cent of the industries before independence was under private Bengali ownership they, however, were predominantly small and household enterprises. This is evident from the small share (18 per cent) of the total value of the fixed assets of these industries. After nationalisation, this share came down to only 3 per cent with the likelihood of rising to 7 per cent provided that 462 abandoned units were privatized through disinvestment.

It may be noted that the nationalisation programme was passed for the socialist policy of the state. But it was found that immediately after nationalisation most industries became ". . . hollow enterprise with empty coffers, negligible inventories and depleted assets." (Sobhan and Ahmad 1980: 117)

However, the productivity in these enterprises gradually increased and by 1977-78 it was 22.4 per cent higher over that of 1969-70. (Government of Bangladesh 1980: XIII-4) It is presumed that the productivity of the enterprises and the profits therefrom could be still higher had there been no political interference with the management and distribution system. But owing to such interference, "the nationalised enterprises . . . came to be exploited by the political peddlers and the associated traders." (Alamgir 1980: 124) Thus while the progress of the regular bourgeoisie was thwarted by nationalisation and (private) investment ceilings, that of a lumpen bourgeoisie was facilitated through political patronage. The rank of the latter was swelled by the unbridled racketeers of indentors, traders, boarders, smugglers and the like. In order to divert the wealth (officially labelled as "black money") of this lumpen bourgeoisie toward productive investment, the state policy was later revised. Thus in 1975 the ceiling on private sector investment was raised (from 1.5 million taka to 3 million taka); tax holidays, equity support, etc. were offered for agro-supportive and export-oriented private industries; the stock-exchange was reactivated; and owners of "black money" were advised to purchase disinvested (public) enterprises. (Government of Bangladesh 1975: 4-6) But the new policy decisions had little impact on the lumpen bourgeoisie for,

High and easy gains from trade and indenting had erased any serious prospect of their setting down to the more hazardous and onerous task of setting up a factory, handling

labour and government and managing a factory efficiently and profitably in the uncertain time ahead. (Sobhan and Ahmad 1980: 237)

Indeed, the liberalization of the state policy toward the bourgeoisie, was a manifestation of the failure of the petty bourgeois state itself in the management of the nationalised sector and of its urge to share the burden of its economic task with the private entrepreneurs. It was presumed that the latter, owing to their known parasitic and lumpen character would remain a subservient class and would not pose any serious threat to the petty bourgeois state itself (the Pakistani bourgeoisie, satisfied with its economic power also remained a subservient class to the military and bureaucratic state). Nevertheless, corresponding to its anti-bourgeois inclinations, the petty bourgeois ruling party was also inclined to gear the state policy to the needs of petty peasant production in agriculture. It may be noted that after assuming power the ruling party emphasized the need of "socialisation" of the dominant agricultural sector. It stated that, "in an economy where more than 80 per cent of the activity is dependent on agriculture, it is inconceivable to bring socialism without socialisation of agriculture." (Government of Bangladesh 1973: 2) However, since any attempt at "socialisation of agriculture" would entail radical transformation of the existing production relations and the AL was incapable of initiating it (the reasons are discussed in the next chapter); all it did was to adopt some reform measures. These measures included: (a) waiving all arrear land revenues

and the interests thereupon up to April 14, 1972; (b) exempting all agricultural families owning up to 25 bighas (slightly over 8 acres) of land from payment of land revenue; (c) imposing a landownership ceiling of 100 bighas (33.3 acres) per family; and (d) free distribution of acquired land among the landless and near-landless (owning less than 1.5 acres) agricultural families.⁷ As to the effects, it may be noted that the measures neither benefitted the overwhelming majority of the agricultural families themselves nor did they augment agricultural productivity itself. Thus, the waiving of the arrear rents was obviously necessitated by the damages and disruption of production during the liberation war. Since in Bangladesh the middle and the rich farmers also fall in the brackets of landowners exempted from payment of land revenue, it proved relatively more beneficial to them than to the masses of poor agricultural households. Further, the definition of "family" enabled the large landowners to escape the ceiling restriction. Consequently, only 58,409 acres of comparatively poor land were "obtained" from 5371 families as excess land, which was less than 15 per cent of the actual excess land that should have been surrendered. And up to 1976, 141,410 acres of acquired and accreted land were distributed to the agricultural families. But it is to be observed that, "it was the propertied classes and not the landless and near-landless who received the lion's share of the land settled. . . ." (Siddiqui 1981: 72-80)

However, it is evident that while the petty bourgeois ruling party sought to build a socialist image by nationalising the

former public sector and the private non-Bengali and Bengali enterprises, it deliberately evaded similar measure in the larger agricultural sector despite its assertion that "it is inconceivable to bring socialism without socialisation of agriculture". Indeed, the AL represented the landed classes (analysed in the next chapter) and therefore the dislocation of the material position of these classes (through "socialisation" or any other measure) would mean the dissolution of AL's rule altogether. As noted before, the AL was a party of the petty bourgeoisie as a whole and, as such, its policies were, necessarily, aimed at the reproduction of the interests of this class. But the contradictions and tendencies which it generated in serving those interests under the cover of a tantalizing socialist ideology, could not but hasten the dissolution of its rule.

DISSOLUTION OF PETTY BOURGEOIS RULE

AND REVERSION TO A MILITARY REGIME

By the middle of 1975 (i.e., in less than four years of independence), Bangladesh found itself in a critical economic situation. It was reported that under-utilization of the installed capacity of industries led to an estimated loss of 5500 million taka in 1974-75; irregular distribution of inputs and neglect of irrigation caused a decline in food-grain production from 11.92 million tons in 1969-70 to 11.48 million tons in 1974-75; by mid-1975 the prices of essential commodities increased nearly five times the corresponding prices in 1969-70.⁸ The economic condition of the masses became precarious even before 1975. Thus in the rural areas the proportion of the "absolutely

poor households" (defined by daily per capita calorie intake of 1720-1935) increased from 50 per cent in 1963-64 to 87 per cent in 1973-74, and that of the "extremely poor households" (defined by a daily per capita calorie intake below 1720) increased from 10 per cent to 54 per cent during the same period. (Khan 1977: 145) In the background of this situation the left political forces intensified their pressure on the ruling party, the AL. The latter, in turn, branded those forces as "extremists", "miscreants", "foreign agents", etc. and retaliated against their actions severely particularly, by using the Rakkhi Bahini. The leader of the Sorbohara Party, Sirj Sikdar, was killed in police custody while another party, the Jatya Somajtantrik Dol, alleged that the AL killed 60,000 of their workers and arrested another 86,000. (Maniruzzaman 1980: 175-77) In December 1974, the government issued a Proclamation of Emergency which was followed by the 4th Amendment of the constitution (Act 2 of 1975). The latter provided for forming "only one political party [the National Party] in the State", whereupon, ". . . a person shall . . . have no right to form or be a member or otherwise take part in the activities of, any political party other than the National Party." (Chowdhury 1975: 91) By virtue of the same Act (Act 2, 1975), the prime minister, Sheikh Mujib, came to ". . . hold office as President of Bangladesh as if elected to that office under the Constitution as amended by this Act". (Chowdhury 1975: 92) In June 1975, the President formed the National Party, called the BAKSAL (Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League) and launched the programme of an alleged "Second Revolution".⁹ Sheik Mujib gave the impression that his schemes

were going to bring radical changes in Bangladesh society. It is, however, well-known that,

Radical changes are always historically determined, and they may be carried out in two ways: starting from the bottom of society, by revolutionizing praxis as a whole; or starting from the top, by authoritarian acts on the part of institutions, established forms, political leaders (example: Bismarckism in Germany after the failure of the 1948 revolution). Only changes of the first kind are decisive, for only they get rid of obsolete forms. Changes of the second kind are not as far reaching, but according to Marx they pave the way for more radical transformation. (Lefebvre 1968: 54)

But Mujib's schemes, which no doubt started "from the top", had certainly no possibility of paralleling the "Bismarckism in Germany" or of paving "the way for more radical transformations". His schemes were evidently impelled by an urge to camouflage his political bankruptcy which entirely alienated him and his party from the people. Indeed, by forming the BAKSAL the AL not only undid its own deed (i.e., its long struggle for democracy) but also indicated that when it fails to rule, a petty bourgeois party may turn fascist and cast off its democratic integument. However, before any substantial effects of the schemes were felt Sheikh Mujib was killed by the army and all his plans were put to an end, in August 1975.

It is alleged that the bloody coup d'etat which was staged in 1975, was precipitated by the humiliations of the army since

the inception of Bangladesh. Thus, first, the army was robbed of its glory in 1971 when the Indian forces accepted the surrender of the Pakistani army in Bangladesh, whereby it was also deprived from acquiring the sophisticated weapons of the latter. After independence, the army was given less attention compared with the para-military Rakshi Bahini attached to the ruling AL. Furthermore, many army officers were unduly censured for apprehending certain criminals during the anti-corruption and anti-smuggle campaigns in late 1974. Consequently, a small number of disgruntled officers finally retaliated for their humiliations by skilfully plotting and staging the August Coup. (Maniruzzaman, 1980: 183-87) However, the plotters of the coup may be said to have given a late proxy by the Pakistani military junta. It seems that had Sheikh Mujib been killed by the said junta in 1971, it would have conferred upon him the lasting glory of a great martyr and that his martyrdom would have profound impact on the nature of the state and society in Bangladesh itself. Nevertheless, the late proxy given by the Pakistani junta's younger counterpart in Bangladesh helped to retrieve the tradition of military-bureaucratic rule in Bangladesh. As noted by Lifschultz:

Mujibur Rahman's demise in Bangladesh marked, as did Bhutto's four years later in Pakistan, the end of an entire era of hopes and illusions surrounding the prospects for social democracy in conditions of severe backwardness and underdevelopment. In both societies - Bangladesh and Pakistan - the regression to forms of military and bureaucratic dictatorship has reasserted itself like an old depressing cancer. (1979: 149)

NOTES

1. In a debate with Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin put forward the thesis that "the question of the right to self-determination" (i.e. nations' rights to secede or form independent national states) is in conformity with Marxism, and that the 'question' accompanies the rise of capitalism, i.e., the bourgeoisie's strivings for overcoming the fetters of feudalism on its development. As noted by Lenin: "Throughout the world, the period of the final victory of capitalism over feudalism has been linked up with national movements. For the complete victory of commodity production, the bourgeoisie must capture the home market, and there must be politically united territories whose population speak a single language, with all obstacles to the development of that language and to its consolidation in literature eliminated. Therein is the economic foundation of national movements. . . . The most profound economic factors drive towards this goal [formation of a national state], and, therefore, for the whole of Western Europe, nay, for the entire civilised world, the national state is typical and normal for the capitalist period." (1976, vol. 1: 568) Lenin further noted that: ". . . capitalism, having awakened Asia, has called forth national movements everywhere in that continent, too, that the tendency of these movements is towards the creation of national states in Asia; that it is such states that ensure the best conditions for the development of capitalism". (Ibid. p. 571)

2. The phrase "freedom from national oppression" is Luxemburgian in origin. Indeed, Luxemburg contended the Leninist views of "right" of nations, or, "the right of self-determination of nations" as that. Her own position as to "self-determination" was the self-determination of the working class which is impossible under capitalism where only the ruling class can have "rights" and "right of self-determination". On principle, Luxemburg opposed the creation of small, nonviable national states even when the workers favour or rule such states (in 1919 the Bolsheviks in the USSR practically adopted Luxemburg's principle as their own (Davis 1976, "Introduction"). However, notwithstanding this position on the national question, Luxemburg endorsed resistance to all national oppression, and envisaged the form of such resistances as they affect the working classes. Thus in 1905 she noted that: "To the credit of mankind, history has universally established that even the most inhumane material oppression is not able to provoke such wrathful, fanatical rebellion and rage as the suppression of intellectual life in general, or as religious or national oppression". (cited in Davis 1976:23).

3. Nicos Poulantzas described these two types of petty bourgeoisie in the following way: "The first is the 'traditional' petty bourgeoisie . . . the small-scale producers and small traders (small property). They include forms of artisanal work and small family businesses in which one and the same agent is both owner of the means of production and of labour and is the direct worker. . . . Secondly there is the 'new' petty bourgeoisie. . . . It consists of the non-productive wage-earning workers . . .

Civil servants employed by the state and its various apparatuses." (Poulantzas, 1973:37)

4. The Basic Democracies system constituted a five-tier administrative structure consisting of the Provincial Assembly, Divisional Council, District Council, Thana Council and Union Council. The elected members of the Union Council constituted an electoral college for electing the members of other Councils as well as the members of Provincial and National Assemblies and the President of Pakistan. The local government systems which previously existed in East Pakistan such as, the 'village panchayat', 'union board', 'local board' etc. were thus replaced by the Union Council with enormous power and linkage with the central state. From empirical surveys, Sobhan came to the conclusion that: "There is no doubt that the B.D. members of the Union Councils in the rural areas are overwhelmingly drawn from the top 10-15 per cent of the economic strata of the rural areas Classified as 'surplus' farmers they control the rural economy through their surplus land and supply of credit. . . . For the urban areas, . . . B.D. membership is clearly dominated by the businessmen and contractors as a class. This class is inevitably wealthier than other classes. The fact that 58.09 per cent of the members have incomes (per month) above Rs. 4,000.00 should therefore occasion neither surprise nor further comment." (Sobhan 1968: 88)

The Rural Public Works Programme was an outcome of the negotiation between the Government of Pakistan and the US, according to which the former agreed to receive the surplus US agricultural commodities worth 621 million US dollars. The deal was

aimed at "mopping up the purchasing power generated by the project". According to the provisions of the deal the refund of the US grant would accumulate in rupees in the US "counterpart fund" in Pakistan to be disbursed by the US Government in agreement with the local authorities. The Indus Project and its accompanying deal (for West Pakistan) around public clamour in East Pakistan. In response to this, the Harvard Advisory Group attached to the Pakistan Planning Commission gave the idea of incorporating a Rural Public Works Programme for East Pakistan. The programme included construction of roads, embankments and drainage canals for generating rural employment and augmenting agricultural production (Ibid. p. 105-6).

5. Apart from direct investment, which according to the then chief economist of Pakistan's Planning Commission constituted roughly one-fifth of Pakistan's total industrial capital, the bulk of foreign capital came as foreign aid. And a member of the Harvard Development Advisory Group attached to the Pakistan's Planning Commission noted that: "It is ironical but true that the strongest prop of the Planning enterprise in Pakistan is the nation's continued dependence on foreign aid." (Griffin and Khan 1972: 55)

6. The nationalisation policy was effectuated through a number of government orders issued during 1972, which included the President's Order No. 1 (Control and Management of Industrial and Commercial Concerns), No. 16 (Control, Management and Disposal of the Abandoned Property), No. 26 (Nationalisation of Banks), No. 27 (Nationalisation of Industrial Enterprises), No. 95 (Nationalisation of Insurance), etc. (Government of Bangladesh 1972c)

7. See Government of Bangladesh 1972 (especially P.O. Nos. 96 and 98 for (b) and (c)). It may be noted that according to P.O. No. 96, "'family' in relation to a Malik owner includes husband, wife, son, unmarried daughter, son's wife, son's son and unmarried daughter and such Malik shall be deemed to be the head of the family." (Government of Bangladesh 1972: 1822)
8. See "Report of the Economic Task Force", The Bangladesh Times, Dacca, September 13, 1975.
9. The BAKSAL remained a party of the AL itself and of its pro-Moscow allies. It, however, proposed a new scheme of decentralized administration entailing the break-up of the existing 19 districts into 61, each of which would be administered by one Governor appointed by the President. The "Second Revolution" was aimed at the eradication of corruption, acceleration of production, attainment of population control, and promotion of national integrity etc. (Bichitra, Dacca, April 4, 1975)

IV CONJUNCTURE OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT
IN BANGLADESH

POSITION OF THE POST-COLONIAL STATE

The mediation of the state (i.e., execution of state policies in furtherance of the interests of the dominant class) is presumed to be a necessary condition for economic development to occur. However, nearly all neo-Marxist writers have very cogently argued that the state in post-colonial societies is incapable and/or unwilling to effectuate this mediating role. This is due mainly to the position of the state emanating from the conjuncture of the social formation as well as the externally induced relations of dependence.. It is noted that the state in these societies had emerged in "the process of imperial state building" and as "strong state", at that. The "strong state" is established through: securing ties with the political leadership, the heads of the police and military; influencing administrative and planning bodies; training personnel, sending technical missions, funding research institutes; developing regional systems etc. (Petras 1978: 52) According to Petras:

Without the strong state, the polarization of class forces would be skewed toward the left; and the alternative of a petty bourgeois-led popular-national alliance would either limit the capacity of imperial capital to extract surplus from the labor force or lead to a more profound transformation of society. (Petras 1978: 54)

The military and bureaucratic state of Pakistan and later, of Bangladesh, fairly corroborates this conception of the strong state. Particularly, the Bangladesh case further substantiates the fact that through externally induced policies the military-bureaucratic strong state thwarts economic development and perpetuates external dependence.

Before the military took over the state in 1975, the foreign alliance of Bangladesh was primarily oriented toward India and the USSR. But the new regime ". . . swivelled the country's international orientation towards the American and British governments in the West, and secondarily towards the Islamic bloc, principally Saudi Arabia, in West Asia." (EPW 1978: 555) While the regime thus ingratiated itself with promising foreign allies, its organizational and technical strength greatly expanded internally. Thus "important internal security, telecommunications and military training programmes . . . linked to the American and British governments prior to independence were suddenly resumed." (EPW 1978: 555) In mid-1977, Bangladesh received a British grant of £750,000 to develop police telecommunication; it was followed by the arrival of a British technical team, the Gibson Mission, to set up a Military Staff College near Dacca. (EPW 1978: 555) The college was set up to meet the requirements of the nascent military state which lacked a sufficient number of senior officers. Indeed, the inadequacy of such officers necessitated the inclusion of senior police personnel into the new ruling circle. As described by Lifschultz:

In the Pakistan era no police or intelligence official had ever reached the ministerial rank of Secretary. . . .

Now police and intelligence officials took over ministries and state corporations in critical locations of economic power and patronage. (1979: 200)

However, the military-bureaucratic regime which was thus established in Bangladesh heavily drew upon the heritage of Pakistan. Comparing the so-called "bureaucratic elites" of Pakistan and Bangladesh it was thus concluded that,

Trained and indoctrinated in the tradition of the elite bureaucracy in Pakistan and drawn largely from the higher income groups, the bureaucratic elites in Bangladesh are almost as exclusive as their predecessors in Pakistan. They are deeply imbued with guardianship orientations and their conception of economic development is almost identical with that of the bureaucratic elites in Pakistan.

(Ahmad, 1980: 210)

Indeed, by altogether discarding the socialist pretensions of the former petty bourgeois regime, the military-bureaucratic regime took to the policies of religious subterfuge,¹ reliance on foreign aid, and encouragement of domestic as well as foreign private investment, after Pakistan. The first military ruler, Ziaur Rahman, proclaimed that,

The Government is ready to extend all possible support to the private sector for utilizing the full potential of the private entrepreneurs in stepping up the productive economic activities in the country.²

The state financial institutions were accordingly directed to assist the private entrepreneurs on a high priority basis.

In order to "stimulate the private sector", in the Two-Year Plan 1978-80, the government allocated 2460 million taka to the private sector (as against 1395 million taka of the First Five Year Plan 1973-78). (Government of Bangladesh 1978: 149) In the Second Five Year Plan 1980-85, the private sector allocation was increased to a record level. Thus,

. . . to enable the private sector to play its due role in the industrial growth of the country an investment target of Tk. 1110.00 crore [$\bar{1}$ crore = 10 million] including foreign exchange component of Tk. 555.00 crore has been set for the private sector industrial investment proper for the Second Five Year Plan. (Government of Bangladesh 1980: XIII-138)

At the time of independence, the extent of foreign private investment in Bangladesh (except the investment by the West Pakistanis) was almost insignificant.³ But in early 1978 the government proposed ". . . to set up a Free Trade Processing Zone at Chittagong to boost up foreign private investment and export." (1978: 171) After the first one, the government undertook to establish three more Export Processing Zones (EPZ) in Chittagong, Dacca, and Khulna. It was envisaged that,

These zones tend to promote foreign investment, encourage transfer of technology, expand employment opportunities and improve foreign exchange earnings. In view of the shortage of indigenous industrial raw materials but large availability of cheap and trainable labour, low cost of energy and reasonably developed infrastructural and shipping

facilities, Export Processing Zones appear to be ideally suited for conditions of Bangladesh for stimulating exports of manufactured goods and widening the industrial base. (1980: XIII-140)

Nevertheless, the EPZs have generally been found to be the exclusive zones of 'Cheap' labour exploitation (where the opportunities of the 'absolute' and 'relative' surplus extraction, i.e., prolonged working-day and advanced technology, are at once combined) and super-profiteering by the multinational corporations. As such, in Bangladesh, too, they have had very little to do with the improvement and welfare of the indigenous economy.⁴ Indeed, the development policies adopted by the military-bureaucratic regime have been, to express it in the words of Petras, "tied to the dynamic of externally induced expansion and accumulation." (1978: 51) That for its policies the regime received cues from the external sources, particularly from the Aid Groups, is evident from the Reports of the Aid Group meetings (in these meetings the home team submits a progress report and then pleads for new aid commitments). For example, in the ninth annual meeting held in Paris Bangladesh reported that,

Greater reliance on the private sector is a cornerstone of the economic policy of the government. The already available facilities and opportunities will be further improved to encourage private investors both domestic and foreign. . . . It is expected that only limited industrial production processes and public utilities will remain under government control. The government will continue to encourage foreign private

investment and technical know-how either in joint ventures or in direct investment and the policy to promote and protect the interests of foreign investors will remain unaltered. (Government of Bangladesh 1982: 26)

To this submission, the World Bank representative remarked that, "Bangladesh has shown its capacity to absorb and respond to our economic counsel and assistance." (Government of Bangladesh 1982:51)

The reciprocations cited above manifest a determinate relation of aid-structured dependence of the client regime on the aid-giving patron states and agencies, which determines the vital policy decisions of the client itself. The implications are well borne out in the following passage:

Bangladeshi's policy-makers continue to wait upon decisions in Washington, London, Tokyo, Bonn and Paris before they formulate their annual development budgets, announce an import policy, formulate a food policy or even decide how many children should be born. The decision makers of the developed world hold the lifeline of any regime in Bangladesh in their hands. . . . The sovereignty of the Bangladesh nation state, in its prevailing social configuration, is therefore likely to remain a polite fiction which is perpetuated by the courtesy of the donors as long as Bangladesh does not challenge their current strategic assumptions and ideological preconceptions. (Sobhan 1982: 226)

However, at the present moment the possibility of challenging the "strategic assumptions and ideological preconceptions" of the

donors, is ruled out by the magnitude of Bangladesh's aid dependence on the former. Thus it is admitted that, "compared to about 5% of total development outlay in India, it accounts for 85% in the case of Bangladesh. In Pakistan it is about 13%, in Srilanka 12% and in Tanzania 13%." (Government of Bangladesh 1983: 1) Furthermore,

Provision of aid by both bilateral and multilateral donors is governed by: (any or all) (1) political objective of extending/sustaining realm of influence/support, (2) economic objective of expanding/sustaining the donor's market for capital goods and control over raw materials product by the recipient country, (3) employment of donor's otherwise sparable manpower as consultants in the recipient country, (4) humanitarian motive and (5) availability of otherwise unutilisable surplus production. (Government of Bangladesh 1983a: 2)

Perhaps because the donors bring all of these "objectives" to bear upon Bangladesh, the document desperately proclaimed that, "the suggested solution is charting of appropriate structural changes in the socio-economic system . . . and relentless efforts to bring about these changes with a view to reduce our dependence on aid." (Government of Bangladesh 1983a: 2) This "solution" has many implications, but one can discern the important ones in the light of the employment generation, privatization and land reform, in so far as they are affected by the policies of the aid-induced military-bureaucratic regimes in Bangladesh.

Between December 1971 and June 1981, Bangladesh received 7753.3 million (US) dollars in foreign aid under such heads as

food, commodity and project assistance. Of this, 4432.2 million or 57.2 per cent, were received after military take over in mid-1975. (Sobhan 1982: Appendix 1, Table 5.1.) It should be noted that the aid received in the first three and a half years (i.e., up to mid-1975) came for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the war-ravaged economy while in the later period they were urged to meet the development outlays. But if the bulk of the aid in the former period had to be necessarily spent on the reconstruction works themselves, that of the later period were necessarily spent on the expansion of the state apparatus itself. The latter is evident from the changes in the employment structure shown in Table 2:

Table 2
Percentage Change in Employment
Structure, 1975-76 to 1981-82

Sector	Percentage increase
Agriculture	6.4
Industry	15.7
Service	46.0

Source: BBS 1982, Tables 10.27-10.30

The Table shows that compared to 6.4 per cent in agriculture and 15.7 per cent in industries, the employment in the service sector (includes defense and civil services) registered an increase of 46 per cent over a period of seven years. This period witnessed increased inflows of foreign aid. The military-bureaucratic state which was thus "over-developed" (relative to agriculture

and industry or the economic infrastructure in general) "by the courtesy of the donors" was, however, obliged to adopt the policy of privatization in the industrial sector. The latter necessitated disinvestment (DI) and denationalisation (DN) of the public sector industries.⁵ Thus between 1976 and 1983, 217 industrial units which comprised 57 per cent of the 381 units under six state corporations, were disinvested or denationalised. But the military-bureaucratic regim undertook this venture disregarding the social as well as the operational aspects. Thus a comparative study of 87 pre- and post-DI/DN industries (Sobhan and Ahsan 1983) revealed that the "private owners operating in the more congenial environment of the late '70s could not perform better than Public Corporations" (Ibid. p. 24); the "disinvestment in particular cases, has imposed a double loss to the economy through increased unemployment as well as reduced profitability" (Ibid. p. 27); indeed, "1 out of 4 regular employees working before disinvestment has lost his job after disinvestment" (Ibid. p. 30). Furthermore, at the time of disinvestment not only the buyers were obliged to pay only 20 to 25 per cent of the bid price (the rest to be paid in 9 instalments with 8 per cent interest which is well below the lending rate of the commercial banks), but a substantial part of the outstanding liabilities of the concerned units were written off by the state (Ibid. pp. 35-36). The social implications of the privatisation venture is then aptly summarized as follows:

The transfer of such a large quantity of public assets to the ownership and control of what may at most amount to 217 families, if we indeed assume one family as

controlling one enterprise, has significant implications for the concentration of wealth and its social control. Enterprises whilst under the corporations were at least juridically owned by 90 million citizens of the state of Bangladesh. The Public Corporations were the trustees of this wealth and always remained accountable for this wealth. . . . In contrast once public assets are surrendered we have seen there is no serious attempt to see what has been done with this wealth or how it is benefitting the economy. (Sobhan and Ahsan 1983:39)

While in compliance with the external cues the military-bureaucratic regime privatized the industrial sector, its policy toward the larger agricultural sector remained fraught with ambiguities. Thus after grappling with the self-directed projects of canal digging and 'gram sarkar' (village government) - both aimed at the attainment of self-reliance through mass mobilization - the first military ruler, Ziaur Rahman, realized the exigency of land reform. In a democratic gesture he held a dialogue on land reform with the leaders of political parties. The latter gave a number of proposals underscoring the needs of lowering the landownership ceiling (from 100 bighas, i.e., 33.3 acres, to various figures below 50 bighas) and other pertinent measures.⁶ The government also issued a draft proposal on land reform which essentially echoed the provisions of the former Mujib government.⁷ However, the proposal was later described by the then prime minister, Shah Azizur Rahman, as a mere "talking paper" and thereafter, the "reform" talk was altogether dismissed. The

second military ruler, H.M. Ershad, after assuming power in March 1982, announced that his government has "taken up the task of land reform in right earnest". Accordingly, a nine-member Land Reform Committee was formed and the committee submitted a report with the following basic recommendations:

(a) For the cultivating landowners (family) an ownership ceiling of 75 bighas and 100 bighas respectively, in irrigated and non-irrigated areas; for the non-cultivating landowners (absentee) an ownership ceiling of 30 bighas and 50 bighas respectively, in irrigated and non-irrigated areas. All excess land is to be acquired by the Government with compensation. (b) The sharecroppers are to stay for 5 years on all lands rented on or before March 26, 1982. As to the share of the produce, the owner is to get 67.5 per cent in case he/she provides all inputs except labour, 33 per cent in case the tenant provides all inputs, and 50 per cent in case the inputs (except labour) are equally shared by the owner and the tenant.⁸

The government accepted recommendation (b), called the "tebhaga" (trisection) principle, but retained the ownership ceiling at 100 bighas as provided by the P.O. 98 of 1972.⁹ Indeed, the Chairman of the Land Reform Committee, the agricultural minister, earlier observed that "any proposal for land reforms in Bangladesh must first take careful note of the existing realities including the power structure".¹⁰ And after submitting the report he stated that, "in the present reform no attempt has been made for the structural changes of the land relations. It has only proposed legal and customary reforms".¹¹ From this assertion it follows that the position of the new

regime, too, is one of mere supervising the reproduction of agrarian relations and agrarian productivity on the self-same scale. Indeed, so far all the regimes in Bangladesh have used the issue of "land reform" as a populist slogan. But given the structural position of the regimes themselves vis-a-vis the task i.e., land reform itself, the former could hardly help this slogan-mongering. It is quite established that effective land reform only comes along with either capitalist industrialization or socialist revolution. Both entail in their respective ways, an articulation of agriculture and industry whereby agriculture provides "free labour", raw materials, basic food (for workers), etc. for industry; and industry provides finished goods, means of labour, various inputs etc. for agriculture. Further, both are the objective outcomes of class struggle.

But for reasons emanating from the mode of production and from the reciprocations between the mode of production and the state, class struggle in Bangladesh could not so far bear out the prospect of either of these development and hence no effective land reform either.

MODE OF PRODUCTION

Before undertaking an analysis the mode of production (MP) in Bangladesh it may be worthwhile to outline the important features of two pertinent modes of production viz. the feudal and the capitalist. The feudal mode of production (FMP) is characterized by the private ownership of the means of production by the feudal lords and the private possession of the means

by the direct producers, i.e., the serfs. The latter, owing to their personal dependence and lack of individual freedom are, indeed, tied to the means of production "as its accessories". (Melotti 1977: 63) The capitalist mode of production (CMP), on the other hand, is characterized by capitalist private property resting on socialised production that arises as a negation of the pre-capitalist individual and scattered private property founded on individual labour. (Marx 1978: 715) Its structural conditions are: free labour - free from personal dependence and possession of means of production, separation of economic (class) and political (state) power, generalized commodity production (production primarily for sale, labour power itself a commodity), and extended reproduction of capital and rise in the organic composition of capital. (Alavi 1981: 477)

Since agriculture is the dominant sector (in terms of the concentration of the means of production as well as the labour) in Bangladesh, the MP existent therein may as well be taken as the dominant MP in Bangladesh, making up in determinate ways, the conjuncture of the social formation. Indeed, although the sectoral share of agriculture in domestic production is said to have declined from 56 per cent in 1977-78, to 48 per cent in 1981-82 it (agriculture) still constitutes the dominant sector. Compared to this, industry's share (including the small-scale and petty household enterprises) is below 8 per cent while that of "service" is about 45 per cent (BBS 1983a: 136). Further, it may be noted that the industrial sector is primarily agro-based and the service sector includes the ancillary activities (transporting, marketing etc.) of the agricultural products themselves.

However, in terms of the size of farms and the scale of operation, agriculture in Bangladesh is minifundist in nature. The average size of a farm at present is reported to have remained unchanged at 3.5 acres since 1960. The farms are also fragmented and the average number of fragments per farm is 9.6, while the average size of a farm-fragment is 0.4 acre. (BBS 1981: 24) Agricultural activity centres around food grains which are produced in some 26 million acres or 82 per cent of the total gross cropped area. Rice alone accounts for 22 million acres or 69 per cent of the total gross cropped area while jute (the chief foreign exchange earning fibre) occupies some 2 million acres, i.e. 6.3 per cent of the total gross cropped area. (BBS 1981:28-29) The labour force employed in agriculture numbers 13.2 million or 83.3 per cent of the total active labour force of the country. (BBS 1982: 154) Nevertheless, this dominant sector in Bangladesh is notorious for its extremely low level of productivity. According to a World Bank report: "Present average yields of rice are about 1.2 metric tons per hectare, compared with 2.5 tons in Sri Lanka or 2.7 in Malaysia, which are climatically similar, or over 4 tons in Taiwan where labor inputs are greater." (Hartmann and Boyce 1979: 10) Although this low productivity results in an estimated deficit of 1.5 to 2.5 million tons of foodgrains per year it is, however, recognized that,

The country is rich enough in fertile land, water, manpower and natural gas for fertilizer not only to be self-sufficient in food but a food exporter, even with its rapidly increasing population size. (Boyce and Hartmann, 1981: 26)

The MP underlying the above stated features of the dominant productive sector in Bangladesh may now be analysed in terms of the means and relations of production in agriculture. The means with the help of which labour is performed in production not only determine the degree of productivity but also reveal the character of the social mode of production. The means of labour used in agricultural production in Bangladesh are almost archaic in form and correspond to the pre-capitalist labour process. These include draft animals, animal-drawn plough, ladder, hoe, spade, sickle, etc. The use of modern means are very negligible. The latest agricultural census shows that 0.2 per cent of farmers use power-tillers, 0.6 per cent use tractors, 6.9 per cent use hand-spray machines, while 7.6 per cent use power pumps. (BBS 1981: 24) Consequently, "living labour" remains as the main feature of agricultural productivity. Thus, as found in a survey, the cost of paddy production is distributed as follows: human labour 62 per cent, animal labour 18 per cent, seeds 10 per cent, and water and fertilizer 10 per cent. (Hossain 1979: 120) It may be noted that to accelerate agriculture productivity the government launched the Green Revolution Programme in the early 1960s. The programme was adopted with the aim of spreading the new "seed-fertilizer-water technology" and the development of agricultural cooperatives. But studies have revealed that the effects have not been "revolutionary" at all. Thus,

By 1977/78 only about 16 per cent of the total food-grain acreage was brought under HYV, and the rate of growth of cereal production during the period 1965-78 was 1.4 per cent per annum. Forty per cent of this growth came from

acreage expansion (a factor on which Bangladesh cannot depend much for the future); 25 per cent as a result of land reallocation from cash crops to cereals. . . .

(Hossain 1980: 63)

However, cooperatives had spread to more than fifty per cent of the rural areas. Thus starting with 3 "thanas" (each thana includes about 175 villages) in 1962-63, cooperatives spread to 250 thanas by 1977-78.¹² But in proportion as cooperatives expanded, the process of rural pauperization escalated.¹³ Indeed, the government also noted that the cooperatives had turned into the "closed club of the kulaks", wherein ". . . the leaders [large farmers] enjoy a greater share of the benefits but their participation as measured by contribution of share capital and savings, is relatively low." (Government of Bangladesh 1974: 11) Consequently, "the existing subsistence agriculture", does not ". . . blossom in the country in capitalist lines, though the policy instruments are in effect mostly geared to this line." (Government of Bangladesh 1980: VII-8) The relations of production in agriculture which the successive regimes have deliberately avoided to change by any effective "reform" policy may, indeed, throw light on the failure of the government policy to "blossom" the "subsistence agriculture" in "capitalist lines".

The patterns of landownership and land operation as shown in Tables 3 and 4, are the basic indicators of the agrarian relations of production in Bangladesh. Broadly, four types of agrarian households can be discerned from data in Table 3:

Table 3

Size Distribution of Land Other than
Homestead land in Rural Bangladesh, 1977

Number of Acres	Per cent of Total Households	Number of Persons	Per cent of Total	Per cent of Total Area
Zero	32.79	18,703,472	27.10	
0.01-1.00	29.10	18,499,120	26.80	9.63
1.01-3.00	23.44	17,361,835	25.15	28.13
3.01-6.00	9.65	8,701,179	12.60	26.59
6.01-9.00	2.80	2,950,588	4.27	13.36
Over 9.00	2.22	2,809,406	4.08	22.29
Total:	100.00	69,025,600	100.00	100.00

Source: Januzi and Peach 1977, Table D-II

a) the poor (owning less than one to one acre of agricultural land; b) the middle (owning one to three acres of land); c) the rich (owning three to nine acres of land); and d) the big land-owning households (owning over nine acres). The table shows that some 15 per cent of the rural households own over 62 per cent of the land; about 53 per cent own the rest of the land, less than 40 per cent, while 33 per cent are wholly landless. Indeed, the proportion of essentially landless households rises to about 60 per cent of households, 15.29 per cent owning up to only 0.5 acre of land (which economically is not a viable unit), and 11.07 per cent who do not own even homestead land (they are not entered in Table 3 at all) are added to the 33 per cent owning only homestead

land. (Januzi and Peach 1977: XXII). Table 4 shows that nearly 23 per cent (A+C) is owner-operated, while the rest of about 44 per cent of the land is operated by hired labour occasionally combined with some family labour. As for the households, about 39 per cent is tenant-cultivator, 23.5 per cent is owner-cultivator, and nearly 38 per cent is mostly non-cultivating owners.

Table 4

Categories	Types of Tenancy		
	Per cent of Households	Per cent of Owned land	Per cent of Land Taken in
A. Owner-cultivator	23.51	10.47	-
B. Owner-Manager	37.66	43.48	-
C. Owner-cum-Tenant	31.99	23.18	18.48
D. Tenant	6.48	-	4.39
Total	100.00	77.13	22.87

Source: Januzi and Peach 1977: Table D IV.

From Table 4 it also follows that most of the land is tilled by persons other than the owners. Share-cropping is widespread and occurs under terms of equal share of the produce, sometimes requiring additional cash payments. Furthermore, all inputs are provided by the tenants who rent the land on temporary (and verbal) basis. (Januzi and Peach 1977: 45) From these features it is concluded that,

The current situation in Bangladesh is one in which the traditional agrarian structure (defined by institution of

custom and law) can be said to be both an impediment to the dissemination of new technology in agriculture and, at the same time, an obstacle to the full participation of the rural majority in programs of rural development.

(Januzi and Peach 1977: 69)

It is thus evident that the agrarian relations in Bangladesh are deeply entrenched in pre-capitalism and this may be further substantiated by exposing the extent of wage labour, commoditisation, investment of surplus etc.

According to statistical reports, the proportion of hired labour in agriculture has increased from 19 per cent in 1960 (BBS 1977: 44) to 26.5 per cent in 1980 (BBS, 1982: 383). But non-wage labour still remains the defining feature, for it is as high as three-fourths of the total labour force employed in agricultural production. What this implies is that the separation between labour and means of production that results in the commoditisation of labour power (wage labour) and which thereby sets off capitalist relations, is largely absent.¹⁴ Corresponding to this, the agricultural products (subsistence) are also less commoditised. In 1963-64 only 10 per cent of the paddy production was sold in the market. (Hossain 1979: 125) In 1974, it was found that cultivators operating up to 3.5 acres of land (55 per cent of all cultivators) had either deficit, or zero net surplus of paddy (rice) for marketization. Cultivators with more than 7.5 acres of land sold 21 per cent of paddy and 30 per cent of all agricultural produce in the market. (Hossain 1979: 125) Indeed, the subsistence peasants marketize a portion of their produce as

"distress sale" in order to procure certain other necessities, make up the loans or the interest thereupon, or to meet other cash requirements. However, the bulk of the marketable commodities are made up of the surplus products appropriated by the landlords as pre-capitalist ground rent.¹⁵ Indeed, in addition to the rental surplus of the tenants the landlords and merchants also marketize what they appropriate from the peasants by way of buying cheap (against advances or loans) at harvest times, and at the government procurement centres.¹⁶

Capitalist relations make for "increases in labour productivity leading to increases in relative surplus product/labour" through "plough back of surplus into production." (Brenner 1977: 30) But, studies have revealed that the rentier class in Bangladesh is not interested in the "plough back of surplus" into production and therefore, in increases in labour productivity. According to one study,

In the Bangladesh case a common finding is that a large portion of the surplus of the rich basically finances the deficit of the poor, through land purchases and provision of consumption loans. Also the better off families use a portion of their surplus for conspicuous consumption like expenditure on social ceremonies and construction of houses and for investment in trade and business. (Hossain 1981: 109)

On the one hand, the direction of investment in land is induced by its scarcity value and the social power that it vests in a land-owner.¹⁷ On the other hand, the high rate of profit attracts the flow of surplus towards trade and commerce. And at present,

"this rate of profit is very high - almost unlimited - compared with the rate of profit from capital investment in industry or agriculture." (Omar 1982: 79-80) Thus the determinate direction of surplus investment renders it not only unproductive but also counter-productive. As in agriculture, it only,

. . . stimulates the attempts among tenants and labors to achieve a rise in the level of absolute surplus value of their labors, where they try to work longer or harder without any capital-assisted increase in their productivity to meet their debt, rental and purchase obligations. This process is circular and cumulative. (Wood 1981: 6)

The "circular and cumulative" process may be said to coextend with and tend towards the maintenance of a mode of production often designated as the semi-feudal mode of production (semi-FMP). Despite the juridical liquidation of feudal relations (at decolonisation), pre-capitalist relations still dominate the agrarian structure of Bangladesh and hence its characterization as the semi-FMP. Indeed, apart from the pre-capitalist relations as outlined above, the agrarian structure in Bangladesh also encompasses such pre-capitalist features as are enumerated below:

Given the low level of monetization of the rural society, traditional social relationship and dominant asset ownership pattern it is only natural that Bangladesh rural society manifests much of the extra-market operations [extra-economic as well] such as . . . 1. Violence (generally by the dominant unit against the other): this includes violence to individuals e.g., physical compulsion or restraint,

and equally known violence to property e.g., forcible acquisition, dispossession or even destruction; 2. Obligatory direction backed by power of the individual, group or by authority of an organization; and 3. . . . through control of information or even parade of power. (Ahmed 1983: 32)

It should be noted that while the larger agricultural sector of the social economy in Bangladesh is entrenched in pre-capitalist or semi-feudal structure, the tiny industrial sector is hardly capitalistic either. The export-oriented and agro-based industrial sector can be designated as capitalistic only in so far as the combination of wage labour and capital is concerned. But when the total dependence of the enterprises on imports for capital goods (i.e., the machineries, spares and accessories) is taken into consideration, then the internal disarticulation (between Department I, producing means of production and Department II, producing consumer goods) belies the assumption of an indigenous autonomous capitalism. Indeed, as well as the lack of technical autonomy this capitalism also lacks its social autonomy. For example, the indigenous "capitalists" are entirely dependent on the state apparatus for import licenses, foreign exchange, loans etc. and for other types of shifting state patronage. They are even solely dependent on the scores of antiquated elements like the "fariahs" and "baparees" (traders, middlemen etc.) for the supply of raw materials from the pre-capitalist agricultural sector. The latter category not only maintains the link between the pre-capitalist and the so-called capitalist sectors but, as well, tends to reproduce the two in their structural

isolation. Indeed, the "free economy" policy of the state by facilitating the free inflow of capital and commodities from the countries of monopoly capitalism essentially impedes the nascent capitalism in proportion as it benefits the monopoly capital. While indigenous nascent capitalism is thus beset with these built-in constraints, the conjuncture of the social formation as a whole persists under the domain of the pre-capitalist forces and relations of production comprising the so-called semi-FMP. The latter, indeed, finds its material expression in the nature of the political power as well as the ideological interpellation of the state in Bangladesh.

POLITICAL POWER AND IDEOLOGY

The association of landownership and political power both at the village and nation state levels of Bangladesh is an empirically evident phenomenon, and it occurs in ways which are reminiscent of the feudal social relations. In the Union Parishad (UP, a local government institution that represents about ten to twenty villages), the class of rich landowners monopolizes all power and the control over resources. Thus one study showed that 90 per cent of all the UP leaders (members and chairmen) in Bangladesh own more than 2.5 acres of cultivable land, while 60 per cent of them own more than 7.5 acres. (Rahman 1979) A recent study of the Comilla district (the laboratory area of cooperative and rural development experiments since early 1960s) has shown that 36 per cent of the members and 70 per cent of the Chairmen of the UPs own more than 3 acres of cultivated land. Furthermore, the yearly income of 41 per cent of these (UP)

members and 60 per cent of these Chairmen, is above taka 40 thousand.¹⁸ In the national elections, too, the landed potentates are found to comprise the overwhelming majority of the elected. Table 5 below shows that about 90 per cent of the Members elected to two Parliaments owned more than 3 acres of land, while about 60 per cent owned more than 10 acres. It further shows that compared with the pre-independence parliament (1970), the proportion of members from the highest land-owning category (1515 acres and above) substantially increased in the post-independence parliament (1973).

Table 5
Land Owned by Members of Parliament,*
1970 and 1973

Election	Less than 1.0 acre to 3.0 acres		3.1 - 10.4 acres		10.5 - 15.4 acres		15.5 acres and above		Number of MPs Interviewed
	No. of MPs	Per cent	No. of MPs	Per cent	No. of MPs	Per cent	No. of MPs	Per cent	
1970	25	10.9	79	34.6	29	12.7	95	41.8	228
1973	29	12.3	62	26.1	25	10.5	121	51.1	237

*Total number of members were 430 and 315 respectively in 1970 and 1973.

Source: Jahan 1980b: 145.

It is commonly observed that the landed potentates at the two levels, village and nation, are structurally aligned. The village potentates maintain their power with support of the dependent share-croppers, landless peasants, clients in village

factions, band of retainers etc. But, in turn, they themselves constitute the support base for the aligned political leaders or parties at the national level. And in exchange for their support and services (rallying votes etc.) they receive all necessary protection of their interests. Thus it is noted that "in exchange for performing these functions government policies are tailored to protect and support large farmers' interests." (Jones 1979: 72) Such "interests", indeed, range from subsidized inputs and/or control over their distribution to the postponement of land reform.

However, the dominance of the landed classes by virtue of the semi-FMP is but one aspect of political power in Bangladesh. Perhaps, the more important aspect is the independent power of the state emanating from its bureaucratic - Bonapartist nature. It appears that the bureaucratic nature is a legacy of the pre-colonial "hypertrophy of the state authority" (attributed to the Asiatic mode of production) as well as of the colonial state power. And the Bonapartist nature of the state seems to be an attribution of the small-holding peasant economy dominated by the semi-FMP. It may be argued that owing to its bureaucratic-Bonapartist nature, the state in Bangladesh persists as a retrogressive force whose policies, as well as the exercise of power, objectively coincide with the persistence of the prevailing conjuncture of the social formation. While the analyses in the foregoing pages fairly corroborate this argument, the patterns of state expenditure (revenue expenditure) and the state subversion of class struggle through ideological subterfuge etc.,

further substantiate it. Table 6 below shows that the state expenditure is mainly geared to what may be called the self-aggrandizing inclination of the state. Thus the state through its expenditures on the administrative and defense services, consumes a substantial part of the revenues. While over one decade

Table 6
Revenue Expenditure of the Government
of Bangladesh (in Million taka).

Head	1972-73a		1982-83b	
	Taka	Per cent of Total	Taka	Per cent of Total
A. Administration, law enforcing agencies and de- fence services	804.8	27.6	9296.9	43.2
B. Social and physi- cal infrastruc- ture	1509.2	51.8	9476.0	441.
C. Agriculture	57.5	2.0	406.0	1.9
D. Industry	-	-	53.9	0.3
E. Debt service	134.4	4.6	2254.2	10.5
F. Other	408.1	14.0	-	-
Total	2914.0	100.0	21467.0	100.0

Source: a. Government of Bangladesh 1979b, Table 10, p. 195;
b. Government of Bangladesh 1983b, Statement III, p.3.

Note: Expenditures of revenue shown under various Heads in the original Tables, particularly those under Head 'A' and 'B' in the present Table, have been merged for convenience of analysis.

this consumption has increased by 56.5 per cent, the expenditure on the social and physical infrastructures has decreased by 15 per cent. The expenditure on the productive sectors like agri-

culture and industry is barely fractional. However, it appears from the table that over a decade, expenditures on Heads 'A' and 'B' have increased inflow of foreign assistance facilitated the increased consumption by the state which has been accompanied by the rapid expansion of its apparatuses as well.

From the nature of the political power and the position of the state as outlined above, one can discern the consecration of the heritage of "hypertrophy of state authority" in Bangladesh. It is observed that in order to maintain this authority the state here always strives to hold the diverse classes and their struggle under its sway. In addition to the economic and political measures, lately, it (the state) has taken to religious-ideological subterfuge to this end. Indeed, in a country where 85 per cent of the people are Muslims, and where "80 per cent live below the poverty line"¹⁹, ideological subterfuge lends considerable advantage to the hypertrophic state itself. The latter, therefore, proclaims that "our struggle is to make Bangladesh an Islamic state"²⁰ for "the existence of the country will be at stake if we fail to establish Islam in Bangladesh".²¹ It may, however, be noted that popular Islam in Bangladesh does scarcely harbor the prospect for the establishment of a fundamentalist Islamic state as, for example, has been possible in Iran in 1979 under Imam Khomeini. The nature of popular Islam in Bangladesh can be comprehended from the following:

From the standpoint of social classes and social stratification, the development of Islam in India has been peculiar. Popular Islam in India in many respects copied the essentials of Hindu beliefs, ideas, and social insti-

tutions and adjusted them to the Islamic system in a very strange way. (Karim 1976: 115)

This "strange adjustment" of Islam is very likely to stand in the way of any move for Islamizing the state of Bangladesh. Perhaps the military regime in Bangladesh is too well aware of this reality and does not therefore undertake itself the task, while its counterpart in Pakistan has rather zealously undertaken it.

Indeed, rather than a fundamentalist conviction it is the perceived need of the sympathy of the Muslim masses at home as well as the support of the Muslim states abroad that underlay the Islamic standpoint of the military-bureaucratic regime in Bangladesh. While its success in obtaining the necessary support of the Muslim states is very evident, that of the Muslim masses at home is difficult to ascertain. It is manifest that in order to influence the masses the regime has often referred to and/or relied upon pseudo-religious sources²² and thereby has also invigorated the so-called "pir cult"²³ in the country. Consequently, besides the common people the members of the bureaucracy and business in general, have largely been inducted into this cult. And it is a common knowledge that the "pirs" nowadays, not only provide spiritual guidance but also mediate in the material transactions between the members of all categories of their disciples. Indeed, this "pir cult" has also led to an increase in the number of (Muslim) religious workers, from 147,922 in 1974-75 to 455,653 in 1982-83 (BBS, 1983b: Table 4.35), as well as the increased observance of the multifarious pseudo-religious festivities in the country. These phenomena have added new dimensions

to the structure of popular Islam in Bangladesh. But, more important, they have as well reinforced the ideological interpellation of the state whereby it seeks to alienate the masses and sustain the hegemonic rule.

NOTES

1. By the Proclamation (Amendment) Order No. 1 of 1977 the principle of secularism was dropped and that of socialism was redefined and these marked significant deviations from the constitution of 1972. Thus the military regime redefined the state principles as follows: "The principle of absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah, nationalism, democracy and socialism meaning economic and social justice, together with the principles derived from them . . . shall constitute the fundamental principles of state policy." (Government of Bangladesh 1979a: 5)
2. The Bangladesh Observer, Dacca, August 4, 1976.
3. It is observed that, "outside a General Motors assembly unit (The Gandhara Industries Ltd.) in Chittagong, a few pharmaceutical multinationals, insurance, banks, and the old colonial tea estates, foreign investment was almost non-existent and totalled less than 30 million dollars." (EPW, 1978: 556)
4. The role of the EPZ in the neighbouring countries as well as the implications of the EPZ in Bangladesh have been discussed in a penetrating monograph on the economy of Bangladesh by Mahbub Ullah, 1982.
5. DI refers to the policy of selling out the nationalised industrial units of the former non-Bengali owners to the Bangladeshi buyers. DN refers to the returning of the nationalised industrial units to their Bangladeshi owners on officially defined terms. It may be noted that both DI and DN followed the revised investment policy since the military take-over in mid-1975. In 1975 the private investment ceiling was raised to 100

million taka and in 1978 the ceiling was altogether lifted.

6. When the dialogue began on September 9, 1980 most of the proposals of the political parties were published in the issues of the daily Sangbad, Dacca.
7. The government proposal was published in Sangbad, Dacca, September 15 and 16, 1980.
8. See Sangbad, Dacca, March 21, 1983.
9. Ibid., July 25, 1983.
10. A.Z.M. Obaidullah Khan, "Land reforms - a historical perspective", The Bangladesh Times, Dhaka, November 7, 1982.
11. Cited in Sangbad, Dacca, May 8, 1983.
12. See, IRDP, Planning Division, "Rural Development Expansion Programme in Bangladesh", Dacca, 1977, p. 17.
13. How far the expansion of cooperatives accelerated the processes of rural pauperization and polarization has been revealed in a study of the first cooperative village located in the laboratory area of the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD) at Comilla. The study showed that from 1894 to 1960 "there had been a long term tendency for Dhoneshor as a whole to decline economically", but "after 1960 the condition of the poorest households continued to deteriorate and their number increased. . . ." After 1960, therefore, increasing polarization by pauperization was replaced by polarization resulting from both pauperization at the bottom and economic improvement at the top. This sudden reversal started soon after the beginning of the Comilla program and then occurred in the "laboratory area" only; it can only be ascribed to the influence of the program." (Schendel 1981: 30)

14. Marx explained the phenomenon in the following way: "The capitalist system presupposes the complete separation of the labourers from all property in the means by which they can realise their labour. As soon as capitalist production is once on its own legs, it not only maintains this separation, but reproduces it on a continually extending scale. The process, therefore, that clears the way for the capitalist system, can be none other than the process which takes away from the labourer the possession of his means of production; a process that transforms, on the one hand, the social means of subsistence and of production into capital, on the other, the immediate producers into wage-labourers." (Marx, 1978, vol. 1: 668)

15. Pre-capitalist ground rent in that under the existing share-cropping system the tenant instead of turning over to the landlord the "surplus over the average profit" (as does the capitalist tenant), only turns over the latter's share in kind, or, in a few cases, in cash which, however, is the same thing in a modified form. (Marx 1977: 796-97)

16. At the government procurement centres, the landlords and merchants in collaboration with the officers concerned compel the peasants to sell out their crops below the official floor price to the former who then resell them at the floor price and thereby make off with a big premium. It is said that in order to sustain the process, "besides paying kickbacks, the merchants . . . pay the warehouse manager a monthly retainer in order to ensure his cooperation." (Hartmann and Boyce 1979: 22)

17. The agricultural minister himself observed that: "Land in Bangladesh . . . is synonymous with control of wealth, social

prestige and political power. Any reform measures, therefore, in the sense of altering ownership, use and control over land has serious consequences not for overall production and distribution of social product, but also for the existing power and property relations in a predominantly rural society. . . . Since the control of land and access to other productive resources appear to be closely related, the larger landowners tend to receive a disproportionate share of technical assistance provided by government agencies. They also enjoy easier access to institutional credit and other inputs." (A.Z.M. Obaidullah Khan, "Land reforms - a historical perspective", The Bangladesh Times, Dhaka, November 7, 1982)

18. The findings are cited with the permission of Mr. M. Sulaiman, the author of the forthcoming report of the study: "Characteristics of Newly Elected Representatives of Union Parishads of Comilla Sadar Upazila, BARD, Comilla."

19. Taking the daily calorie intake of 2122 as the poverty line, M.K. Alamgir calculated the proportion of people living below the line at 79.9 per cent ("Poverty in Bangladesh" in ADAB News, January-February 1984, vol. XI, No. 1, Dhaka).

20. Cited from the speech of the military President, H.M. Ershad, Sangbad, Dhaka, January 15, 1983.

21. Cited from the speech of the same, The Bangladesh Observer, Dhaka, February 13, 1984.

22. About a year after seizing the power, General Ershad announced that "the mutawalli (care-taker) of the shrine of Hazrat Boro Pir Shaheeb (at Bagdad) had sent me a chadar (robe) on June 16, 1981 together with a message saying 'you will be the head of

state', and later, I took over the office on March 24 last (1982)" - Sangbad, Dhaka, January 15, 1983. Previously, "the quilt (gilap) from the majar of Hazrat Abdul Quader Zilani (same as above) were presented to both Ziaur Rahman and Justice Sattar (former Presidents) with the prophecy of their ascension to power" - Holiday, Dhaka, January 22, 1983.

23. The "pir cult" or Pirism is deeply rooted in Sufism. Originally the word pir denoted the spiritual guide among the sufis but in course of time many special powers were ascribed to him. Such powers included "giving relief to the poor, destitutes and patients, being present at several places at a time, giving life to the dead, killing anybody at their wish and telling the future." Naturally the khanquahs, Chillakhanas or tombs of the Pirs became places of pilgrimage where constructions were made giving the name of dargah. The devotees illuminated the graves and made offerings to the Pirs or their departed soul. . . . It is no wonder that the converts /Buddhists and Hindus of Bengal who became Muslims/ found the Pirism in Islam somewhat parallel to their own traditions and superstitions." (Karim 1959: 163-64)

V CONCLUSION

In the foregoing chapters an analysis of the reciprocations between the social classes and mode of production and the state during the successive periods of the social formation in Bangladesh has been given. From this analysis it appears that the state in its determinate colonial, sub-colonial, petty bourgeois and military-bureaucratic forms, has existed as an autonomous institution vis-a-vis the social classes, which has been coterminous with the retarded transition of the mode of production. In other words, by impeding the unfolding of new modes of production the autonomous state, in the past, allowed the pre-capitalist forces and relations of production to dominate the social-economy, and continues to do so in the present. It should be noted that in the beginning, various natural and social conditions underlying the Asiatic mode of production attributed to the state its autonomous power. But the successive states as well have maintained the heritage of the Asiatic state while they established their sway over the social classes. The consequence of this is the development of sustained underdevelopment in Bangladesh.

The Asiatic state did not altogether hinder the development of commodity production which ushered in the vigorous mercantile activities of the indigenous and foreign merchants in Bengal. But, nevertheless, the transformation of the Asiatic mode of production itself was thwarted by the "unprogressiveness" of the forces of production, the subservience of the producers to the community and, more important, by the coercive domination of the

merchants by the ruling nobility and its state. Although by the late seventeenth century a section of the indigenous merchants substantially consolidated their position, they could not advance further with their politico-economic objectives in the face of the power of the state. However, in the second half of the eighteenth century (immediately before the Industrial Revolution in England) the advanced English merchant bourgeoisie overpowered the ruling nobility (albeit with the help of its indigenous counterpart) and captured the state power. With the advent of the English colonial rule the indigenous social formation had turned into what has been described as "partly Asiatic, partly feudal and partly capitalist." (Sen 1982: 6) It implies that instead of "creating a world after its own image" (Marx and Engles, 1962, vol. 1: 38), the English bourgeoisie hybridized the indigenous social formation in order to appropriate its resources for accelerating the capitalist development in England itself.

However, the routinization of colonial exploitation led to the emergence of new social classes and contradictions which were accompanied by extensive anti-colonial movements. By taking recourse to the policy of "divide et impera" the ruling class then contrived such politico-economic and religio-ideological schisms as were conducive to the diversion of the anti-colonial struggles into communal struggle. Although such contrivance failed to dispel the escalation of anti-colonial movements and nationalist upsurge, communalism persisted as their overarching ideology. At the time of decolonization this overarching ideology

of communalism was brought to bear upon the "process of imperial state building" in the Indian subcontinent. And in this "process" Bengal (as well as Punjab) was divided and the eastern part of Bengal became the numerically major part of the (Muslim) state of Pakistan.

At its inception, the ruling bloc of Pakistan (based in West Pakistan) adopted a policy of total national oppression in east Bengal and turned it into an arena of primary accumulation for the economic development of West Pakistan. However, by steering the question of freedom from this national oppression and sub-colonial domination along the line of regional autonomy, the Awami League (AL, a party of the Bengali petty bourgeoisie) won a decisive victory in the election of December 1970. But by denying to transfer power to the AL the West Pakistani ruling bloc forced upon the people of East Pakistan a struggle for total independence. While the struggle had escalated simultaneously along class and national lines, Indian intervention telescoped the independence whereupon the AL took over the state power in Bangladesh. But the inherent incapacities of the party to consolidate its power coupled with the contradictions it created by undermining the nascent bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie under socialist pretensions, hastened the dissolution of its rule. The dissolution of the petty bourgeois rule was, however, consummated by the nascent army. When the latter captured power through the coup d'etat in middle 1975, it not only retrieved the tradition of military rule but also reverted the state to its pre-independence form.

By modifying the policy of the petty bourgeois regime, the military-bureaucratic regime undertook to patronize the domestic as well as the foreign private investment in the nascent industrial sector, but, after the former regime, it deliberately avoided the necessary reforms in the larger agricultural sector dominated by the semi-feudal mode of production. While gearing state policies to the needs of private investment in the industrial sector, the regime relied on the "counsels" of the donor states and agencies. But when it adhered to a policy of non-intervention toward the larger agricultural sector and thereby allowed the prevailing semi-feudal mode of production to continue to dominate, it did so for the sake of its autonomous power which historically is an attribution and accompaniment of such a pre-capitalist mode of production. For example, with reference to French society under Louis Bonaparte, Marx noted that, "by its very nature, small-holding property forms a suitable basis for an all-powerful and innumerable bureaucracy". (1962b, vol. 1: 338) Lenin also referred to the similar social roots of bureaucratic power in the USSR. According to him,

In our country bureaucratic practices have different economic roots, namely, the atomised and scattered state of the small producer with his poverty, illiteracy, lack of culture, the absence of roads and exchange between agriculture and industry, the absence of connection and interaction between them. (1967: 602)

In a recent work Sen (1982) has shown that the state in India, too, has so far maintained its autonomous power by encouraging small-scale production in the vast agricultural

sector and in industry while the development of large-scale industries was undertaken by the state itself, undermining the interests of the Indian bourgeoisie. It is alleged that the state took to such policies with the object of alleviating the poverty of the masses as well as of curbing the power of the bourgeoisie. But it is found that, on the one hand, the state has been "totally unsuccessful in alleviating the condition of the people and the producing classes." (Sen 1982: 222) On the other hand, "every day the ranks of the bourgeoisie are swelling", and the "hand of the bourgeoisie in its struggle to bring the state apparatus under its own rule" is being strengthened. (Ibid.) The latter development is likely to have far-reaching impact on the transformation of the social formation in India. But owing to lack of similar development in Bangladesh, the autonomous power of the state and the prevailing conjuncture of underdevelopment are likely to persist until reversed by some revolutionary upsurge from below.

Indeed, the "over-developed" military-bureaucratic state and its ideological subterfuge that correspond to the prevailing semi-feudal mode of production, may be said to militate against the prospect of a "bourgeois revolution" in Bangladesh. The nascent "bourgeoisie" in Bangladesh seems to have no other option than its present mercantile, lumpen or comprador complacence. And due to the organic and/or infantile weaknesses of the bourgeoisie, the industrial proletariat, too, is not large enough in size (the total number of industrial workers is reported to be 440,000; BBS, 1983b: Table 4.32). However, notwithstanding its relatively small size and compositional (class) syndrome, the

working class in Bangladesh not only demonstrated its militancy in the past but has become evidently more organized and class conscious in recent times. Although not organized, the peasant proletariat in Bangladesh constitute the most numerous class and its radical potential, too, is presumed to be enormous. However, it is observed that while the state makes no secret of the magnitude of material deprivations of these classes, it adopts various measures to divert and pulverize their struggle for emancipation. Such contradiction is not likely to allow the prevailing conjuncture of the social formation to persist very long in the future. Indeed, in view of the current crisis as well as the growing capacity of the working classes, it seems that the decisive battle over the state power in Bangladesh is not far off and that, it may usher in a new era of hope and dignity for the millions who, for ages have been groaning under their pyramid of sacrifice.

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