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Moral Economists, Subalterns, New Social Movements, and the (Re-) Emergence of a (Post-) Modernised (Middle) Peasant

Tom Brass*

This article examines the way in which peasant movements in both India and Latin America have been reinterpreted by the post-modern and politically revisionist project of the subaltern studies series on India and the new social movements theory on Latin America. It is suggested that much of the conceptual analysis embodied in both these frameworks is prefigured in the earlier 'moral economy' approach, incorporating the middle peasant thesis of Wolf and Alavi, an epistemological lineage in which the work of J.C. Scott discharges a pivotal role. An additional claim made here is that such frameworks implicitly provide Chayanovian neo-populist economic theory with its missing politico-ideological dimension.

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INTRODUCTION

This article follows a doubly unpopular path. First, it constitutes an attempt to reassert the value of a chronologically old and increasingly unfashionable Marxist analysis of the peasantry. And second, it utilizes a comparative framework that stresses certain similarities between some recent agrarian mobilisations in Latin America and India, when the trend nowadays is in the opposite direction: that is, towards an absolute relativism which stresses the complexity and uniqueness (almost, even, the autonomy) of the individual subject in terms of ideological formation, social composition, and (thus) political interest and disposition.

Just as sociological theory generally can be described as a continuing dispute with Marx, so the study of agrarian change is similarly a confrontation with Lenin. Hence the political importance of the longstanding debate between Marxism and neo-populism on the agrarian question involves not just the issue of peasant differentiation *per se* but rather its

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implications for the role played by rural mobilisation in the transition to socialism. The hostility of neo-populism to the latter, and the resulting conflict between it and Marxism, is embodied historically in the theoretical opposition between Chayanov and Lenin concerning both the socio-economic differentiation and the politico-ideological disposition of the peasantry. In contrast to Marxism, therefore, neo-populism views the peasantry as an undifferentiated *sui generis* economic category ('peasant economy', 'peasant mode of production') which both reproduces itself regardless of and simultanously resists all social systems.

It is claimed here that the more important epistemological components – together with their political implications – of precisely such a neo-populist lineage can now be traced directly from Chayanov through the 'middle peasant thesis' and the 'moral economy' argument of Wolf, Alavi, and Scott, to the current studies of agrarian mobilisation that use a postmodern subaltern studies and new social movements framework. These frameworks, it is further argued, also provide Chayanovian theory about the peasant economy with its missing politico-ideological dimension: in so far as the subaltern studies and new social movements approach is structured by the increasingly fashionable methodology of discourse analysis and resistance theory, therefore, its conceptualisation of ideology and action is decoupled from class and revolution. It becomes pluri-vocal, and is diffuse in its origins, causation, effect, and ultimately in its political direction. Finally, the theoretical efficacy of these frameworks is evaluated with regard to recent agrarian mobilisations in Colombia, Peru, and India.

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NEO-POPULISM, MIDDLE PEASANTS, AND MORAL ECONOMISTS

According to Lenin [1960, 1966] – and also Trotsky [1962, 1969] – the peasantry discharges a twofold role in the process of revolutionary transformation. The first stage occurs in the course of the transition to capitalism, and entails a process whereby an economically declining feudal landowning class is challenged and overwhelmed by a peasant movement reflecting the interests of a rising and economically dominant rich peasantry (= rural capitalists). The second stage occurs under capitalism itself, when a rural mobilisation led by poor peasants and agricultural workers in turn challenges and overthrows the capitalist peasantry who successfully led the movement against the landlord class. On the agenda at this stage, therefore, is the possibility of a transition to socialism, in that poor peasants and particularly agricultural workers will demand the further socialisation of the means of production, and specifically the collectivisation of all rural property. The middle peasantry is not involved in – let alone leads the peasant movement – in either of these two stages, for the simple reason that in Lenin's model this particular stratum disintegrates (or is 'depeasantized') in the course of capitalist development.[1]

By contrast, in the neo-populist vision of Chayanov [1966] it is precisely the middle peasant which reproduces itself in the form of the family labour farm, regardless of the presence/absence of feudalism, capitalism or indeed socialism. Implicitly challenging Lenin's view regarding the occurrence of socio-economic differentiation within the peasantry, Chayanov argued instead that the reproduction of the family labour farm is unaffected by wages, interest, rent, and profit. Consequently, work organisation and intensity on such units is determined not by internal/external surplus appropriation leading to capital accumulation, but rather by the producer/consumer balance within the peasant family itself.[2] Based on the development cycle of the domestic group that cultivates the economically self-sufficient smallholding, rural change is endogenous and takes the form of demographic differentiation linked to the consumption requirements of family members.

However, while Chayanov outlines the *economic* logic of the peasant family farm, he tells us nothing about the nature of the *political* action which corresponds to and follows from this economic role. And it is this very gap that the theory advanced not only by Scott, Alavi and Wolf but also by the subaltern studies and new social movements framework concerning the nature and object of individual or collective action undertaken by the peasantry fills so neatly. In other words, it is Chayanov's peasant family farm which, as the 'eternal' middle peasant, either engages in revolutionary action against capitalism, or simply resists it on a day-to-day basis, the object in both instances being to restore the *status quo ante*.

Unlike the Lenin view, the 'middle peasant thesis' propounded by Wolf [1971] and Alavi [1979] allocates a revolutionary role to its subject, and thus opens up a *politico-ideological* space for the economic theory of Chayanov. Superficially, the seminal texts by Wolf and Alavi covering twentieth century peasant movements in Mexico, Russia, China, India, Vietnam, Algeria, and Cuba appear to be compatible with a Marxist framework. Thus agrarian mobilisations are regarded as a response to the impact of capitalist development, and the peasantry itself is differentiated on the basis of rich, middle and poor components. Wolf's analysis of peasant movements has been endorsed by no less a person than Desai [1979: 760ff.], who not only maintains that he uses 'some of the major elements of a Marxist approach [and] adopts an approach which comes closest to a Marxist [framework]' but goes so far as to commend the resulting break with ahistorical anthropology in which peasants 'are treated as passive, unchanging, ... traditional and ... major obstacles to the modernization of the Third World'.[3] However, both Alavi [1979: 673ff.] and Wolf [1971: 291f.] share the (un-Leninist) belief that the middle peasant is not located between the rich and poor peasantry but much rather corresponds to a different sector of the rural economy, composed of independent smallholders who own their land which they cultivate with family labour. Both also share the (un-Leninist) view that poor peasants are the least militant elements of the peasantry as a whole

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because of patron–client ties which bind them to their masters, and similarly that the the most militant elements are the middle peasantry.[4]

The mutually reinforcing theoretical overlap between the 'middle peasant thesis' and the 'moral economy' argument provides Chayanov with two additional forms of superstructural material. First, it constitutes a break with the Leninist concept of revolutionary action and the role of different peasant strata in this process (the political significance of which will become clear below). Instead of revolutionary or insurrectionary activity involving peasants as a mass, rural mobilization in the 'moral economy' argument has been recast by Scott [1976, 1985, 1989] as 'everyday forms of peasant resistance'. The latter refers to smallscale and apparently innocuous activity undertaken by peasants on an individual basis, corresponding to 'generalized non-compliance by thousands of peasants' [1989:11], and consists of actions such as foot dragging (or go-slows) dissimulation, desertion, false compliance, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, and sabotage [1985: xvi]. The importance of such actions, Scott argues, lies in the fact that they require little or no coordination or planning (in a word, spontaneous), they make use of implicit understandings and networks, they often represent a form of individual self-help, and they typically avoid any direct confrontation with authority. He concludes that in many ways 'everyday forms of peasant resistance' is a more effective form of action, in that through this peasants are more likely to achieve the goals they fail to obtain in the course of the more dramatic large-scale rural mass mobilisations.

And second, just as the Chayanovian subject is reconstituted theoretically in the 'middle peasant' thesis, so the 'moral economy' argument emphasises its ahistorical character (or 'naturalness') in protecting the subsistence ethic against an external capitalism.[5] A theoretical position which this time Wolf shares with Scott, the 'moral economy' argument maintains that peasants are moved to protest when capitalist penetration of the countryside leads to the loss of subsistence as a result of the breakdown in patron–client relations linking them to elites.[6] The 'moral economy' element consists of the fact that pre-capitalist relationships and institutions protect the peasantry against hardship and starvation, and it is this pre-existing form of insurance or subsistence guarantee which is destroyed by capitalism. Therefore, Scott and Wolf claim, the object of peasant resistance against capitalism is to protect this traditional source of provision. Unlike Lenin, for whom capitalist development not only benefits rich and poor peasants in different ways but also prefigures socialism, for 'moral economists' it merely provokes a return to the pre-capitalist socio-economic structure, and thus cannot prefigure anything.[7]

POST-MODERNISM, SUBALTERNS AND NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

At first sight, both the subaltern studies and new social movements theory seem to have little in common in terms of time and space. Thus the

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subaltern studies series is basically a critique of the historiography of colonial India, and focuses on issues connected largely with rural transformation; by contrast, the emphasis of the original new social movements texts is on urban social mobilisation in contemporary Latin America, which is regarded as a response to new forms of social subordination (commodification, bureaucratisation, and massification).[8] More recently, however, the scrutiny of new social movements theory has not only shifted from urban to rural mobilizations (for example, Eckstein [1989], Redclift [1988], Fox [1990]) but has also begun to combine with the 'middle peasant thesis', the 'moral economy' argument and 'everyday forms of resistance' theory, where it finally (and logically) joins forces with subaltern studies.[9]

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Post-modernism and Its Effects

It is impossible to situate the theoretical concerns and political direction of subaltern studies and new social movements without reference to the way in which their discourse is structured by the post-modernist project. The latter has transformed the disillusion of 1968 into a Nietzschean pessimism which licenses and in politico-ideological terms epitomises the reactionary conservatism of the 1980s (see, *inter alia*, Sarup [1988], Callinicos [1989]). In rejecting totalising/Eurocentric meta-narratives, post-modernism also denies thereby the possibility of a universal process of socio-economic development embodied in the notion of history-as-progress (regardless of whether or not this is actually realised).[10] Such a view necessarily signals the abolition of the Enlightenment project, or emancipation as the object and attainable end of historical transformation, and along with it socialism and communism.[11]

The epistemological link between on the one hand the 'middle peasant thesis' and the 'moral economy' argument of Wolf, Alavi, and Scott, and on the other the postmodern underpinnings of subaltern studies and new social movements theory, is evident from the positive/negative thematic classification that structures their discourse. In general terms, therefore, Eurocentrism, universalism, together with the emancipatory object of history-as-progress all constitute methods/processes/concepts the efficacy of which is denied. The collective is replaced by the autonomous/fragmented individual subject, and the latter is defined not by production but by consumption. The realm of 'the economic' gives way to 'the cultural', while Lenin and Marx are similarly pushed aside by Gramsci and Foucault. Action is guided not by class structure/formation/struggle but by subaltern/elite identities and/or those based on ethnicity/gender/religion/region; a change in the very nature of action itself entails that revolution be replaced by resistance, and in terms of the desirable/(possible) outcome of such action socialism is displaced by bourgeois democracy.

This nihilistic anti-systemic/anti-progessive position derives in part

from the methodological underpinnings of postmodern theory itself. In methodological terms, postmodernism is the mirror image of historical materialism: its unit of analysis is the individual, and its sphere of intervention/determination 'the ideological'.[12] As with language itself, each and every discursively constituted subject in post-modern theory is in ideological terms fragmented and hence autonomous: instead of people speaking univocally (as a class), the individual speaks plurivocally (as a gender/ethnically/regionally specific subject).[13] In contrast to the Marxist analysis of, for example, Volosinov [1977], for whom language is a materially determined arena of class struggle, whereby rival significations are reproduced or transcended and meanings constructed inter-subjectively, for post-modernism the subject is unproblematically constituted by and through language, outside of which there is no existence and therefore no meaning.[14]

In common with two of its theoretical precursors, Gramsci and Foucault, the analytical focus of post-modernism is on 'the ideological': unlike historical materialism, however, an important socio-*economic* concept such as 'power' is theorised by Foucault as an ideological phenomenon, as an end in itself (an innate human characteristic), and thus not as a means to an end (ownership/control of the means of production).[15] Accordingly, the determining role of 'the economic' is either denied or downgraded: ethnic- or gender-specific sociological categories are decontextualised economically, only to be reconstituted in post-modern discourse as cultural subjects.[16] In the case of subaltern studies, this methodological procedure results in the depeasantisation of tribals (or the tribalisation of peasants), which in turn licenses the dei-/rei-fication of the 'other' (see below).

In rejecting history-as-progress, post-modernism is nevertheless required to identify a less alienating version of the present, and (its ahistoricism notwithstanding) unsurprisingly retrieves from the past an idealised version of a world-we-have-lost. Accordingly, the postmodernist philosopher Lyotard expresses nostalgia for a pre-modern (traditional) society, which rests on non-scientific knowledge such as myth, magic, folk wisdom, while the 'New Philosopher' Nemo makes a similarly unfavourable constrast between the dehumanised anonymity of commodity relationships under capitalism and the (more desirable) personal bond between master and servant under feudalism (see Sarup [1988: 132] and Dews [1980: 10]). This advocacy by postmodernism of a return-to-nature both merges neatly with and simultaneously reinforces not only the 'moral economy' argument and the 'middle peasant thesis' but also the neo-populist vision of Chayanov that lies behind them. In denying either the possibility or even the desirability of emancipation, therefore, post-modern theory supports the view of an 'eternal' peasant economy as a 'natural' category outside and against history, and thus confers politico-ideological acceptability on the struggle of its constituent subjects to remain the same.[17] Postmodernism also reproduces and

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reinforces the theoretical emphasis placed by Chayanovian theory on the role of consumption (as distinct from production) in defining the subject.

Subalterns, New Social Movements, Class and Consciousness

In typically post-modern fashion ('a plague on all your houses'), the critiques undertaken by subaltern studies, new social movements, and Scott, all object to a similar combination of overarching theoretical frameworks. Thus the trinity composed of 'conservative paternalism, ... populist manipulation [and] the technicist understanding of history by Latin American Marxists' (Evers [1985: 45]; see also Slater [1985: 4, 5]) against which new social movements theory argues is analagous to the tripartite model of colonial/nationalist/Marxist interpretations challenged by subaltern studies [Guha 1983: 4].[18] In much the same vein, Scott [1989: 4] rejects both 'conservative officialdom and revolutionary vanguard'.

In subaltern studies and new social movements texts, as well as in the work of Alavi, Wolf and Scott, the concept 'class' is either used incorrectly, questioned, downgraded or rejected. Although he uses the terms rich, middle and poor peasants, therefore, Alavi [1979: 672–3] nevertheless questions the utility of such concepts. In a similar vein, Wolf [1971: 289] claims that peasant interests override class alignments, as demonstrated by the fact that rich and poor peasants unite as kinsfolk (kinship = affective relation) rather than divide as economic subjects. For Scott [1985: xvi–xvii; 1989: 5,7], the concept of 'class' is synonymous with the category 'peasant' (see also Guha [1983: 92–3]), and seemingly radical notions such as 'ordinary means of class struggle' together with 'everyday forms of class resistance' thus refer mainly to conflict between the peasantry as a whole and the state (see below).[19] Significantly, because of this 'conflation' ('class' = 'peasant'), Scott is then able to claim that, as a 'class', peasants are able to discharge an *independent* historical role.

The irrelevance of class differentiation in relation to the peasantry emerges most clearly in a recent collection celebrating Scott's concept of 'everyday forms of resistance', where the editor unambiguously asserts that:

> For the sake of convenience the rural poor are described as peasants. Numerous discussions about what constitutes a peasant remain inconclusive. At times it is important to acknowledge the heterogeneity of the rural poor. Not so here. Thus the definition adopted is broad, with only two easily satisfied characteristics: (1) the peasant works in agriculture, and (2) he or she has a subordinate position in a hierarchical economic and political order. [*Colburn*, 1989: ix][20]

Much the same is true of the approaches which adhere to the new social movements and subaltern studies framework. Because it is tainted with universalism and Eurocentrism, and hence deemed to be inapplicable to the Third World, both deprivilege class as an analytical category (see, for

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example, Guha [1983: 166ff.], Evers [1985: 62], Laclau [1985: 29,30], Slater [1985: 5,15]).

Instead of class difference, the opposition is rather between the 'elite' and its 'state' on the one hand, and the on the other the 'masses'/'popular masses'. Thus Guha's [1982a: vii–viii] category of the 'subaltern' encompasses all forms of 'subordinate' who do not belong to the 'elite'; that is, all those 'of inferior rank ... whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way' (see also Sen [1987: 203]). It is these same 'subalterns' who correspond approximately to Scott's [1989: 5] 'weaker party' or 'relatively powerless groups' that engage in 'everyday forms of resistance' against the state. The politically and sociologically problematic nature of the 'subaltern' is evident from its all-embracing social composition: among its ranks, therefore, are to be found 'the lesser rural gentry, impoverished landlords, rich peasants and upper middle peasants'. The fact that it includes those whose *class position* and interest correspond to those of an agrarian petty-bourgeoisie, and as such are opposed to those of a rural proletariat, rightly identifies the 'subaltern' as an all-encompassing *neo-populist* category.[21]

The political and analytical deprivileging/demise of class that characterises the theoretical approaches under consideration stems from a particular epistemological chain of causation. Because classical Marxism – with the exception of Lukacs [1971] – failed to develop an adequate theory of class-determined ideological forms and practice, this terrain has been annexed by non-Marxist post-modernists who now use it to throw doubt on the current and historical existence of class itself. Thus subaltern studies and new social movements theory argue that, as agrarian mobilisation and resistance to colonialism/capitalism has more to do with the experience and ideology of gender, ethnicity, region, ecology, or religion, these kinds of 'difference' cannot be understood by (and are therefore not reducible to) the class position of the subject. This incompatibility between ethnic/gender/religious/regional identity and experience on the one hand, and class-specific ideological forms on the other, leads in turn and inevitably to the non-emergence of class consciousness, which is then taken as evidence for the non-existence of class itself. Within such an unambiguously idealist framework there is no need to probe the surface appearance of non-class idioms/language/identity/experience, and hence no contradiction is perceived to occur between the latter and the socio-economic position of the subject(s) concerned. Accordingly, the question of precisely what ideological forms constitute consciousness of class, together with the reasons for their absence, is never (and indeed cannot be) posed.[22]

In the case of Latin America, therefore, the argument is that as peasants are unable to make the transition from a 'class-in-itself' to a 'class-for-itself', any attempt to analyse rural mobilisations in terms of 'class' is consequently inappropriate (see, for example, Wolf [1971: 289], Redclift [1988: 250]). At no point do such texts consider what ideological forms

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such a transformation (class-in-itself ⇒ class-for-itself) would entail, let alone the possibility that for the leading strata such movements are actually a success.[23] As a number of other texts have pointed out (for example, Sánchez [1982], Mallon [1983]), the operationalisation of apparently politically 'innocent' pre-/non-capitalist ideological forms serve to disguise and simultaneously to advance the *class*-specific objectives of rich peasants, since only in this way can relationships which in economic terms are unequal be represented ideologically as equal. Similarly, in the case of India politico-ideological inversions in which 'Brahmans ... would behave like Sudras and Sudras like Brahmans' [*Guha*, 1983: 30ff.] that seem to reverse (and hence subvert) the existing hierarchy, may in certain situations also serve to obscure the presence of economically opposed subjects within the category of the subaltern/subordinate itself.[24] A consequence of accepting the surface appearance of these relationships is to endow them with a false concreteness, a reification which not only results in the (mis-) recognition of middle peasants as the sole agents and benefactors of agrarian mobilisation but also sustains thereby a rejection of history-as-progress.

This acceptance of the surface appearance of relations of production, which derives from the epistemological impossibility of admitting the presence of false consciousness, also structures the subaltern studies critique of the non-fulfilment of the liberal bourgeois project on the part of the British Raj. That the latter did not displace pre-capitalist social forms in its colony, as embodied in the contrast between the introduction of Liberalism/Democracy/Liberty/Rule-of-Law, etc., leading to the elimination of unfreedom in the metropolitan context yet the absence of the very same combined with the persistence of unfreedom in the Indian subcontinent [*Guha*, 1989: 235–7, 273–4, 277], is regarded as evidence for the failure of the totalizing capitalist project and implicitly confirms the impossibility of history-as-progress.[25] Because the issue is theorised largely at the level of the superstructure, however, even a perceptive subaltern studies contributor like Ranajit Guha fails to distinguish between the spread of capitalism as an *economic* project, and Liberalism/Democracy/Liberty/Rule-of-Law, etc., as contingent *politico-ideological* aspects of this process, any or all of which may be absent without necessarily hindering the reproduction of the capital relation itself.

Accordingly, capitalism does not everywhere need – and indeed sometimes cannot operate with – the superstructural forms that constitute the liberal bourgeois project: much rather, in specific contexts and at particular moments, the accumulation process actually depends on their absence. Unfree (or 'feudal') relations of production constitute a good example of this paradox, since both historically and currently the development of a specifically *proletarian* class consciousness linked to the existence of the free wage relation not only threatens the profitability of capitalism in the short term but confronts this socio-economic system with the possibility of its own demise in the long term.[26] In such circum-

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stances, therefore, the continuation of pre-capitalist socio-economic forms in non-metropolitan contexts is in fact a *realisation* and not a negation of the universalist project of capitalism.

Revolution and Resistance

As has already been noted, Marxism denies middle peasants an independent historical role in any revolutionary process. As small capitalist producers, rich peasants are in the vanguard of the struggle against the landlord class in the course of a capitalist transition, only to be displaced in turn by the proletariat and poor peasantry in the course of a transition to socialism. Because of its continuous 'depeasantisation', the middle peasantry does not – and indeed *cannot* – discharge a similar historical role, and for this reason is not considered by Marxism to constitute an independent revolutionary force. Having recuperated this very same subject for the historical process, Wolf and Alavi nevertheless experience difficulty in reconciling the innate dissonance between on the one hand its revolutionary political action and on the other its conservative socio-economic disposition.[27] The work of Scott offers a plausible solution to this contradiction, in so far as it shifts the locus of peasant action from revolution to 'everyday forms of resistance', thereby banishing or downgrading revolution from the historical agenda and simultaneously restoring to the middle peasant an independent historical role embodied in this kind of all-pervasive and continuous political activity.

Scott is in many ways a pivotal figure in the whole discourse under consideration here; his methodology based on 'everyday forms of resistance', together with its theoretical effects, forms a crucial (and continuing) link between earlier texts by Wolf and Alavi, and the later texts belonging to the subaltern studies and new social movements framework. Thus the micro-level responses embodied in Scott's ubiquitous concept, deployed by Wolf [1971: 282] to describe peasant reaction to capitalist penetration, reappear as the 'new forms of struggle and resistance' [*Laclau*, 1985: 27] undertaken by new social movements which in turn lead to 'new socio-cultural patterns of everyday sociability ... the embryos of a popular counter-foundation' [*Evers*, 1985: 63]. As an organizational form, the concept of 'everyday forms of resistance' also structures the actions undertaken by subalterns: in contrast to the elite, whose activity is legalistic/constitutional, cautious and controlled, and consists of vertical mobilisation [*Guha*, 1982b: 4–5], subalterns engage in spontaneous/violent (= 'natural') action that entails the operationalisation of traditional horizontal linkages based on kinship and territoriality.

Most importantly, the element of hegemony, implied in the work of Wolf and Alavi, is challenged and displaced by Scott. The latter thereby transforms peasants from passive accepters of existing ideology into its active challengers. Hence middle peasants are not just occasionally engaged in overt conflict, such as going to war, rioting, rebelling, or engaging in revolutionary activity to stay middle peasants but are now

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depicted by Scott as being actively and continuously engaged in covert struggle to remain middle peasants. In short, the periodic and defensive action attributed by Wolf and Alavi to middle peasants in order to preserve their status as such is in the work of Scott transformed into incessant and offensive action.

As significant is the fact that in the course of this epistemological break, the central focus of peasant resistance has shifted from withstanding capitalism (as in the work of Wolf and Alavi) to opposing socialism (in the work of Scott, subaltern studies and new social movements), thus not only reinforcing the Chayanovian concept of the peasantry as a socio-economic form which reproduces itself independently regardless of the mode of production but also licensing opposition by rich peasants to attempts at the further socialisation of means of production. As Kitching [1982: 21ff.] points out with regard to the political difference between neo-populism and populism, the latter was a principally a critique of nineteenth-century capitalism arising from opposition to its human costs; moreover, populism did not deny the possibility of economic development *per se*, arguing only that this could be achieved without large-scale industrialisation and urbanisation. Neo-populism, by contrast, is a twentieth-century phenomenon opposed not so much to capitalism as to socialism, and to the collectivisation of smallholding peasants in particular.

The shift from revolution to resistance as the main type of peasant action licenses a break not just with the revolutionary form itself but also with its political content. A consequence of downgrading the act of revolution in this manner is a corresponding denial of history-as-progress linked to and dependent on the revolutionary process itself; in short, a procedure which banishes emancipation generally, and in particular abolishes not merely the inevitability but even the possibility of socialism as the outcome.

Bourgeois Democracy, Socialism and the State

As the focus of new social movements is the individual subject, the target of whose activity is the state apparatus, it is unsurprising that its post-modern discourse is unequivocally anti-state. Thus new social movements, for whom the 'question of a reappropriation of society from the state has become thinkable' [*Evers*, 1985: 61], are characterised as generally 'anti-authoritarian, anti-institutional' [*Slater*, 1985: 3]. Wolf [1971:294–5], Scott [1989:23] and Redclift [1988:251] all identify the state as the object of action undertaken by peasants. Since without knowing the class composition of a movement against the state it is impossible to say what kind of socio-economic contradictions permeate its political programmes and objectives, the decoupling of state and class immediately raises a number of politically important issues.

At a general level, this decoupling generates a certain amount of conceptual confusion; for example, the claim [*Redclift*, 1988: 250] that in

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Latin America during the 1970s and 1980s the state has replaced the landlord as the source of repression in the agrarian sector allocates to the state (an adminstrative apparatus where – as is the case here – the class interests are unspecified) the role previously filled by the landlord *class*. It also obscures the *class* origin and object of action against the state. Hence a simplistic peasant/state opposition reproduces and reinforces the all-powerful-state/all-subordinate-peasantry dichotomy, which in turn conceals the extent to which it is *rich* peasants who successfully resist the attempts by a capitalist state to impose controls on the direction of their own accumulation project.[28] Similarly, 'everyday forms of resistance' can be undertaken by any and all socio-economic agents against the state, a point conceded by Scott [1989: 23]. He attempts to rescue his characterisation of this kind of action as resistance-from-below by claiming that it usually involves a 'weaker' party struggling against an 'institutional' opponent that controls the state apparatus, and that all those engaged in such action operate with a concept of injustice-which-needs-rectifying [*Scott*, 1989: 24]. The problem with this is that landlords and capitalists are not only capable of undertaking 'everyday forms of resistance' but – like poor peasants and workers – also do this on the basis of 'injustice' (for example, state expropriation of privately-owned factories or latifundia). A further problem is that, although new social movements are directed against the state, both their mode (resistance-not-revolution) and form (the aetheticisation of revolt, or cultural opposition) of mobilisation effectively preclude a realistic challenge to the power and existence of the state itself. This point is recognized by Evers [1985: 43], who observes that new social movements are basically about 'everyday social [and socio-cultural] relations' and *not* about the capture of political power.

That the state apparatus remains intact in this manner – for the bourgeoisie to (re-) occupy – is unsurprising, since the political objective of new social movements and subaltern studies framework is an understanding of the difficulties associated with the realisation not of socialism or communism but bourgeois democracy.[29] Hence the project of subaltern studies has been defined by Guha as 'a "new democracy" – *it is the study of this failure which constitutes the central problematic of the historiography of colonial India*' (original emphasis), while that of the new social movements similarly addresses issues relating to the (re-) construction of a hegemonic democracy encompassing the 'popular sectors'.[30] However, the rejection by Scott [1985: 314f.] of 'hegemony' indicates the difficulty of reconciling 'everyday forms of resistance' with any social structure, since the element of politico-ideological acceptation implicit in the concept is by its very nature incompatible with this kind of (almost nihilistic) peasant activity.[31]

The long-term political direction of a theoretical framework with a socially non-specific state at its core, and thus as the focus of peasant action, finally emerges when it becomes clear that it licenses resistance not

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only to the capitalist state but also to a socialist state and behind this socialism itself.[32] Hence the observation by Slater [1985: 7] that: 'we must not assume that there exists a linear relationship between new social movements and a progressive political orientation, because obviously it cannot be assumed *a priori* that every new struggle or demand will somehow automatically express a socialist content'. This point is reiterated elsewhere by Slater [1985: 14] and also by Evers [1985: 63], who comments that 'some observers have pointed to the puzzling fact that some of the new impulses coming out of these base level groupings have similarities with the ultra-liberal ideology of [Milton] Friedman'. Significantly, in rejecting revolution as a means of securing change, Scott [1989: 3–4] argues that socialist revolutions are more exploitative than capitalism and, like Laclau and Mouffe [1985], makes no distinction between Leninism and Stalinism [Scott 1989: 18]. For Scott, therefore, the focus of peasant opposition has now become the socialist state, and his most recent examples of 'everyday forms of resistance' embodying state/peasant conflict are all drawn from non-capitalist contexts: the Soviet union in the 1920s and 1930s, Hungary during the 1940s and 1950s, and China 1949–78 [1989: 15ff.].

Although this particular development in the work of Scott constitutes a fundamental break with Wolf, for whom the focus of peasant opposition is the capitalist state, it nevertheless licenses an equally important continuation with the earlier views of Chayanov. Thus the type of peasant he defends in general terms against the socialist state is precisely that which Chayanov was accused of protecting in the Soviet Union, and for much the same reasons. At first sight, therefore, the self-sufficient family farmer, whose 'autonomy' is threatened by the socialist state, whose life-sustaining link between production and consumption is broken by collectivisation, and who because of this engages in 'everyday forms of resistance' [*Scott*, 1989: 15], exhibits all the socio-economic characteristics associated with – and indeed appears to be nothing other than – the middle peasant. However, just as Chayanov [1966: lxx, 43ff.] conflated middle peasants and kulaks, thereby providing the latter with a politico-ideological defence that permitted them to resist further socialisation of the means of production under the guise of petty commodity producers rather than rich peasants, so Scott [1989: 17] tacitly acknowledges that in socialist Hungary 'everyday forms of resistance' was a defensive strategy adopted by kulaks to block state procurements.[33] Despite being aware of the petty bourgeois disposition and element among the peasantry in such contexts, therefore, Scott refuses to make a political distinction between action by incipient/actual agrarian capitalists against a socio-economic system attempting to prevent them from becoming once more or continuing as small capitalists, and that undertaken by workers and poor peasants against capitalism. Whereas both activities share the same form, the political content of the former is reactionary, and must be differentiated from resistance against capitalism which seeks to go beyond it and establish socialism.

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AGRARIAN MOBILISATION IN LATIN AMERICA AND INDIA

The epistemological continuity between on the one hand the post-modernised new social movements and subaltern studies approach, and on the other the work of Scott, Wolf and Alavi, and the neo-populism of Chayanov, together with the consequent theoretical difficulties inherited by the former from all the latter, is best illustrated with regard to the way in which these frameworks analyse and account for three recent examples of agrarian mobilisation in Latin America and India: ANUC in Colombia during the 1970s, Sendero Luminoso in Peru during the 1980s, and Naxalism in West Bengal during the early 1970s.[34]

ANUC in Colombia

Zamosc charts the rise and fall of the peasant movement in Colombia over a period of two decades, a process which began with the formation of the National Peasant Association (*Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos* or ANUC) in 1967, reached a peak with the land invasions of 1971, and ended in the late 1970s when the struggle for land ceased. Because it did not result in a substantial 'repeasantisation', Zamosc regards this movement as a failure. Although in the course of this struggle and the subsequent agrarian reform some 66,000 families had obtained land by the end of the 1970s, a greater number had in fact become landless during the two previous decades [1986: 149,203; 1989: 124].

Despite containing much important information on the political economy of Colombia, the opposing politico-ideological positions in debates concerning rural transformation, and the peasant movement itself, Zamosc's analysis is marred by an idealised view of the peasantry, which in turn leads to a misrecognition of the reasons for the agrarian struggles he describes. Apart from a few token footnote references [1986: 215–16], no attempt is made to address the existing literature on and debate about capitalist development, rural socio-economic differentiation, and the peasant economy.[35] Instead of differentiating the peasantry in terms of class, Zamosc follows Shanin – whose enthusiastic endorsement precedes the main text [1986: xi–xiv] – and (like Scott) adopts a neo-populist framework in which not only is the peasantry itself recast in terms of 'class' [1986: 2, 27, 37, 39, 46, 50ff.; 1989: 115, 123, 127] but the self-sufficient peasant family farm is regarded as a non-capitalist alternative form of development [1986: 7, 215–16 footnotes 1–2]. That such a theoretical framework is impossible to sustain rapidly becomes apparent, since Zamosc's view of peasants as a class soon begins to co-exist uneasily with references to the presence of rich, middle, and poor peasants [1986: 41, 124–5, 140, 231 footnote 81, 224 footnote 83]. Subsequently he admits that the existence of a socio-economically differentiated peasantry undermined the peasant movement [1986: 170–

71], and concludes by noting that the demise of ANUC was due largely to this factor [1986: 204–5].

Although his argument is based on the Chayanovian concept of the independent peasant family farm, Zamosc actually tells us little about its internal socio-economic structure, organisation, and dynamic. For example, he omits to provide data on crucial points such as changing household composition, the kinds and amounts of labour employed (personal, family, hired), cropping patterns and per hectare yields, and whether or not such units generated production surpluses. Instead, the defining criterion is land, a methodological procedure which, when coupled with the unproblematic adoption of census landholding categories, involves Zamosc following 'the accepted convention that ... considers units smaller than twenty hectares to be peasant units' [1986: 23; see also 1989: 109]. That the economic interests of those at the top of this category might not be the same as those at the bottom is a question Zamosc never poses. According to the 1960 agricultural census, cultivators owning under 20 hectares accounted for 61 per cent of total output and, more significantly, for half the output of coffee, the principal cash-crop exported by Colombia [1986: 25]. This undifferentiated landholding category would therefore have included not only poor peasants, whose main income derived from the sale of their labour-power, but also small agrarian capitalists producing coffee for the international market.[36]

The theoretical contradictions inherent in Zamosc's neo-populist teleology are perhaps nowhere more evident than in his assessment of the agrarian reform that followed the peasant movement. Trapped by his essentialist concept of a peasant 'class' composed of family farms whose main objective and defining characteristic is landownership for subsistence cultivation, it is necessary to depict the peasant movement in Colombia during the 1970s as an attempt to realize this goal by establishing a 'peasant economy' [1986: 130, 146, 149ff., 163, 165, 202; 1989: 103, 109]. Thus the failure of the co-operative institutional structure (*empresas comunitarias*) set up by the Colombian agrarian reform agency INCORA after the land struggles is attributed principally to the external agency of 'adverse state policy' [1986: 160ff.], despite acknowledgement that 'an individual economy of small entrepreneurs and affluent peasants' [1986: 162] operated inside the co-operatives. However, Zamosc regards the existence of the latter subjects not as evidence of capitalist development in Colombian agriculture but much rather as an indication of 'distorting repeasantisation' and 'a failure of the peasant economy' [1986: 146,165]. Symptomatically, he blames such deviations from the path of peasant essentialism on the decline of a (non-existent) peasant 'class solidarity' [1986: 163].

Like many of the new social movements theorists who write about the peasantry, Zamosc also makes explicit the political practice consequent on his analysis. Notwithstanding the inescapable weight of evidence against his essentialist view of the peasantry, therefore, Zamosc continues

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to argue against the 'indiscriminate use of such notions as "emergent peasant bourgeoisie"', and insists on reaffirming his neo-populist vision that 'the first task of a sensible opposition [in Colombian politics] is to restore the spirit of autonomy among the peasants' [1986: 212, 213; see also 1989: 127]. In his most recent text, Zamosc [1990: 47, 48, 52] still talks of making a 'free peasant economy viable', noting that, amongst other things, 'in the 1980s the Colombian peasants have been fighting for ... the defence of the small peasant economy'.

Sendero Luminoso in Peru

Much the same kinds of difficulty confront the attempt by McClintock to theorise the support received by the Sendero Luminoso guerrillas in rural Peru throughout the 1980s in terms of a combined 'moral economy', 'middle peasant', and new social movements framework. Invoking both Scott and Wolf to sustain her argument [1984: 58f., 74, 82; 1989a: 67–70, 95], McClintock claims that economic decline, population growth, and ecological crisis in locationally remote Ayacucho [1984: 63, 76–7] have all resulted in a threat to the subsistence of 'smallholders ... relatively unitegrated into the capitalist market' [1984: 49, 74] from among whom Sendero consequently draws its support. Although not categorized as such, these smallholding proprietors are clearly regarded as middle peasants, a point which McClintock confirms in another text [1989b: 358]. Since peasant proprietors remain socio-economically undifferentiated, are all regarded as uniformly impoverished and downtrodden, and undertake action merely to defend the *status quo*, little or no attempt is made to account for the changing socio-economic composition of Senderista support in rural areas and to link this in turn to the *class*-specific acceptability of Sendero's ideology.[37]

The problematic nature of McClintock's analytical framework emerges clearly when she attempts to explain the changed socio-economic composition of Senderista backing in the Peruvian countryside. With the exception of one particular location, the Upper Huallaga valley in the department of Huánuco, rural support for Sendero in the Andean region declined over the 1983–86 period. McClintock is clearly baffled by this development, and observes [1989a: 87–8]:

> Many analysts were surprised at the appearance of Sendero in this zone. In contrast to the Southern highlands, this valley is prosperous. The people living on these lower Andean slopes are less likely to be descendants of the Incas than the people in the Southern highlands. Sendero apparently chose to recruit in the Huallaga Valley to take advantage of the popular opposition to the coca-eradication programs sponsored by the US and Peruvian governments. Sendero did mobilize and support coca-growers, and became the dominant authority at several sites.

Since most of the texts dealing with the cocaine economy tend to focus

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only on the large amounts of money generated in the course of and as the rewards linked to the high-risk marketing/distribution from Colombia of the already processed drug, little reference is made to the profitability of the first stage in its production, the cultivation in Peru (and elsewhere) of the coca crop itself. From the viewpoint of cocaine production in the Andean region, the highest-yielding coca leaves are to be found in the Upper Huallaga Valley, where during the mid-1980s a peasant producer might expect to gross on average an astonishing US$ 12,600 per hectare of coca cultivated [*Morales*, 1989: 55–6].[38] In contrast to McClintock's 'moral economy' and new social movements argument, therefore, it is clear that in the Upper Huallaga valley rural support for Sendero no longer corresponds to a stuggle by uniformly impoverished middle peasants belonging to the same ethnic group in defence of a threatened subsistence base but much rather involves rich peasant colonists who grow and benefit substantially from the coca crop.

This shift in the socio-economic composition of Senderista backing raises the additional issue of precisely why the same politico-ideological position is apparently acceptable to such different agrarian class subjects. In short, the question concerns the seeming incompatibility between the Maoism of Sendero and the class interests of coca-growing rich peasants in the Upper Huallaga valley. Two opposed views exist regarding the political and ideological position of Sendero. One maintains that what is important about Sendero's rural appeal is not so much its Maoism as Andean messianism, the latter invoking a mythical Incaic past where the traditional Pre-Conquest cultural values of the Quechua population will once again dominate (for example, Taylor [1983: 20–21]). The other, which includes new social movements theorists such as McClintock and Gianotten *et al.*, rejects the claim that Sendero is attempting to recreate an archaic cultural tradition. In support of this view, McClintock [1989: 83] points out that: 'Words such as "feudalism", "bourgeoisie", "imperialism" are common, whereas references to the Incan past, indigenous customs, and popular anecdotes are non-existent.' Similarly, Gianotten *et al.* [1985: 192ff.] argue that: first, because the Andean peasantry in now integrated into the market, Sendero is faced with the impossibility of reconstituting the self-sufficient rural community; and second, Sendero has anyway attempted to break the existing political and economic structures of the Andean peasant community by replacing communal authorities with its own militants.

In so far as they are mutually exclusive, however, neither of these positions is wholly correct; much rather, the ideology of Sendero ought to be perceived as a *synthesis* of Maoism and Andean messianism. Thus, the objection made by Gianotten *et al.* regarding the impossibility of reconstituting the eroded material base of the peasant economy together with the Andean rural community overlooks the extent to which it is possible for Sendero to obtain support as a result of an *ideology* based on the desire to recuperate this materially impossible objective. Further-

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more, it is significant that Sendero does not challenge the concept and structure of 'community' *per se*, but merely replaces its personnel.

Neither view considers the degree to which and the reasons why Sendero Luminoso's Maoism is compatible with the more important politico-ideological components of Andean traditional beliefs, either by reproducing the latter directly or merely by not challenging them. Thus the anti-urbanism, anti-imperialism, ethnic chauvinism and peasant essentialism (*campesinismo*) of Sendero not only possess strong affinities with the politico-ideological form and content of indigenous Andean beliefs such as the town/country opposition, nationalism and ethnic chauvinism, but also reproduces the central tenet of neo-populism, 'urban bias'.[39] In short, it contributes to and reinforces the mythical existence of a middle peasantry while at the same time permitting a rich peasant stratum to operate.[40]

One important consequence of classifying the Peruvian social formation as 'semi-feudal', therefore, is that the principal contradiction is located not between capital and labour but between on the one hand an external imperialism coupled with its internal ally, the 'feudal' landlord class, and on the other an anti-imperialist alliance composed of peasants, workers, and a 'progressive' bourgeoisie, in which the peasantry constitute the dominant element. Not only is Maoism and nationalism interchangeable in this discourse, but its specifically Maoist component also allocates the main role in the defence of the nation against 'outsiders' to an undifferentiated peasantry. Thus in politico-ideological terms 'the nation' ('the people', 'the popular masses') is equated largely with the peasantry as a whole, while 'outsiders' – or non-peasants – of whatever kind (urban dwellers, technocrats, bureacrats, foreigners) are unproblematically associated with 'imperialism' (peasants: outsiders:: nation: imperialism).

From the viewpoint of prosperous coca growing peasants in the Upper Huallaga valley, the politico-ideological acceptability of Senderista Maoism/messianism lies precisely in the fact that, when combined with the historical image of coca as a 'traditional' crop associated with subsistence/survival and the Incaic past, an outside enemy permits rich peasants to externalise capitalist exploitation, and thus to deflect/supress any reference to the occurrence of socio-economic differentiation and surplus appropriation within the peasantry itself. Accordingly, when linked with anti-urbanism, ethnic chauvinism and peasant essentialism in this manner, the anti-imperialism of Sendero Luminoso reinforces not politically progressive internationalist/socialist concerns but a more narrow and reactionary set of nationalist/conservative beliefs that is compatible with and indeed reflects the *class* position of rich peasants.

Like other texts on Sendero, McClintock [1984: 49, 77ff.; 1989a: 76ff.] emphasises the discontinuity between the rural guerrilla movements of the 1960s and those of the 1980s, pointing to the failure of the former when compared with the continuing success of the latter. By contrast, it is

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argued here that, in at least one important respect, significant continuities do exist between these two periods: as in the 1980s, therefore, there are instances of Peruvian agrarian movements during the 1960s that were a success for rich peasant subjects, and similarly not despite but much rather because of a seemingly radical ideology.[41] It is tempting to speculate in passing that, just as the Latin American guerrilla movements of the 1960s were linked to the profitability of the coffee crop (see Gott [1970: 15]), so those of the 1980s in Peru and Colombia may be linked similarly to the profitability of the coca grown for cocaine production.

Naxalism in West Bengal

Turning to the case of India, since peasant movements in the subcontinent have been examined in a large number of texts, it is intended here to consider just one aspect of the subaltern studies framework: the theoretical implications of the 'tribalisation' of agrarian struggles.[42] In the case of rural mobilisations during the colonial era, for example, Ranajit Guha [1983: 166ff.] downgrades the concept 'class' on the grounds that it was overdetermined by religious or ethnic solidarities; however, one important theoretical effect of this position is the conceptual reproduction of the 'tribal', paradoxically a central emplacement of colonial discourse (the demystification of which is Guha's objective).[43] As O'Hanlon [1988: 196] rightly hints, behind the deconstructed subject of the subaltern studies project necessarily lurks another (or 'an other') subject, potentially or actually reconstituted; the latter, it is argued here, is none other than the 'other' which the totalising discourse of historical materialism had apparently dis-mantled earlier.

Hence the *ideological* difference embodied in (and recognized by Marxism as) 'ethnicity' not only reappears in subaltern studies discourse but can now be recuperated as a *material* difference, occupying the terrain prevously held conceptually by 'class'. Accordingly, in rejecting/displacing historical materialism, with its universal/totalising *economic* analytical categories, and then contrasting the 'degenerate'/'corrupt'/(sinful) Eurocentrism of the latter with the immanent 'goodness'/'naturalness' of the *ideological* categories that constitute 'indigenous' discourse, the subaltern studies framework creates a theoretical space for the rescue of the 'tribal' from the dustbin of (colonial) history, and thus breathes new life into the Rousseauesque myth of the 'noble savage' who, together with its contemporary variant, the middle peasant, is everywhere to be found engaged in 'everyday forms of resistance' to remain the same.[44]

Neither isolated culturally from the rest of the population nor economically undifferentiated, tribals in north-east India have participated historically in agrarian struggles not just as producers in their own traditional areas but also as agricultural workers (for higher wages, better working conditions, etc.) in the Assamese tea plantations and in the coal mines of Bihar.[45] The extent to which class differentiation operates within

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the tribal population emerges clearly from a study by Bose [1985] in 1980 of five districts of West Bengal (Birbhum, Bankura, Burdwan, Midnapore and Purulia).[46] Not only were the beneficiaries of government reservation schemes in this context rich peasant tribals, who composed only one per cent of all households yet owned 16 per cent of the land, 44 per cent of which was irrigated, but they also engaged in moneylending, owned more livestock, and used more chemical fertiliser than any other peasant strata.[47] Middle peasants, who constituted seven per cent of households, owned 23 per cent of the land, 22 per cent of which was irrigated, while poor peasants who amounted to 68 per cent of all households, owned 60 per cent of the land only 20 per cent of which was irrigated [*Bose*, 1985: 75, 80, 84, Tables 3.10, 3.14, 3.16].

A quarter of middle peasants and three quarters of poor peasants in these West Bengal villages purchased no labour-power, whereas all rich peasants employed outside labour [*Bose*, 1985: 86–7]; by contrast, no rich peasant, a few middle peasant, most poor peasant and all agricultural labour households sold labour-power [*Bose*, 1985: 51, 88–9]. Tribal peasants who hired tribal wage-labourers treated them no better, and in some cases worse, than non-tribal peasants hiring tribals as agricultural labour [*Bose*, 1985: 94–5]. Rich peasant tribals also employed young labourers (*bagels*) to herd their cattle, either without paying them wages or merely on the promise of meeting their marriage expenses when they came of age.[48] In politico-ideological terms, variations in tribal kinship patterns were determined by class, as was intra-kin conflict; there was little evidence of intra-tribal unity, rich tribals being regarded by their poorer counterparts as possessing not just different but antagonistic interests [*Bose*, 1985: 112–13, 118–19, 121–2].

Significantly, these same West Bengal districts of Midnapore, Birbhum, and Bankura were also areas of Naxalite guerrilla activity over the 1967–71 period [*Duyker*, 1987]. Formed in 1969 after a split with the pro-Moscow CPI(M), the Maoist CPI (M-L) initiated the Naxalite guerrilla movement in this region, and drew its main support from the tribal population. Just as in the case of Sendero Luminoso in Peru, Naxalite Maoism in West Bengal exhibited millenarian characteristics that were ultimately not only compatible with but supportive of the existing tribal structure [*Duyker*, 1987: 110, 124], regardless of the extent to which it might be differentiated socio-economically.[49] Claiming that India was a semi-colonial/semi-feudal social formation, therefore, rural Naxalites externalized capitalist exploitation on the one hand, and on the other emphasised tribal cultural particularism together with the element of continuity between the politico-ideological objectives of the present struggle and those of the past [*Duyker*, 1987: 101–2, 117].[50] Claims by Duyker [1987: 118] to the contrary notwithstanding, such an approach leads inevitably to the displacement of class struggle (which licenses intra-ethnic conflict) by ethnic struggle (which licenses intra-class conflict) as the primary focus of Naxalism.[51]

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In contrast to the claim by subaltern studies texts regarding the irreducible nature of ethnic categories, the Naxalite movement in West Bengal provides evidence that at the bottom end of the social structure proletarian class solidarity does indeed transcend tribal/caste distinctions. Following the introduction of the Green Revolution package in this region during the mid-1960s, there was an increase in the incidence of *de facto* proletarianisation as landholders not only no longer leased out land to new tenants and rotated existing ones in order to prevent them claiming ownership rights, but also increased product rents and decreased wage levels [*Duyker*, 1987: 50ff.]. On the basis of a common experience as sharecroppers and agricultural labourers, therefore, Santals united with other tribals (Munda, Mals, Rajbansi, Oraons) and lower caste Hindus (Bagdi, Bauri, Doms).[52]

While such evidence confirms the existence of and the reasons for the transcendence of ethnic divisions by class solidarity at the lower end of the social structure, the same study only hints at the occurrence of a similar differentiating process at its top end. Duyker [1987: 60ff.] notes the emergence of rich peasantry following the Green Revolution, but omits to indicate whether or not this stratum extended to include Santals. However, nearly half the killings carried out by Naxalites in Birbhum were of peasants with less than 25 acres, while those who owned more than this amount accounted for only 22 per cent of annihilations, a point underlined by one CPI (M-L) leader who observed that 'the fundamental contradiction was not between (big) landlords and their sharecroppers, tenants and labourers, but between *jotedar*-kulaks and sharecroppers, labourers and tenants' [*Duyker*, 1987: 62–3]. The significance of this lies in the fact that, as the study by Bose demonstrates, a numerically small but economically important stratum of precisely this kind of peasant was to be found *within* the tribal population itself.

The existence of actual/potential Naxalite targets among the Santals themselves raises in turn the crucial issue of the reasons for an absence of intra-tribal class struggle. Why, if a *de facto* Santal proletariat was able to unite with other tribals and/or non-tribals along class lines, was it not also capable of directing subsequent action against those of a different class inside the same ethnic group? As with Sendero Luminoso, the answer to this question must necessarily address the complicity between the politico-ideological position of the CPI (M-L) itself and that of the 'traditional' tribal authorities, the corresponding failure to challenge – let alone break – the strong ties of authority inside the village community, and the resulting deflection of class struggle by ethnic conflict.

Duyker [1987: 89, 103–4] suggests that in both Midnapore and Birbhum districts the CPI (M-L) micro-level organization 'owed more to indigenous cultural factors than to its April 1969 resolution on political organization'. Accordingly,

> Naxalite cells and action squads had hierarchies, lines of communi-

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> cation and logistic support which were rooted in the local kinship system ... as whole familes of Santals joined the movement, kinship organization began to parallel guerrilla organization ... the natural authority of the elders, i.e. fathers, uncles and husbands, appears to have become a political and military authority over sons, nephews and wives who also joined the movement.

In other words, guerrilla activity mobilised through the kinship system was actually structured by – and thus could not but reflect the interests of – the *existing* socio-economic order, as embodied in the authority of tribal elders.[53] The difficulty with this is that even in a tribal context (as Bose, Pathy and others show), such authority can also correspond to that exercised by rich peasants over agricultural labourers and sharecroppers (all of whom happen to be tribal kinsfolk), and would therefore not only not be 'natural' but in class terms could not be neutral. In the (unlikely) event of their own socio-economic position being challenged/threatened, therefore, rich peasant tribals would be able to counter any attempt on the part of the CPI (M-L) to mobilise Santals as class subjects (landless labourers, poor peasants, sharecroppers) by proclaiming a politico-ideological unity based on ethnicity.

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CONCLUSION

It has been argued here that the way in which peasant action and peasant movements are theorised initially in the work of Alavi and Wolf, and then in the the work of Scott, and most recently in the approach which characterises texts on the new social movements and subaltern studies, provide neo-populist theory about peasant economy with its missing politico-ideological dimension. To a large degree, this process is structured by the de-/re-constructions effected as a result of post-modern epistemology.

Mediated through the subaltern studies and new social movements framework, the post-modern project is in a number of important ways particularly supportive of the 'middle peasant thesis' and 'moral economy' argument advanced by Wolf, Alavi, and Scott, and behind them the neo-populism of Chayanov himself. On the one hand, therefore, post-modernism attacks the teleological roots belonging to the traditional political opponents of neo-populist visions of a self-sufficient peasantry: the overarching meta-narratives of Marx and Lenin on the universality of class and class struggle, collectivisation and socialism as outcomes of the latter, the necessity/desirability/possibility of emancipation which structures the notion of history-as-progress, and the state as the object of revolution. On the other hand, it attempts to recuperate conceptually a politico-ideological project which sustains that very same neo-populist vision: the ideological pluralism of the subject, the autonomy of the individual, the political importance and acceptability of (self-defined)

relativism as embodied in 'the cultural' ('the tribal', 'the peasant'), the wholesale legitimacy of any/all 'everyday forms of resistance', and bourgeois democracy.

In keeping with their post-modern antecedents, therefore, analyses based on a new social movements or subaltern studies framework claim that the object of peasant activity – whether 'everyday forms of resistance' or largescale mobilisations – is unconnected with socialism because the latter is unrealisable/undesirable. While it is true that peasant activity may not necessarily lead to socialism, this is *not* for the reasons indicated by the subaltern studies and new social movements framework. These imply that all smallholders are middle peasants interested only in remaining as such, and as a result adhere to non-class based ideologies which stress regionalism, ethnicity, or gender.

By contrast, the case of ANUC in Colombia, Sendero Luminoso in Peru, and Naxalism in West Bengal suggests that rich and not middle peasants are in the forefront of rural mobilisation, and also that apparently radical socialist idioms may in particular contexts be compatible with more conservative meanings which themselves support (or do not challenge) the politico-ideological objectives of rich peasants. It is one thing to maintain that class struggle has not developed as predicted, it is quite another to argue that class is of little or no relevance to the understanding of the formation/reproduction of politico-ideological consciousness and the (equally class-specific) kinds of conflict this permits subsequently. Thus the transcendence of ethnic solidarity by class solidarity among poor peasants and agricultural workers, and the subsequent displacement either of class consciousness by ethnic identity or free wage labour by 'semi-feudal' relations of production, is itself an integral part of the class struggle, and constitutes evidence only of the resort by rich peasants to 'traditional' institutional forms supportive of their economic power when/where necessary, and not of the undesirability of socialism or the impossibility of historical progress *per se*.

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NOTES

1. While a few middle peasants join the rich peasant stratum and become agrarian capitalists, the majority join the poor peasantry and become *de facto* agricultural workers. The middle peasants that remain must be neutralised' in the course of the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie [*Lenin*, 1966: 156ff.].
2. It should be noted that the theoretical provenance of Chayanovian arguments concerning the peasant family labour farm is neo-classical economics. Hence the categorisation by the latter of the wage received by the industrial worker as a 'reward' for the disutility of labour finds a direct parallel in Chayanov's drudgery-averse peasant, whereby a timeless/static (and thus) 'natural' producer/consumer equilibrium results from a subjective evaluation by the peasant family of the balance between the drudgery of labour and the satisfaction of wants. The political significance of this is as follows: whereas classical economics stressed the role of socio-economic conflict between

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classes over an exogenous concept of value generated in the sphere of production, neo-classical economics which emerged during the 1870s was by contrast an explicitly anti-Marxist response to the development of the labour movement, and thus emphasised social harmony premissed on the existence of an equilibrium in which a psychologistic (and therefore relative) notion of value is conceptualised internally by each individual subject and located at the level of exchange. In his critique of the latter position, Bukharin [1927: 32] observed that the 'methodological difference between Karl Marx and [the Austrian marginalists] may be summarized ... as follows: objectivism – subjectivism, an historical standpoint – an unhistorical standpoint, the point of view of production – the point of view of consumption'. Not only was adherence to the Austrian *marginalist* school one of the charges levelled against Chayanov by his Marxist critics (see Chayanov [1966: lxix, 84–5, 220]), but the terms used by Bukharin to describe the way which neo-classical economics diverges from Marxism could be used *verbatim* to differentiate the latter from post-modernism (see below).

3. As will become clear below, Wolf adheres closely to the anthropological framework that is supposed to have been transcended, and in fact reproduces those very concepts which Desai claims are absent. For the significance of this, see footnote 17 below.
4. Wolf and Alavi both acknowledge a *mutual influence*, and each claims that his own hypothesis concerning the peasantry is supported by the work of the other (cf. Wolf [1971: 291], Alavi [1979: 716, footnote 2]).
5. The generally opaque link between the 'moral economy' argument and the micro-economic theory that structures the Chayanovian concept of a subsistence-oriented, risk-avoiding, choice-making, utility-maximising peasantry can be seen most clearly in the work of Scott [1976: 13–15].
6. For a useful critique of the 'moral economy' theory, see Popkin [1979]. Although strictly speaking Alavi cannot be categorised as an adherent of the 'moral economy' position, some of its more important concepts are nevertheless present in his work: for example, the view that peasant response is triggered by the violation of traditional norms [1973: 35], together with the crucial role of patron–clientage in peasant–master relations [1979: 714].
7. From the Marxist viewpoint, one of the main objections to the 'moral economy' argument is that it denies the *active* striving of the different components of the rural population as *class* subjects; that is, either by rich peasants to become small agrarian capitalists or by poor peasants and agricultural labourers to improve their position as workers (by organising in pursuit of higher wages, better working conditions, a shorter working day, etc.). Without this capitalist struggle, together with the equally specific kinds of socio-economic contradictions to which it gives rise, there can be no transition to socialism.
8. While the subaltern studies series is about the peasantry in the colonial era, some contributions cross the boundary into the post-colonial period (for example, Chandra [1983], Das [1983], Chakrabarty [1984]), while others claim that its methodological/theoretical approach transcends the colonial/post-colonial divide (for example, Chatterjee [1983: 77]). Implicitly or explicitly, therefore, the subaltern studies framework can also serve as a model for analysing contemporary peasant movements.
9. The publication in both *Subaltern Studies IV* and the volume edited by Colburn of the same text by Ramachandra Guha [1989] underlines this trend towards theoretical (and political) cross-fertilisation and compatibility. Interestingly, the rejection by Scott of 'hegemony' (see below) on the grounds that, while peasants may accept the inevitability of their overall subordination, this does not imply that they regard it as just, finds a strong echo in a recent text by Ranajit Guha. The latter similarly displaces 'hegemony' with a variant of the 'moral economy' argument, whereby 'dharmic protest' or 'rightful dissent' by peasants derives from a pre-colonial Indian tradition that legitimises 'the morality of struggle against ... [the ruler's] failure in his protective function [towards the ruled]' [*Guha*, 1989: 266ff.]. The antithesis between 'hegemony' and 'resistance' is another reason why Guha [1989: 299], like Scott, questions its existence.

10. For the rejection of universalism and/or Eurocentrism by subaltern studies, see Guha [1983: 6; 1989: 272ff.]. The latter, however, then goes on to base his concept of 'negative class consciousness' on Hilton's study of *European* peasant movements [*Guha*, 1983: 20].
11. New social movements texts that question emancipation include Evers [1985: 61] and Redclift [1988: 254].
12. For the link between subaltern studies and 'the ideological', see Guha [1983: 13].
13. Thus Laclau [1985: 28] observes that 'the social agent's positions become autonomous – it is this new autonomy which is at the root of the specificity of the new social movements'. Similar views regarding the autonomy of the subject are expressed by Slater [1985: 5] and Evers [1985: 59]. The fragmentation of the subject's consciousness is identified by Evers [1985: 45,61] as the main characteristic of post-modern discourse, while the effects of the 'individualizing techniques of power' on peasant resistance are noted by Redclift [1988: 251–2]. For the importance of ethnic/gender/regional identity/inequality in the discourse of the subaltern studies and new social movements framework, see Guha [1982: vii], Slater [1985: 3], Gianotten *et al.* [1985: 185] and Redclift [1988: 252]. Significantly, Wolf attributes a similarly important role to the element of regionalism in the 'middle peasant thesis'. Accordingly, the location of a middle peasantry in geographically peripheral areas is regarded as one of the main reasons why such 'tactically mobile' peasants are able to successfully engage in revolutionary action [*Wolf*, 1971: 291].
14. This difference is encapsulated in the comment by Volosinov [1977: 13] that: 'Individual consciousness is not the architect of the ideological superstructure, but only a tenant lodging in the social edifice of ideological signs'.
15. Among those who endorse/invoke/apply Foucault's theory with regard to peasants are Chatterjee [1983: 348–9], Redclift [1988: 252–3] and Scott [1989: 8], while those who do the same with regard to Gramsci include Guha [1983: 10, 19ff.] and Chatterjee [1989].
16. This emphasis on culture permeates all the texts under consideration here: for Wolf [1971: 279], the transformation of non-capitalist contexts as a result of capitalist penetration entails a corresponding change from a cultural system to an economic system, while the 'everyday forms of resistance' undertaken by new social movements are similarly presented as manifestations of popular culture, 'an alternative moral universe in embryo – a dissident subculture', or the defence of cultural identity [*Evers*, 1985: 43, 49, 50; *Gianotten et al.* 1985: 183; *Scott*, 1976: 240; 1989: 24].
17. In part, the penetration of peasant studies by post-modern discourse has been effected via anthropology in general and the ahistorical structuralism of French 'Marxist' anthropology in particular. From the latter emerged both Clastres [1977], who in true post-modern fashion counterposed an idealised image of the (non-Western) acephalous primitive society to the (Western) state, and the high priest of post-modernism Baudrillard, for whom [1975] a dematerialised political economy of production has symbolic meaning only. In many ways it is unsurprising that post-modernism has been embraced so enthusiastically by anthropology, since the latter regards the project of the former as a vindication of its own specific theoretical/methodological practice, elements of which include both superstructural autonomy and the reification of the peasant and/or tribal as an ever-present 'other'. Of particular significance in this respect is the trajectory followed by Sahlins, whose initial attempt to recuperate Chayanovian theory in the form of the 'domestic mode of production' [*Sahlins*, 1972: 102ff.] has now culminated symptomatically in postmodern cultural determinism [*Sahlins*, 1985]; for other examples of texts which apply Chayanovian theory to the peasantry, see Durrenberger [1984] and Maclachlan [1987]. In terms of methodological and theoretical emphasis, the differences between anthropology and historical materialism on the one hand and the similarities between post-modernism and anthropology on the other may be illustrated by the following set of oppositions:

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Anthropology (Post-modernism)		*Marxism*
micro-level	:	macro-level
relativism	:	universalism
myth	:	history
culture	:	economy
community	:	state
individual	:	class
resistance	:	revolution
stasis	:	change

Post-modernism might be described as the revenge wreaked by anthropology on development theory for the theft by the latter of the object belonging to the former.

18. In keeping with the new social movements theoretical approach, Redclift [1988: 249] dismisses the applicability to Latin American peasant movements of the 1960s of both the modernisation paradigm as exemplified by Landsberger and Hewitt [1970] and the Marxist framework of Quijano [1967]. This point is echoed by Ranajit Guha [1989: 270], who observes that '[the popularity of] a dynamic modernity ... has declined with the end of the development illusions generated by post-war capitalism to "modernize" an archaic Third World'.
19. The reference by Scott [1989: 23] to class as 'social stratification' rather than relations of production confirms his non-Marxist use of this term. In his introduction to a recent collection of texts on Peru, Miller [1987: 14] rejects class as a determinant of peasant struggles during the colonial period in preference to the 'moral economy' approach.
20. That Scott himself does not subscribe to a concept of an internally differentiated peasantry is evident from his resort to inverted commas when using the word '"kulak"' [1989: 17, 32 footnote 28]. Zamosc [1989: 122] also puts inverted commas round the term '"rich peasantry"'.
21. Significantly, the 'subaltern' category shares this characteristic with the Maoism of Sendero Luminoso and the Naxalites (see below); that is, the heterogeneous nature of the class elements subsumed under its rubric. For the analogous usage of a dichotomy composed of 'elite' and 'rural poor'/'popular masses' in the case of Latin America, see Fox [1990] and Zamosc [1990].
22. Part of the difficulty here is that such a procedure is epistemologically impermissible, since consciousness of class is an Eurocentric concept that involves an 'outsider' imputing a politically appropriate, logically consistent and historically necessary set of universalistic beliefs to particular socio-economic agents.
23. Anti-landlordism constitutes a particularly potent example of one politico-ideological component mobilised by rich peasants (for instances of which in Peru and India, see Brass [1989] and Krishnaji [1986]).
24. Although Guha agrees that in so far as they 'empty rebellion of its content and reduce it to a routine of gestures in order to reinforce authority by feigning defiance ... ritual inversion stands for continuity turned into sacred tradition' [1983: 31, 36], such reversals may in fact be supportive of the status quo by *deflecting* rebellion, he nevertheless fails to consider the extent to which *successful* uprisings do not similarly incorporate symbolic inversions that also reinforce the existing social order, thereby subverting the act of rebellion/opposition itself.
25. Ranajit Guha [1989: 272–3] poses the central question thus: 'Why did the universalist drive of the world's most advanced capitalist culture, a phenomenon that corresponded to the universalizing tendency of the most dynamic capital of the time, fail, in the Indian instance, to match the strength and fulness of its political dominion over a subject people by assimilating, if not abolishing, the pre-capitalist culture of the latter?.'
26. In the course of actute class struggle between agrarian capital and its workers, therefore, the former introduces/reintroduces unfree relations in an attempt to maintain control over the cost/availability of the latter by pre-empting/undermining/

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reducing their bargaining power (see, for example, Brass [1986, 1990], Cohen [1987], Miles [1987]). That poor peasants do in fact struggle to become or remain a proletariat in the face of landlord and/or rich peasant attempts to prevent this, refutes the 'moral economy'/'middle peasant' position of Alavi and Wolf (see above) which maintains that subjects from this particular rural stratum are too downtrodden and oppressed to do this. For the role of unfree agrarian relations in colonial India, see *inter alios*, Patnaik [1985], Prakash [1990], and Sarkar [1985].

27. This dilemma is signalled in the observation by Wolf [1971: 292] that 'it is the very attempt of the middle and free peasant to remain traditional which makes him revolutionary'. This same view – that it is middle peasants reacting to external change rather than rich or poor peasants challenging the existing social order – is implied in the wish of Redclift to reconstruct the 1960s peasant mobilisations in the image of new social movements theory. Hence the comment [1988: 251] that '[i]t is easier today to see the [Latin American] peasant movements of the 1960s as a symptom of transformation than the *agency* of transformation ... ' (original emphasis)
28. This is illustrated by the case of Peru, where the state has been unable to stop rich peasants either from privatizating cooperative land and assets (see Gonzales and Torre [1985], Brass [forthcoming]) or from growing coca for and profiting from cocaine production (see below).
29. That the control of the state is not the object of anti-colonial conflict is the theme of Ranajit Guha's most recent contribution to the subaltern studies series, where he argues [1989: 213–14] that 'the indigenous bourgeoisie ... abjured and indeed resolutely opposed all forms of armed struggle against the raj, and settled for pressure politics as their main tactical means in bargaining for power'.
30. See, for example, Guha [1982b: 7], Slater [1985: 5,9,16,18], Evers [1985: 46,58,63], Redclift [1988: 251]. By contrast, both Miller [1987: 11] and McClintock [1989: 73] talk of 'landlord hegemony' [*sic*]. That democracy ('citizenship') and not socialism is to be regarded as the main object of mobilisation by the 'rural poor' in Latin America emerges clearly from a recent collection edited by Fox [1990]. In his contribution to the latter, Zamosc [1990: 45] observes symptomatically that 'democracy can still provide a substantial part of the remedy for Colombia's ills'.
31. Ranajit Guha [1989] also rejects the concept 'hegemony', but mainly on the grounds that British colonial rule in India failed to displace pre-capitalism with the liberal bourgeois project (Liberty/Democracy/Rule-of-Law, etc.) of capitalism itself.
32. Hence the observation by Evers [1985: 63] that: 'States themselves have fallen into discredit'.
33. Decollectivisation and the introduction of the family responsibility system in post-Maoist China is described symptomatically by Scott [1989: 16] as an effect of peasant resistance, the object of which was 'subsistence and survival'. Another text [*Chossudovsky*, 1986: 75], however, attributes this same process to a very different cause. Since the People's Commune 'failed to eliminate the rich peasantry as a class, decollectivization emerged from *within* the structure of collective agriculture, leading initially to the collapse of the collective work process and to the restoration of private production under the household responsibility system' (original emphasis).
34. The analysis of Sendero by McClintock appears in the collection edited by Eckstein, as does a contribution by Zamosc on ANUC in Colombia.
35. Where he does address the issue of the agrarian question, Zamosc [1989: 103, 108–9] poses it in terms of a two-paths development process characterised by 'peasant agriculture' on the one hand and by 'entrepreneurial landlords' on the other, thereby banishing peasants from the ranks of capitalist producers.
36. The extent of economic differentiation among Colombian peasants owning/operating less than twenty hectares of land emerges most clearly from a recent study of the 1970s agricultural modernisation in and its effects on a rural community in the southwest of the country. One result of the green revolution programme applied in the latter context was that the average value of per farm marketed output of those with more than 12 hectares of land was twice that of peasants owning 3–12 hectares, eight times that of

peasants owning $1\frac{1}{2}$–$3\frac{1}{2}$ hectares, and 21 times larger than peasants with less than $1\frac{1}{2}$ hectares of land (calculated from data presented in Reinhardt [1988: 166, Table 6.1]).

37. The element of class is similarly ignored in the presentation of Senderista/state relations by Bourque and Warren [1989], which is based on Taussig's post-modern 'culture of terror' thesis, and accordingly emphasises the regional and ethnic dimensions of this conflict [1989: 13f.]. For a critique of the post-modern discourse of Taussig [1987], who is aptly described as a 'Castenada for the 1980s', see Kapferer [1988: 81f.].
38. According to another and more conservative estimate, by growing coca for cocaine production a peasant is able to earn seven and a half times the amount per hectare that can be made from the cultivation of even profitable cash-crops such as coffee or cocoa ('Peru: State of Fear', *Internationalist*, No. 197, July 1989, p.17).
39. For an excellent account of the way in which categories such as 'nationalism', 'regionalism', and 'ethnicity' both permeate and simultaneously displace 'class' in Senderista ideology, see Montoya [1986]. For the connection between Lipton's concept of 'urban bias' and neo-populism, see Byres [1979] and Kitching [1982: 84ff.].
40. Even this middle peasant disguise has been discarded by Maoism elsewhere. During the 1980s, therefore, the Chinese Communist Party no longer sees a contradiction between the re-emergence of rich peasant capitalists and building socialism [*Chossudovsky*, 1986: 59].
41. For a case study of one such peasant movement in Peru, see Brass [1989].
42. For a useful critique of the tribalisation (and hence abolition) of peasant movements, see Sengupta [1982,1989]. For an example of the tribalisation of peasants in Latin America, see Burger [1987]. Texts on agrarian movements in India include Desai [1979,1986], Dhanagare [1983], Gupta [1986], Karna [1989], Nadkarni [1987], Pavier [1981], Pouchepadass [1980], Sen [1982] and Wood [1987]. The new social movements framework has been applied by Lindberg [1990] to farmers' struggles taking place in India during the 1980s, on the grounds that these unite all peasants as consumers as well as producers of commodities against the state which controls input/output prices and thus their economic reproduction, whereas pre-Independence peasant movements were solely about landownership. Accordingly, he maintains that the principal contradiction is no longer to be found within the different peasant strata but between all the latter on the one hand and the urban-industral sector and the state on the other, and therefore rejects the claim by Nadkarni [1987] and Banaji [1990] that agitation by landholders' organisations, such as the *Shetkari Sangatana* of Maharashtra led by Sharad Joshi and the *Bharatiya Kisan Union* of Uttar Pradesh led by M.S. Tikait, corresponds to the mobilisation of a kulak lobby. Of the many difficulties faced by this argument, three can be referred to here. First, in keeping with the neo-populist epistemological lineage stretching from Chayanov to Baudrillard, peasants and peasant movements are defined not in terms of production relations but in terms of consumption. Second, since the use of commodified agricultural inputs itself depends on adequate landholding size and secure tenure, property relations not only continue to be an issue but divide rather than unite rich, middle, and poor peasants who own/control vastly different amounts of land. And third, in spite of the fact that agricultural workers also depend on the state for inputs (prices of goods consumed) and output (wages for the sale of labour-power), they have not joined with the farmers' movement on this issue, much rather the opposite: it is the peasant proprietors themselves, not the state, who are regarded by rural labour as the source of exploitation and thus the main enemy (see, for example, Brass [1990]).
43. For a similar view to that of Guha, see Sen [1987: 204]. Although Guha [1983: 15,26] hints at the existence of intra-tribal socio-economic differentiation, he fails to explore this in terms of ethnic identity as false politico-ideological consciousness in the process of agrarian class struggle. The colonial origins of the concept 'tribe', together with the way in which it was used by the British to divide and rule, are discussed by, *inter alios*, Pathy [1984: 2] and Singh [1985: 104ff.].
44. For a useful analysis of the way in which orientalism involves the attempt to recuperate

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precisely this 'primitive Other', see Baudet [1965].

45. On tribal migration in north-east India see, for example, Badgaiyan [1986], Bhowmik [1981], Choudhury and Bhowmik [1986], and Vidyarthi [1970]. Until the development in the 1940s of pan-tribal movements, Santal and Bhumij culture had for a long time been incorporating Hindu beliefs and behaviour, while Munda ceremonial and religion had similarly been influenced by both Hinduism and Christianity [*Bose*, 1985: 22f.].
46. Similar observations concerning the socio-economic differentiation of tribal peasants in other parts of India are made by, *inter alios*, Datta [1989], Mishra [1987], Pathy [1976] and Pathy [1987].
47. Pathy makes much the same observation about the fact that welfare measures aimed at tribals invariably benefit the better-off elements, and thus paradoxically intensify and hasten the very differentiation process they are designed to prevent [1984: 25,185ff.].
48. Tribals who are rich peasants engage in productive moneylending to secure labour-power cheaply, and 71 per cent of tribal agricultural labour households are in debt to such landholders. The economic object of this activity is described by Bose [1985: 95, 101–2] in the following terms: '... all the rich peasants advance money to tribal labourers so that during the peak season, when the demand for labour is high, they get them at comparatively cheaper rates ... [t]he loans are mainly consumption loans, which labourers take during the lean period ... [these have] to be repaid [in the form of] labour during the peak agricultural season.'
49. Despite maintaining that Santals expected a classless society to emerge from the Naxalite movement, Duyker [1987: 123] furnishes no evidence to support this assertion.
50. One CPI (M-L) leader noted that: 'When we went to the Santals we used to emphasize their [1855 Insurrectionary] heroes...We told them that Sidhu and Kanhu were our predecessors and that "New Democracy was no different from what they had fought for"' [*Duyker*, 1987: 118].
51. The Maoist Communist Centre, which Duyker [1987: 152] notes as consolidating its position in West Bengal from the 1970s onwards, was by 1987 engaged not in class but caste struggle in neighbouring Bihar, a communalisation that culminated in the killings of Rajputs by Naxalite-led Yadavs in Aurangabad district. Although the Rajput caste has traditionally consisted of substantial proprietors, a few of the latter are now also to be found among the ranks of the traditionally lower caste Yadavs. As one commentator observed, 'Over the years, the new, better-off class among the backward castes transformed itself into the kulak lobby. Today, the same people who were one in the forefront of the Kisan Sabha movement are the oppressors'. Another source makes much the same point, commenting that 'Yadavs occupy a peculiar position on the socio-economic scale in this part of Bihar. They are both exploiters and exploited. Many of them own land and are said to maltreat Harijan agricultural workers'. Cf. Kanchan Gupta, 'Communism Through Caste in Bihar', *The Statesman*, 16 June, 1987; Chandan Mitra, 'Caste-Class War in Bihar To Go On', *The Times of India*, 3 June 1987.
52. See Duyker [1987: 133ff.].
53. Significantly, in the case of the farmers' agitation in Uttar Pradesh, the organisational success of the BKU has been attributed by Dhanagare [1988: 30] to caste and clan solidarity among the Jats, clan heads having acquired leadership of BKU units.

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