

DIALECTICS OF RELIGION, CLASS AND POLITICS

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CERTIFICATE

I have the pleasure to certify that Mr. Manindra Nath Thakur, an M.Phil. student of the Department of Political Science, University of Delhi, has pursued his research work and prepared the present dissertation entitled "Dialectics of Religion, Class and Politics", under my supervision and guidance. The present dissertation is the result of his own research and to the best of my knowledge, no part of it has earlier comprised any other monograph, dissertation or book. This is being submitted to the University of Delhi for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Political Science in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the said degree.


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PREFACE

The focus of this dissertation is on the dialectics of religion, class and politics, which has been the subject of debate since long. This debate becomes important particularly at this historical juncture when an effort is being made to re-examine Marx's theories in the light of historical experience and in the context of modern problems.

In the introduction, that is 'Opening the Issues', an effort has been made to solve some definitional problems regarding religion and class. The problematic has been located and the parameters of the discussion has been defined.

In the first chapter, 'Approaches: Marx and Weber', an attempt has been made to find out the similarities between Weber and Marx regarding their approach to religion. This has been done in the light of two important issues, (a) The relationship between religion and class and (b) role of religion in class struggle. It has been argued that there is a need to have a broader framework of analysis of religion within the Marxian paradigm which can also include some of the insights of Weber.

In the second chapter 'Towards an Alternative Theorization', an effort has been made to locate a framework in the tradition of Althusser's theory of ideology and subsequent development made in it by Therborn, Laclau et al.

(ii)

In the third chapter, 'Liberation Theology: Spirit of Socialism' it has been argued that the emergence of 'liberation theology' can be explained with the help of this framework, emerged in this dissertation. It has been argued that Liberation Theology can facilitate the socialist transition by providing a social milieu.

In 'Conclusion' the validity of this framework has been argued in the Indian context. Some fragmentary notes have been made on the issues of communalism and secularism.

Thus in brief, an attempt has been made to develop an alternative framework to understand the religious phenomenon in the context of transformation within itself and transition of the social formation.

In course of writing this dissertation I got help from many of my friends and teachers. First of all I would like to thank my guide for her affectionate and illuminating guidance. Without her comments this dissertation would have been more imperfect. I am also grateful to my teachers, Prof. Manoranjan Mohanty, Prof. M.P. Singh, Dr. B.B. Sarkar for showing their concern for my dissertation.

I am obliged to all my friends who helped me by their books, comments, criticism and encouragement. Here I would like to acknowledge the individual help extended particularly by Ujjwal, Deepak, Satish, Manishekhar, Ashutosh, Vinay, Dharmendra and Manjula. I am very thankful to Parashuram who always showed great concern and took the trouble of going through early drafts repeatedly.

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I am also thankful to the Staff of the Department of Political Science, who always helped me in solving all the problems I faced in this process.

In the end I dedicate ~~to~~^{to} this dissertation to all those who are struggling for the cause of the oppressed.

Manindra Nath Thakur
Manindra Nath Thakur

Opening the Issues

This dissertation begins with the asking of a question as to why do we need to study religion as a political phenomenon? The answer to this question is important in two ways, firstly, it provides us a 'vantage point' from which we can enquire into the intricacies of this complex phenomenon and secondly, also sets the parameter of the discourse on the nature of politics in the contemporary world.

We need to study religion because of two reasons. Firstly, the contemporary political situation and that is the increasing visibility of the religion in the contemporary world as well as the resort of the ruling class to the use of religion as a legitimizing ideology and as a system of ~~operation~~ ~~operation~~ *oppression*. The problem has become much more severe in multi-religious social formations. In these social formations religion has become a cementing factor for different groups. Religious consciousness has taken forms of communalism and this has pushed class consciousness far behind. India provides a typical case of such phenomenon. The problem is that the theorists burdened with the conceptual baggage of existing knowledge fall into traps. Even Marxist scholars

have reduced their understanding of religion to communalism and secularism given the prevailing political situation.¹

However there is a need to 'take care of religion', as Randhir Singh points out, while dealing with communalism.²

The second reason is related to the theoretical debates that have been waged around the whole notion of religion in contemporary Marxist theory. The first theme of the debate concerns the fact and the recognition that religion is not a homogeneous construction. It is a tradition which is dualist. And it is this duality that can cause contradictions within

1. See for example,

- i. Dilip, Simeon, "Communalism in Modern India: A Theoretical Examination", Mainstream, Dec. 13, 1986.
- ii. Haribans Mukhia, "Communalism and Indian Polity: Is there a solution?" Mainstream, March 22, 1986.
- iii. Bipan Chandra, "Communalism - The Wayout", Mainstream, May 24, 1986.
- iv. S. Khan, Towards a Marxist Understanding of Secularism: Some Preliminary Speculations: Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. XXII, No.10, March 7, 1987.
- v. Rajni Kothari, "Cultural Context of Communalism in India", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. XXIV, No.2, January 14, 1989.

2. Randhir Singh, "Theorizing Communalism: A Fragmentary Mode". Economic and Political Weekly, no.30, July 23, 1988, pp.1541-48.

the religious tradition which is dualist.³ It can not be reduced only to the tool of the dominant classes, it can equally be a tool of the popular classes. Secondly, there has been a fundamental re-examination in the theoretical debate about the whole Marxian notion of religion. The acceptable principle that Marx considered religion only as 'Opium' has been displaced by a renewed interest in Marxist writing in totality. The thirdly, a survey of theoretical debates in the issue becomes indispensable for constructing and understanding of the contemporary world and both of these ~~are~~^{is} needed for providing us with the vantage point from which we can conceptualise religion and its role in social transformation.

The discussion in this dissertation will revolve around ~~the~~ two critical issues, a) the importance of religion in human life and social collectivities and b) the complex relationship between religion, class and revolutionary politics, the duality of the religious tradition, the incipient contradiction and the transformation of religious traditions in response to political practice and historical juncture.

3. See Neera Chandhoke, "Religion, Culture and the State" in Moin Sakir, (ed.) Religion, State and Politics, (Delhi: Ajanta Publication, 1989).

Before going into any detail regarding the discussion that has been carried out in this dissertation, we must devote some space to the definitions of two important terms; religion and class.

The definitional problem, however, is not one which leads itself to a simple solution. But without going into any detail of the debates on definition which is a matter for epistemological debate, we shall try to have a simple working definition for the specific purposes of this dissertation.

Hopfe's definition of religion⁴ seems to be an adequate one for this purpose. Hopfe explains five characteristics of religion: (i) religions usually deal with people's relationship to the unseen world of spirits, gods and demons (ii) religions usually have developed a system of myth about the unseen world and rituals design for communication with or propitiating the spirits, (iii) religions, usually have developed a cult of organised rituals, temples, priests and scripture at some point of history, (iv) religion usually have some statement about the life after death, either as survival in some shadowy hades, in some version of heaven and

4. See for more debates on definitions, Michael Hill, 'Sociological Approaches', Frank Whaling (ed)., 'Contemporary Approaches to the Study of Religion', (NY: Muton Publishers; 1985), pp. 103-106.

hell, through reincarnation and (v) religions have attracted large fellowships either currently or at some time in the history.⁵ Thus religion maps out the relations of ~~in~~ this world and to the other world. Religion is basically an 'inclusive-existential ideology', the term we shall be discussing in detail later~~on~~.

Turning towards the definition of 'class', one can note very easily the large amount of work done on this, and several debates in this context. But the approaches that has been used in this dissertation uses the following definition of Lenin as the building block:

'Large group of people differing form each other by the place they occupy in historically determined system of social production by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated by law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labour, and consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and, ^{the} mode of acquiring it. Classes are group of people one of which can appropriate the labour of other owing to the different places they occupy in the definite system of social economy.'⁶

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5. Lewis M. Hopfe, Religions of the World, (Beverly Hills: Glencoe Press, 1976), p. 25.
 6. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 29. (Moscow: Progress Pub., 1974); p.421.

Here classes embody three elements: (i) the relations of individuals to the ownership of the means of production (ii) the division of labour functions and mutual associations in the production process and (iii) the pattern of income distribution. As Lenin further explains:

^{The}
'~~Lenin's~~ fundamental criteria by which classes are distinguished of the place they occupy in social production and consequently the relation in which they stand to the means of production'.⁷

Thus the first criterion is always the most important of the three elements in determining the class formation.

In the first chapter of this dissertation I have analysed the approaches of Marx and Weber on religion particularly in the light of issues raised above. Basically two points have been made. Firstly, it has been a source of immense confusion in social sciences due to the approach which ^econtraposes Marx against Weber. Instead of that an agreement has been made with Karl ^{Lowith} ~~Lewy~~, who says, 'Marx proposes a therapy while ^eWeber has only a diagnosis to offer'. Secondly, both Marx and Weber seem to agree in their analysis of religion in the

7. Ibid. p.422.

context of earlier raised questions. They agree that a) nature and content of same religion become different when it comes in contact with different classes, b) that religion plays an important role in the process of class struggle and that too it is a component of both the classes involved in the process of struggle. But there seems to be a lack of a coherent, systematic and exhaustive theoretical construct to understand the intricacies of religious phenomenon, particularly in the context of socialist revolutions. Thus there is a need ^{for a} ~~of~~ broader framework of analysis which can not only explain the religious phenomenon in more exhaustive way, by taking clues from both Marx and Weber but also can provide us a better strategical answers to the problems of socialist revolution in this context.

In the second chapter an effort has been made to argue for a better framework with the help of Althusser's theory of ideology and subsequent developments made by several other scholars to this. There are two important aspects of Althusser's theory of ideology, a) the doctrine of articulation and b) the doctrine of interpellation. The doctrine of articulation explains that the ideological structure of any social formation is very complex and it contains several ideologies. These ideologies can be divided roughly into two

categories, a) the class ideologies and b) non-class ideologies. These ideologies always exist in some form of articulation. The non-class ideologies do not have any precise class content of their own, the class content to them is provided by the class ideology articulated with them. Religion is a non-class ideology. Hence this articulation principle explains the content and nature of religion along with the motor force of changes in them. This theory successfully explains the change in Christian religion, for example, the emergence of Protestant Ethic at a particular historical juncture, and also the emergence of Liberation Theology at the other historical juncture. To make this point the most important theoretical support has been taken from Goran-Therborn's 'Ideology of Power and Power of Ideology'.

The 'doctrine of interpellation' explains that ideology makes individuals subjects through the mechanism of 'interpellation'. Through this mechanism the individual is provided with an image of himself/herself vis-a-vis society or nature and in turn shapes up ^{individual's} ~~their~~ behaviour. This is the social-psychological dimension of religious phenomenon. Thus religion provides the individuals an identity of their own, which is crucial in the context of their social behaviour.

This 'doctrine of interpellation' explains two aspects of the religious phenomenon, a) why religion has followers and b) the role of religion in the class struggle.

Important contribution has been made in this aspect of Althusser's theory of ideology by Goran Therborn and Michael Pecheux.

In the third chapter 'Liberation Theology' has been treated separately. It had been argued that ^{just} as 'Protestant Religion' ^{was} articulated with the class ideology of ^{the} Capitalist class, 'Liberation Theology' is a product of ^{the} articulation of Christian religious ideology with class ideology of the working class. The emergence of 'Liberation Theology' has shown the path to the revolutionary struggle in the context of religion. It can be considered as the 'spirit ~~of~~ socialism'. But it must be noted in this context that the process of this articulation is an ongoing process it is never finished, however, there are phases when the process of this articulation is clear and coherent.

In the conclusion of this dissertation instead of summing up what has been argued in the other chapters, an effort has been made to raise some new issues which are particularly relevant for the socialist~~s~~ revolutionary

struggle in the multi-religious social-formations like India. As it has already been said above that most of scholars in India, both Marxists and Liberals are busy in analysing the problem of communalism. In this process they consider religion only of secondary importance, many of them even do not consider it at all.

Another, important issue is that of secularism. As prof. Mohanty has rightly argued that there are two types of secularism a) hegemonic and b) democratic. As he further argues that only democratic secularism is desirable, it can be achieved as when secularism becomes a part of the overall process of democratic transformation, only it is a part of the movement against social domination. However, he has not given any clue as to how can it be achieved. And it is at this point, this framework seems to be useful. It can be argued that through the process of articulation of all religious ideologies with the class-ideology of the oppressed class we can achieve real communal harmony. On the one hand, by finishing off the contradictions among different religions, and on the other hand by providing a common social base for all religions and ^{we can} thus facilitating the path of democratic secularism. However, this is an

open ended question and needs much more debate and discussion,
Whatever has been argued here can only be considered as the
'opening of the issues'.

CHAPTER - I

Approaches: Marx and Weber

The concern of this chapter is to examine the approaches of Marx and Weber on religion, the pioneers of two major streams of social sciences. Despite his comment that the criticism of religion is the prerequisite of all criticisms¹, Marx does not seem to be exhaustive in his treatment of religion. Of course he provides us certain insights which can be expanded in order to have a better and relatively general theory of religion. Max Weber on the otherhand has tried to deal with religion exhaustively and that too supported with vast empirical data and this explains the importance of Weber in the context of any theorization of religion. What is more, Weber's work has been regarded by many social scientists as having a strong Marxist affinity. Joseph Schumpeter's assessment of Weber is frequently quoted in this context: 'The whole of Weber's facts and arguments (in his sociology of religion) fit perfectly into Marx's system². Irving Zeitlin takes the view that Weber generalised and revised Marx's method, and argues that Weber was not refuting Marx, and that to say, as Talcott Parsons has, that after an early

1. Karl Marx, Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right. (London: Penguin, 1975); p.243.

2. Joseph Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1976); p.11

contact with Marxian position Weber soon recoiled from this, becoming convinced of the indispensability of an important role of "ideas" in the explanation of great historical process, is quite incorrect.³

However, we agree with Bryan S. Turner, the opposition between Marx and Weber has often been drawn in a manner that is crude misleading, based on political and ideological requirements rather than on analytical interests.⁴ In the more recent criticisms of ^{the} debate, fortunately there has been a growing sophistication in ^{the} exegesis, and the crude dichotomies (Idealists vs. Materialists) of earlier interpretations have been abandoned.⁵ Thus the crux of the argument, that is to be done in this chapter can be expressed in one sentence of Karl Lowith, that 'Marx proposes a therapy while Weber has only a diagnosis to offer'.⁶

(A) Marx on Religion:-

It is difficult to deal with Marx's views on religion, firstly because he himself has never treated it extensively

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3. Irving Zeitlin, Ideology and the Development of Sociological Theory, (Engelwood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1968); p.11.
 4. Bryan S. Turner, Marx, Weber and Coherence of Capitalism; The Problem of Ideology. In The Weber Marx Debate, Robert Willy(ed)(London: Sage Pub. 1987).
 5. See Schroeter
 6. Karl lowith, Max Weber and Karl Marx, (London: Allen S. Urwin, 1982); p.25.

and exhaustively in his various writings. His analysis can be said only as reflections on religion. It is difficult to collect these scattered comments. Secondly, his treatment of religion was as varied as scattered.

As comments McKown, "On one occasion he analyzed it in general with an eye to its etiology and taxonomy.* On the other occasions he singled out specific religion, such as Judaism or Christianity of distinct phases of religion, such as primitive or the bourgeois, for analytical, critical and illustrative purposes. Some times he drew analogies such as the ones presumed to obtain between Catholicism and feudal agrarian society, or between Protestantism and Political Economy or other time he contended himself with simple comparison."⁷

Despite varied and scattered treatment of religion by Marx, as explains McKown, his unity of thought can not be denied.⁸ The changing problems which preoccupied Marx at various points in his development are so clearly discernible that Lowith has schematized them topically. He says:

'Marx's development can be summed up as follows:
At first he criticized religion philosophically,

7. Delos B. McKown, The Classical Marxist Critique of Religion: Marx, Engles, Lenin and Kautsky, (The Hague:Martinus Nijhoff, 1975): p.3.

8. See Ibid, p.7.

then he criticized religion and philosophy politically and at last he criticized religion, philosophy and politics and all other ideologies, economically.'⁹

Thus Marx's criticism of religion is scattered and unfinished but still there is an unity in the Marx's thought on religion.

Marx's treatment of religion can be understood by dividing his concept, as he himself preferred to do, into two parts. One is called as 'natural religion' and the other as 'social religion'.¹⁰ Regarding the natural religion Marx and also Engles accept the dictum of the earlier materialists, derived from Epicurus, that religion originated from the savage's awe and fear in the face of an inexplicable nature.

Marx wrote :

" Consciousness is at first, of course, merely consciousness of the limited connected with other persons and things outside the individual who is growing self-conscious. At the same time it is consciousness of nature, which first appears to men as a completely alien , all powerful and unassailable force, to

9. Karl Lowith, 'Marx Self-Alienation in the early writings of Marx'. in Social Research, XXI (Summer, 1954)p.204.

10. Marx and Engles, On Religion, op. cit., p.67.

which men's reactions are purely animal and by which they are overawaked like beasts, it is thus a purely animal consciousness of nature (natural religion).¹¹

Thus the 'natural religion' is nothing but the fantastic reflection in men's minds of those external forces which control their daily life. A reflection in which the terrestrial forces assume the forms of super structural forms. In the beginning of history it was the forces of nature which were first so reflected and which in the course of further evolution underwent the most manifold and varied personification among various people.¹²

The 'natural religion' is a product of dialectics between man and nature. And it is this process in which 'fantacies of religion may be intertwined with genuine knowledge.' Malinowski has illustrated this point in part when he wrote :

In a maritime community depending on the products of sea there is never magic connected with the collecting of ~~sell~~ fish or with fishing by poison, wires and fish traps, so long as these are completely reliable. On the other hand, any dangerous, hazardous and uncertain type of fishing is surrounded by ritual. In hunting, the simple and

11. Ibid., p.67.

12. Marx and Engels, On Religion, (Moscow:Progress Pub., 1976); p. 128.

reliable ways of trapping and killing are controlled by knowledge and skill alone; but let there be any danger or ^{any} certainty connected with an important supply of game and magic immediately appears. Coastal sailing as long as it is perfectly safe and easy commands no magic. Overseas expeditions are invariably bound up with ceremonies and rituals.¹³

Clearly, these religious responses have nothing to do with the forces of production including property relationship, with social relations in contradiction to the forces of production, or with consolatory projections based on false consciousness, predicated in liver on contradictions in productive forces, in social relationships or both. The knowledge of Yoga, part of Hindu religion can be a good example of mixture of knowledge and fantasies. So many similar examples can be given of this type.

But having introduced the concept of natural religion Marx promptly dropped it, because his main concern was not to criticise the 'natural religion' but the 'social religion'. The social religion has its origin in humanity's lack of control over the forces of society that resulted from class domination. This was first perceived by Engels, who pointed

13. Bronislaw Malinowski, "Culture", Encyclopedia of Social Science. (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1931); p.630.

out that the students of comparative mythology in paying attention exclusively to the gods as imaginary reflection of the forces of nature over-looked one increasingly important factor in the evolution of religion. That was its connection with and conditioning by the loss of control over the forces of society with the advent of class distinctions and domination:

'Side by side with the forces of nature, social forces begin to be active-forces which confront man as equally alien and at first equally inexplicable, dominating him with the same apparent natural necessity as the forces of nature themselves.

The fantastic figures, which at first only reflect the mysterious forces of nature, at this point acquire social attributes, become representatives of forces of history.'¹⁴

Thus for Marx the social religion was important ~~which~~ ~~becaus~~ ~~it~~ has grown out of the relations of production ~~and~~ which in turn govern the relation between man and man, man and society. That is why Marx says that to criticise heaven is to criticise earth because heaven is considered as ideal. To Marx it was of least concern that there is any heaven in the nebula of the sky, but the shadow of that heaven on the earth is

14. Marx and Engels, On Religion. Op.Cit. p.128.

important. The fear of the masses to have bad reputation in front of god, the sanctioning role of religion, and these myths maintain the dominance of particular class upon other classes in a class divided society.

For example, we can see how the myth of transmigration of soul helped in maintaining caste hierarchy among Hindus. This doctrine is not found in the Vedas, although some vague statements in the later hymns have been used by Hindu modernists to authorize it. It is not a product of what Engels says, 'dialectics between man and nature', it is not a part of the natural religion. Indeed there is only one reference to caste in a very late hymn, for the Vedas were the product of a pastoral, egalitarian society. But the Brahmans the custodians of the Vedas, (only certain section of which they imparted to the high castes, as the Catholic Church used to withhold knowledge of the Bible from the laity) developed a doctrine supposed sanctioned by the Vedas as society changed.

However, the doctrine of the transmigration of souls stated that after death the soul entered the body of one being born. The caste into which the soul now entered the was dependent on one's conduct in previous life. Each caste had its own law of what was right that it had to observe. Naturally the primary law of conduct for the Sūdas was

obedience. As is stated in the laws of Manu, one of the sacred books of Hinduism, "one occupation only the lord prescribe to the Sudra-to serve meekly these other three caste... for him... are prescribed truthfulness, meekness; and purity."¹⁵

The doctrine of the transmigration of souls thus provided justification for caste: the Sudra should not blame the system: he was only being punished for his transmigrations in a previous life of which he had no memory. If he rebelled, he would only make it worse for himself in his next life, for there were still worse things than being a Sudra; the soul could inhabit the body of an animal, even becoming 'a worm in the intestine of a dog', as one text graphically put it.¹⁶ Thus too in the epic Mahabharata, another part of the canon of Hinduism, when the authority of the Brahamans was being challenged a Jackal says, "I used to repudiate the Brahmans and was hostile to what ^{the} Brahmans said... this life of the Jackal, which I am now suffering is the result of all this'.¹⁷ On the other hand by performing one's caste obliga-

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15. Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, "Social Formation of Indian Idealism," in Essays in Honour of Prof.S.C.Sarkar, (New Delhi:People's Publishing House, 1976); p.82.
16. Max Weber, The Religion of India: The Sociology of Hinduism and Budhism(Glencoe, III; The Free Press, 1960); p.122.
17. D. Chattopadhyay, Op.Cit. p.96.

tions one could ascend to a higher caste in a future life and even as later Hindu doctrine said, becomes a god.

So Marx's major concern was with this social ramification of religious myth and religious ideology. Turning towards the most important and relevant question related to the 'social religion' that is the relation between religion and classes in general and ruling class in particular it must be noted that for Marx this social religion is the product of the social classes and their relation to the modes of production

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Marxism holds that, just as coping with their environment leads, in animals to the evolutionary development of natural organs through natural selection, so with humanity the labour process leads to the development of tools, humanity's artificial organs. The development of the forces of production, in which the means of production—the aggregate of tools socially organised—are essential element, is the dynamic power of the social development. Different social classes stand in different relationships to the mode of production, the productive forces plus the productive relations. The further development of the means of production, which disintegrated primitive collectivism and brought in class divisions, brings about the rise of the new social classes, which after a gradual economic development affect a sudden transformation in society, a revolution. These new social

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classes evolve their own ideologies. In the course of development these new classes by reinterpreting the old existing non-class ideologies evolve a new world-views. As explains George Novack :

A new social class does not come into existence with a readymade view of the world corresponding to its real conditions and constitutions. Quite the contrary, ~~A~~ at the beginning this budding formation may have as distorted and inadequate a picture of social set up and its position and prospects in it as a child does of the world around it. The class's distinctive conceptions have to be elaborated in the course of its activities and evolution by specialists in that line.¹⁸

These specialists, the ideologists of the class, generalize upon the class's distinctive conceptions, which express^u the new needs and interests rising from its new social circumstances, shaping them into a new world-view. Marx explains such changes in the religious^u ideology in these words:

"The social principles of Christianity justified the slavery of Antiquity, glorified the serfdom of the Middle Ages and equally now, when necessary, how to defend the oppression of the proletariat..."¹⁹

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18. George Novack, Pragmatism and Marxism, (NY: Pathfinder Press, 1975); p.9.
19. Quoted in McKown Op.cit., p. 57.

Thus for Marx the emergence of new class changed the contents of religious ideology according to its own needs for social justification. Each ruling class, the class that owns the means of production, constructs an 'ideology', a system of ideas expressive of its outlook on life, that dominates its age. 'Other classes' as explains Neigel, while dealing with Marx's view on religion, 'have different interests and ideas, but until they become revolutionary they normally tend to accept or at least adapt to the dominant ideology'.²⁰

Marx while dealing with the development of religion explained different forms of the same religion having some relation of affinity with different classes and different modes of production. During the middle ages in Europe with the feudal mode of production there existed Roman Catholicism. The Church "reigned supreme" during the Middle Ages due entirely to the social and economic relations of feudalism which required and determined it.²¹ It was a feudalised religion suited to the feudal class of the contemporary society. With the emergence of the capitalist mode of production, there came into being the protestantism, which suited both the capitalist mode of production and the rising dominant class of bourgeoisie. Marx explains about Protestantism:

20. Neigel, The Meek and the Militants, Religion and Power Airoes the World(London: Zed Pub.1986); p.23.

21. McKown, -Op.cit. P. 34.

'... The religious world is but the reflex of real world. And for a society based upon the production of commodities, in which the producers in general enter into social relations with one another by treating their products as commodities and values, whereby they reduce their individual private labour to standard of homogenous human labour - for such a society, Christianity with its cults of abstract man, more especially in its bourgeois developments, Protestantism, Deism, sc., is the most fitting form of religion.'²²

Thus Marx agrees that the emergence of new class gives meaning to the old religious ideology according to its own need. ~~The~~ Protestantism was ^{the} outcome of this interaction between ~~the~~ class and religion. ☹

However the process of the construction of an ideology is complex, involving interaction between the diverse components of a class and its ideologists; it is not fully conscious. 'Although an ideology' as explains Neigel, 'acts as rationalization of a class social position and material interests, it is not mere hypocrisy but is sincerely trusted as truth by its members.'²³ For instance, the Puritans among the bourgeoisie in the late sixteenth century, who were often denounced as hypocrites by their opponents, generally had the genuine strength of their belief which made it possible for them to gain adherents and lead a revolution fifty years later.

22. Marx and Engels, on Religion, Op.cit., P. 117.

23. Neigel, Op. cit., P. 23.

Similar ideas are expressed by Engels in the context of the Peasant war in Germany, the three forms of religion representing three different classes:

'While the first of three large camps, the Conservative Catholic Camp, embraced all the elements interested in maintaining the existing conditions, i.e., the imperial authorities, the ecclesiastical and a section of the lay princes, the richer nobility, the prelates and the city patricians, the camp of burgher-like moderate Luthereal reforms attracted all the propertied elements of the opposition, the bulk of the lesser nobility, the burghers, and even a portion of the lay princes who hoped to enrich themselves through confiscation of Church estates and wanted to seize the opportunity of gaining greater independence from the Empire. As to the peasants and plebeians, they united in a revolutionary party whose demands and doctrines were most clearly expressed by Munzer.'²⁴

Thus the religious ideology was given different interpretations by different classes.

Turning towards the question of role of religion in the process of class struggle, it is important to note that though Marx accepted the role in favour of the oppressed

24. Engles and Marx, On Religion Op.Cit. p.31

class, but he focussed more on the role it plays in favour of the dominant class, the ruling class. Marx while criticising the Communism of Rheinischer Beobachter, has ~~been~~ ^{given} ~~inciteful~~ ^{sight} examples of the relationship between religion and the ruling class. Marx writes :

"The social principles of Christianity preach the necessity of a ruling and an oppressed class, and for the later all they have to offer is the pious wish that the former may be Charitable.'²⁵

Thus religion makes the oppressed class obey oppressor and not to fight against it. Marx further explains :

"The social principles of Christianity declare all the vile acts of the oppressors against the oppressed to be either a just punishment for original sin and other sins, or trial which the Lord, in his infinite wisdom, ordains for the redeemed.'²⁶

Hence the religious ideology articulated the dominant class interests and in this way hampers the revolutionary consciousness of the oppressed class.

But Marx's perception of role of religion in the revolutionary process is not only what has been argued above, ^{it is} not the same as the French Materialists view of religion as a conspiracy of the ruling class. This has been a common place for misunderstanding of Marx's stand

25. Ibid., P. 74

26. Ibid., P.74.

by his critiques^s and Reinhold Neibuhr is no exception. Reinhold Neibuhr, one of the pre-eminent theologians of our time, writes in his introduction to the Schocken edition of Marx and Engels 'On Religion' that Marx's Engels' 'appreciation of the socially radical peasants of the sixteenth century under Anabaptist religious leadership, particularly in Engels' article on peasant wars, is not quite in agreement with Marx's central thesis that religion is a weapon always used by the established social forces. Neibuhr's statement is applicable to the enlightenment philosophers' view of religion as conspiracy. That was ^{an} ahistorical approach to religion. The philosophers rightly regarded the Catholic Church of their time as the enemy of progress and consequently looked upon religion as ministr^eing exclusively to reaction at all times and in all respects. This was too lop-sided ^{an} appraisal of ^{the} phenomenon.

In accord with the method of dialectical materialism Marx and Engels gave a much more concrete historical explanation of the role of religion through the ages which took into the account its contradictory functions. Although the primary function of religion was to sanctify repressive institutions, because it dominated people's thinking about the world and society around them, rebellious moods and movements among the oppressed in pre-bourgeois times -

and even after - tended spontaneously to acquire a religious colouration and heretical cast. The aims and aspirations of social agitators were expressed through traditional religious ideas adopted to the need and demands of the insurgent masses.

There is, therefore, no sort of contradiction, as Neibuhr suggests between the perception that German Anabaptism served the socially radical peasants and the perception that religion is ~~always~~ a weapon used by the established social forces ~~is wrong~~, religion in different forms, of course - can be a weapon used by opposing sides. The reinterpretation of religious ideas have accompanied deep ~~going~~ changes in social relations that have given rise to sharp class conflicts.

In fact this is clearly stated, although obsusely disregarded by Neibuhr, in the very passage in Engels the 'Peasant war in Germany' from where Neibuhr got his metaphor of religion as a weapon of the dominant class:

"Luther has put a powerful weapon into the hands of the plabian movement by translating the Bible. Through the Bible ~~that~~ contrasted the feudalised Christianity of his day with the unassuming Christianity of the first century, and the decaying feudal society with a picture of a society that knew nothing of the complex and artificial hierarchy. The peasants have made extensive use of this instru-

ment against the prices, the nobility, the clergy.²⁷

Thus ~~the~~ religion, which was earlier a weapon in the hands of ^{the} dominant class, was also equally used by and has ^{the} potential to be used by the oppressed class.

The above point becomes much more clear when we see how Munzer started giving new meaning to old Biblical ideas and raised revolutionary movement. Munzer, when went to Zwickau as the evangelic preacher, he found one of those fanatical chiliastic sects ^{which} and continued their existence on the quite in many localities whose subjects were ^{the} oppressed sections of the society. Munzer ~~since then~~ started supporting them and his philosophic-theoretical doctrine attacked all the main points not only by Catholicism but also ^{of} Christianity ⁱⁿ generally. To hold up ^{the} Bible against reason, he maintained, was to kill the spirit of - ~~by~~ the later, for the Holy spirit of which the Bible speaks ~~is~~ not something that exists outside. ~~The~~ Holy Spirit is our reason. Munzer said, as Engels explains, "Faith is nothing else but reason come to life in man, and pagans could therefore, also have faith. Through this faith, through reason come to life, man becomes god like and blessed."²⁸ ~~However,~~ It is, therefore, not a thing of another world, and ~~is~~ to ^{be} sought in this life and it is the task of believers to establish this Heaven,

27, Marx and Engels 'On Religion' Op.cit., P. 95.

the kingdom of God, here on earth. Just as there is no Heaven in the beyond, there is no Hell and no damnation. Similarly, there is no devil but man's evil lusts and greed. For Munzer, Christ was a man as we are, a prophet and a teacher. 'Munzer's political doctrine as explains Engels, "followed his revolutionary religious conceptions very closely and his political programme approached communism."²⁹ By kingdom of God Munzer understood society, in which there would be no class differences, no private property and no state authority independent of or foreign to the members of society. One of Munzer's sermon was :

"All world must suffer a big jolt. There will be such a game that the ungodly will be thrown off their seats, and the downtrodden will rise."³⁰

Thus the religion of such type, as advocated by Munzer, will always be in the side of the oppressed people in the process of class struggle. Marx and Engels thus accepted the revolutionary role of religion, if so interpreted.

However, both Marx and Engels saw rebellious movement of the oppressed as taking their own distinctive religious forms from the earliest days of Christianity. 'Christianity was originally a movement of oppressed people: it first appeared as the religion of the slaves and emancipated slaves, of poor people deprived of all rights of people subjugated ^{and} dispersed by Rome.³¹ Thus there was a similarity

29. Ibid., p.98

30. Ibid. p.100.

31. Marx and Engels, on Religion, Op.cit. p.275.

in both Christianity and the workers socialism, both preached forthcoming salvation from bondage and misery. The idea of the second coming of the Christ which would bring a thousand years of the kingdom of god on earth - inspired the struggles of the poor and the oppressed for centuries.

To conclude Marx's view on religion, particularly in the context of the questions raised in this dissertation we can note following points. Firstly, Marx agrees that 'social religions' are the product of class relations. Different classes ~~by~~ reinterpreting the elements of 'natural religions' suiting their class interests. Secondly, in the process of class struggle religion plays an important part ~~and~~ that is ~~on~~ the both sides of the struggling ~~parties~~. But the 'social religion' of the dominant class will favour the dominant class in the process of struggle till the dominated class does not have its own 'social religion', and accepts the former.

(B) Weber on Religion :-

Weber's analysis of religion, as it has already been noted, has strong Marxist 'affinity'. Weber has tried to investigate the problems in detail and it can be said that it is a micro analysis of religion, while Marx has

provided a Macro analysis. Weber's works can be considered as an analysis of religion at a particular historical juncture, while Marx's works have seen religion in historical perspective.

To begin with Weber's analysis of religion, we must provide some space to the much debated issue of base-superstructure. The fame of Weber's book 'The Protestant Ethic~~s~~ and the Spirit of Capitalism' originated from a vulgar oversimplified and somewhat arbitrary interpretation of his argument. There is no doubt the exceptional reception of Weber's essay in this century was largely due to its alleged upsetting of the Marxist thesis concerning both the genesis of capitalism and in a broader, the materialist interpretation of history.

However, Weber's 'Protestant Ethic' thesis is commonly interpreted as an argument that ascetic Protestantism was wholly or in part responsible for 'Capitalism'; 'Economic progress', 'economic development', 'industrialization', 'Entrepreneurs', 'economic growth' and even 'commerce and 'industry'³² Weber's two arguments that the 'Protestant Ethic' fostered the modern Capitalist mentality and, ~~that~~

32. Numerous such examples are cited in -
 Marshall, Gordan, Presbyteries and Profits :
 Calvinism and Development of Capitalism in Scotland,
 (Oxford: Clerndon Press, 1980), p. 30.

that this mentality was under specific economic circumstances important for the direction of economic development in the West, such that his thesis is reduced to the proposition that ascetic Protestantism caused modern capitalism.³³

However, Weber's conception of causation was pluralistic. Protestantism for Weber was not the cause but one of the causes of certain aspects of Capitalism.³⁴ He claims only that ascetic Protestantism changed the attitude of the faithful towards their everyday and economic activities, not that it created the money economy, the banking system, factories, or any other aspects of modern accidental economic life. In short as explains Bernard :

"At first level of causality the thesis is extremely cautious and limited in the first place because it does not apply to capitalism in its entirety as an historical phenomenon but only to a certain specific characteristic of ~~occidental~~ ^{ethic} capitalism; and the Protestant has been but one of the causes, amongst others, of these particular characteristics. Limited also to the period of nascent capitalism... limited finally because, far from suggesting the direct action of theological doctrines on the economic sphere, it postulates, the existence of indispensable meditation, in particular psychological motivations deriving from religious beliefs'.³⁵

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33. Trenor-Roper H.R., "Religion Reformation and Social Change in Historical Studies. Vol.4, 1963; p.21, 28-9.
34. Raymond Aron, German Sociology, (London: Heineman, 1957); p.95.
35. Phillips Bernard Protestantism et Capitalism: la Controverse Post-Weberien, quoted in Gordon Marshall, In Search of the Spirit of Capitalism: An Essay on Marx Weber's Protestant Ethic Thesis, (London: Hutchinsons & Company, 1982). pp. 134.

Thus the fact is that, whatever, the accuracy of Weber's account of the nature of the economic development of the occident, it most certainly cannot be depicted as idealist or indeed monocausal with respect to any factor whatsoever. As Weber himself can be quoted :

"No economy has ever been determined solely by religion. In the face of man's attitudes towards the world - as determined by religions or other (in our sense) 'inner factors - an economic ethic has, of course, a high measure of autonomy. Given factors of economic geography and history determine this measure of autonomy in the highest degree. The religious determination of life - conduct, however is also one only one, of the determinants of the economic ethic.'³⁶

Thus Weber cannot be blamed for arguing that only Protestantism gave birth to capitalism or only religion is the motor force which guides the day-to-day human conduct and the development of the modes of production.

However, Weber rejected a reductionist explanation of beliefs and ideologies and material base/interests. 'Beliefs and Ideologies' can not be reduced to a mere function or reflection of material circumstances and interests; as explains Weber:

^{36.} ^{quoted in} Franco Ferrarotti, Weber, Marx and the Spirit of Capitalism; Towards a Unitary Science of Man, in R.J. Antonio and Ronald M. Glassman (ed.), A Weber-Marx Dialogue, (USA: The University Press of Kansas, 1985), p.262.

'It is not our thesis that the specific nature of religion is simply a 'function' of social situation of the stratum which appears as its characteristic bear, or that it represents the stratum's 'ideology' or that it is a reflection of the stratum's material or idea interest situation.'³⁷

Nevertheless Weber was far from falling over into the opposite idealist stream, which would have led to the unsociological conclusion that social relations and social circumstances don't effect beliefs and values.

Rightly argues Raymond Aron, that Weberian thought is not an inversion of historical materialism. Nothing would be more untrue than to imagine that Weber maintained a thesis exactly opposite to Marx's and explained the economy.³⁸ So Weber's methods should not be seen in either- or terms regarding base and superstructure. Actually Weber wanted to arrive at a formulation which would do justice to material circumstances and interests and also to the channelling effects of ideas in determining people's action. As Weber himself expresses his intention :

'Not ideas but material and ideal interests, directly govern man's conduct. Yet very frequently the world 'images' that have been created by 'ideas' have, like switchmen, determined the tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic of interest. 'From what' and 'for what' one wished to be redeemed and let us not forget, 'could be' redeemed depended upon one's image of the world.'³⁹

37. M. Weber, The Methodology of Social Science, (New York: Free Press) P.22.

38. see, Raymond Aron, Main Current of Sociological Thought Vol.2, (Harmonds Worth: Penguin, 1970).

39. M. Weber, The Methodology of Social Sciences, (NY: Free Press, 1969), p. 22.

Thus it is wrong to formulate Weber's problem as a base-superstructure problem in the context of Weber-Marx debate. Weber's spirit of Capitalism is not one sided idealistic postulate and it does not go against Marx. Weber did not intend a polemic against Marxism, infact much of his theoretical and scholarly efforts aimed to test Marx's ideas.

Turning towards the first part of the central issue that has been focused in this dissertation, that is relation between class and religion, it must be noted that Weber's analysis is more extensive than that of Marx on this issue. Weber has tried to expose the intricacies as to how the same religious ideology accomodated itself according to the needs of the different classes. He has taken up so many classes, bourgeois, feudal, artisan, peasant and proletariat and ^{he} tries to see the differences in religious ideologies accepted and practiced by them. It must be noted that Weber further divides all the classes into two parts the dominant and dominated classes and argues that there are common elements in the religion of all dominant classes and different common elements in all dominated classes.⁴⁰

40. see Weber, Sociology of Religion, (London: Blacon Press, 1963).

Let us begin with Weber's analysis of relation between the bourgeoisie and the Protestant ethic, to which Weber has devoted much space than any other. It is important to note that there was a whole set of religious movement at different geographical locations, as Weber called them 'ascetic Protestantism', have had similar ideological commitments. It appears to Weber that a ^{nu}number of 17th century reformed Churches subscribed to a common code of conduct. He focuses on four of these religious groupings; the various neo Calvinist Churches and denominations of Western Europe and North America; Continental Peitism; Anglo-American methodism; and the sects associated with and developing out of anabaptism. Thus Protestantism was a movement in the arena of religion, at a particular historical juncture of the development of a specific social formation, which was somehow related with the developing mode of production.^{40a}

For this purpose, Weber takes into account the modern capitalistic orientation towards economic activity of the Calvinist and Protestant Sectarian business communities. Presumably here we are looking for such traits as the systematic use of available time so that as long as possible is spent in the pursuit of an honest 'vocation' and a little as possible wasted 'in useless recreation and

40a. see Ibid.,

pastimes. Since the domestic life of the faithful was limited to the duties associated with the family and home-centered religious obligations (such as family prayer), and hence a general asceticism prevailed in life-styles, limited consumption and a deliberately modest standard of living helped the incidental accumulation of capital which, by default, was channeled back into economy.⁴¹

However, again in the productive sphere itself the individual was continuously seeking to 'improve' his or her performance: rational expansion was pursued; less profitable lines of economic activity was abandoned in favour of more profitable ones. A continual balance of costs against returns was kept so that policies could be adopted which increased productivity and utilized resources in most efficient manner. Investments were results from careful costings and informed predictions as to profitability of projected enterprises. Transactions offering relatively secure, steady, and calculable if some what modest returns, were always preferred to high-risk, unpredictable, though potentially lucrative investments which could result in a total loss as readily as a spectacular gain. All these bourgeois economic ethics was sanctioned by the Protestantism.

41. Gordon Marshall, In Search of the Spirit of Capitalism: An Essay on Max Weber's Protestant Ethic Thesis. Op.cit.p. 101.

Again in the day-to-day routine Protestantism provided a clear cut code of conduct, which was suited to the bourgeois class. The believers were supposed to be up early. They must go for their vocations as soon as possible after finishing their general work. Above all else, they must treat their performance in the productive sphere as a duty of obligation, an obligation to the god. Dictums like 'time is money', 'work is worship' etc. were given popularity and religious sections. Thus the bourgeois class had an 'elective-affinity' in that particular historical juncture with ~~the~~ Protestantism and the class ideology of the bourgeois was reflected in this religious ideology.

Regarding the religion of the feudal class, Weber argues, that prior to Reformation, which Marks the rise of bourgeoisie, it is not possible to detect such beliefs and practices among the dominant classes in any part of the globe. Rather 'economic traditionalism' was the norm, both as ideal and practice. Individuals used to seek either to reproduce only that material standard of living to which they had become accustomed, this goal being reflected in an easy going attitude towards the business, the frequent taking of holidays, the pursuit of traditional markets,

profits, standards, and the like; or conversely being motivated by the desire to secure a fortune, they use to invest in all forms of business activity including colonial adventures, money lending and tax-farming and having earned a fortune would consume their profits in the spontaneous enjoyment of 'good things' in life. Weber argues that this 'economic traditionalism' which is the class ideology of the feudal class and is related to Catholicism.⁴²

The peasants, on the other hand, have ultimate affinity with lands and this class is much more dependent on nature than on the market forces. As explains Weber, " The lot of peasants is strongly tied to nature, ... dependent on organic processes and natural events, and economically... little oriented to rational systematization.⁴³ Thus the rational systematization of bourgeoisie rarely found in the economic ideology of the peasants. In turn peasant based religions rarely have any ethical rationalization too. As explains Weber:

'The more agrarian the essential social pattern of a culture e.g. Rome, India & Egypt the more likely it is that the agrarian element of the population will fall into a pattern of traditionalism and that religion, at least that of the masses, will lack ethical rationalization.'⁴⁴

42. Ibid., P. 102.

43. Weber, Sociology of Religion, Op.cit.; p.82.

44. Ibid., P. 82.

Thus as a general rule, the peasantry will remain primarily involve with weather or animistic magic or ruitualiza tion; in so far as it developed any ethical religion, Weber to elaborate this point further provides empirical evidences from different religions. Regarding the religion of the Parsees, Weber explain, that in this religion only cultivated soil was regarded pure from the religious point of view, and there for only agriculture was pleasing to god.⁴⁵

Again the characteristics of artisan class can be seen reflected in the ancient Christianity. Weber argues that earlier communities of original Christianity were strongly urban throughout ancient times, and their adherents were recruited primarily from artisans. The economic foundation of the urban man's life has a far more rational essential character, viz. Calculability and capacity for purposive manipulation. Furthermore, the artisans led economic existances which influenced them to entertain the view that honesty is the best policy, that the faithful work and the performance of obligations will find their reward and are dēserving of their just competition.

Coming to Weber's analysis of the nature of religion having proletariat as its subject, it should be noted that this is the most important part of his essay on the

45. Ibid., P. 82.

religions of the non-previlleged classes. According to Weber, the modern proletariat has a distinctive religious position, it is characterised by indifference to or rejection of religions common to large group of modern bourgeoisie. As Weber explain :

'For the modern proletariat the sense of dependence on one's own achievements is supplanted by a consciousness of dependence on purely social factors, economic conjunctives, and power relationship guaranteed by law. Any thought of dependence upon the course of natural or meteriological processes, or upon the anything that might be regarded as subject to the 'influence of magic or providence' has been completely eleminated.'⁴⁵

Thus the Proletariat class ideology gets manifestation in the religious ideology/.

So, Weber, agrees with Marx that different classes give different interpretations to the same religious ideology, according to their own needs and experiences. In this Weber's work is much more extensive but nevertheless complementary to Marx's understanding of dialectics between religion and class.

45. Ibid., P. 100.

Let us take up the second part of the problem, that is 'what role does religion play in the process of class struggle'. For Weber, however, this was not the issue, so he has not provided any direct analysis of this aspect of religion. But he agrees that the 'spirit of capitalism' was provided the religion, 'Protestant Ethic' hence indirectly he accepts that this religion helped the growing bourgeois class to win the class struggle against the feudals. It must be noted in this context that Weber seems to agree with Marx's proposition that 'religion is the opium of the masses'. However, Weber also provides the mechanism of the functioning of this opium, which may be called 'social psychology of religion' Weber in order to explain the mechanism or method, how religion influences human behaviour brings home two prominent concepts. Firstly ~~Martin~~ Luther's doctrine of Calling' and secondly, 'doctrine of predestination.'

Weber argues that the central achievement of Luther, in the period of Reformation, from the point of view of Weber's thesis, was the acceptance of secular life as of equal ~~more~~ significance to that of the religious^u order. Hence ~~for the~~ 'godly life' was the prerogative of all believers, whatever their station. This finally resulted in 'Callings' of everyday life. As explains Weber :

'...at least one thing was unquestionably new: the valuation of the fulfilment of duty in worldly affairs as the highest form which the moral activities of the individual could assume. This was which inevitably activities ~~of~~ religious signification and which first created the conception of the calling in this sense... The only way of living acceptably to God was not to surpass worldly morality in monastic asceticism, but solely through the fulfilment of the obligations imposed upon the individual by his position in the world. That was his calling.⁴⁶

This sense of religiosity behind the day to day action psychologically forced the people to follow the Protestantism, which as has already been discussed, had elements of bourgeois class ideology. Thus this doctrine of calling made the people behave in accordance with the need of ^{the} developing mode of production and in turn supported the dominant class, the bourgeoisie, of that mode of production.

However, Luther increasingly moved towards the idea that God had placed each person in a station in order that all might labour for their material necessities and be a burden to no other. But Luther did not talk about the process of accumulation of wealth typical to ~~the~~ Capitalism. So, ^{the} really decisive figure in Weber's eyes is not Luther but ~~is rather~~ Johan Calvin.

The broad outline of Calvinist doctrine of predestination is as followed:

46. M. Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism; (London: Unwin, 1971); p. 80.

"The world exists only for the sake and glory of God. All things contained therein are governed by his providence, to his glory, and for purposes which he alone perceives... Now, although by the fall all persons are inherently sinful, nevertheless God has, of mere mercy alone, predestined some to be saved through faiths in Christ as their saviour. The rest of humanity is destined for damnation."⁴⁷

Thus the important point about this doctrine of predestination is that God's decree of election or damnation is eternal. All must observe the laws of Church, participate in the sacraments and attempt to live the godly life, for 'we are all upon earth to testify the glory of God'.

However observation of this percept provides no guarantee of salvation according to Weber,^{which} changed the psychological consequences of the doctrine of predestination from passive to dynamic. At the time when salvation was a matter of real importance for the average person, the question was obviously to be raised by the faithful Calvinist as to whether or not he or she was of the elect. A Calvinist was then fought that in the last resort, the single distinguished feature of^{the} elect is that they have trust in Christ. Calvinist Christians were encouraged to prove their election by identifying the fruits of true faith in appropriate every day conduct. This brought home the concept of psycho-religious sanction of day-to-day conduct in every realm of life and particularly in the economic realm.

47. Ibid., p. 99.

The impact of the 'doctrine of Calling' and the 'doctrine of predestination' on the class struggle is obvious. It favoured the emerging bourgeois class, the flag bearer of the bourgeois revolution, at a particular historical juncture, in the process of class struggle, against the feudals, the existing dominant class. It made bourgeoisie think that what ever they were doing, was not only worth doing, but also by doing that they were serving the god. And this feeling provided the 'opium effect'; the obviousness of their understanding. On the otherhand, this dominant religious ideology at that time, made the workers in favour of the bourgeoisie by making them concern to the doctrine of calling, and, that of the predestination. Hence the same religion favoured the revolutionary struggle of the bourgeoisie against feudals and hampered the revolutionary consciousness of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. Thus to conclude Weber's analysis of role of religion in the process of class struggle, it can be said that, Weber agrees with Marx, on the point that religion may be on the both sides of the class struggle, depends it is the religion of which class, meaning thereby, particular religion has been articulated with which class.

Thus both Marx and Weber seem to agree that there is some relation between religions and classes, in the sense that different classes have different shades of religion. The variations in religious ideology comes due to articulation of different class ideologies with it.

But there remains two major problems, ^{with} both Marx and Weber, firstly, none of them could analyse the role of religion in the context of socialist revolution, secondly, there is a lack of adequate theoretical construct for analysing the interaction between religion and class on the one hand, religion and politics on the other. So there is a need of a broader framework of analysis which can not only give us better and more clear answer to the questions raised earlier but also can provide a guide to carve out an adequate strategy for socialist revolution. In the next chapter this effort has been made with the help of Althusser's theory of ideology and subsequent development made in it by few other scholars.

Towards An Alternative Theorization

The concern of this chapter is to carryout an investigation into the possibilities of an alternative or rather broader framework of analysis of religious phenomenon, which can explain ^{the} theoretical findings of Marx and Weber and can provide a guide to political action in the context of transition to socialism. It has been argued that this can be done with the help of Althusser's 'theory of ideology' and some recent developments made in it by Gorðan Therborn, Ernesto Laclau and Micheal Pecheux et.al. The sources of theoretical influences can further be extended to include such figures as Gramsci, Foucault and other contemporary theorists whose ideas have featured predominantly in debates about beliefs and ideologies but are seldom referred in the context of religion.

To begin with Althusser's theory of ideology, it is noted that, as Paul Hirst explains, this has transformed virtually ^a moribund region of Marxist theory.¹ Althusser has challenged certain central aspects of classical Marxist theory of ideology and he has attempted to introduce a new set of problems. Althusser's challenge ~~sociologicistic~~ consists in essence in rejecting the sociologicistic and reductionist

1. Paul Hirst, 'Althusser's Theory of Ideology', in Economy and Society, vol.5, 1976, p. 385.

models of analysis of ideology dominant in Marxist tradition. His attempt to change the terms of the problem of ideology consists in the rejection of the conception of ideology as reflection of social reality in consciousness and the substitution of a conception of ideology as a structure of social relations no less 'real' than the economic and the political and articulated with them. Thus Althusser, as Paul Hirst explains, rejects two propositions hitherto central in Marxist theories (these are positions taken by Marx in German Ideology): (i) that ideology is false representation of the real, (ii) that ideology is a distorted reflection in consciousness of real social relations. Althusser challenges the notion that 'ideology is 'false consciousness' of reality because it entails the conception of knowledge as the experience of a subject, false consciousness is true consciousness in blinkers.²

Althusser points out two basic aspects of ideology: particular ideology (represented in specific regions, political and legal forms) always expresses class positions. Opposed to the view that ideologies do not have any theory, he explains that since ideologies express class positions they do have theories, meaning thereby that there must be some

2. Ibid., p. 366.

theory of relations between 'ideology on the one hand and economic base, and the classes, and class struggle on the other'. The second point that Althusser wants to make is, as explains Kenneth Thompson, ~~is~~ the analytical dimension of ideology which includes the processes ~~for~~ grounded in Althusser's attempt to give scientific precision to Marx's theory of ideology: 'The operation of ideology in human life basically involves the constitution and patterningⁿ of how human beings live their lives as conscious, reflecting initiators of acts in a structured meaningful world. Ideology operates as discourse, addressing or, as Althusser puts it, interpellating human being as subjects.'³

Althusser's theory of ideology has immense potential to explain art, culture, law, philosophy, religion etc. their contents and their functioning in a class divided society. The first aspect of Althusser's theory has been developed further by Goran Therborn. Therborn's concern has been to show that there are several types of ideologies in the ideological structure of a social formation and they exist in articulation and non of them can be reduced to other. This process and mode of articulation is ~~being~~ provided by the class ideologies and class struggle in the social formations. This point of Therborn has been supported by Laclau in the

3. Kenneth Thompson, Beliefs and Ideology, (Sussex: Ellis Horwood Ltd., 1986); p. 15.

context of populism.

The implication of this theory for the purpose of analysis of religion is that the 'religious ideologies' do not have precise class content by ~~itself~~^{themselves}, but the class content is provided to them by the articulation of the class ideology. This further explains the motor force of changes in the nature of religious ideology. Taken as a historical view, it can provide us sufficient explanation for the emergence of Catholicism from early Christianity, Protestantism from Catholicism and Liberation Theology from the other two. The question that how this fresh articulation takes place can be explained with the help of Gramscian concept of 'organic intellectual'. The 'organic intellectuals' of a class start ~~giving~~ fresh meaning to the same religious surmons, same 'natural religion' and religion's text, from the vantage points of their own classes.

The second point of Althusser, the functioning of ideology, has been further elaborated again by Thernborn along with the others like Micheal Pecheux, Klaus Hožkamp and Lacan. This part of Althusser's theory is able to explain the role of religion in the process of class struggle or revolution. Marx's famous dictum that 'religion is the opium of the masses' can be explained with the help of this

theory. Althusser explains that ideology interpellates individuals and provides them a frame of reference through which individuals interpret the world and formulate their behaviour. Pecheux shows how this process of interpellation goes on at the level of individuals' ego and makes them think that what they think is ^{the} only right thing. Klaus Holzkamp argues that this process of interpellation can be called as 'socialization from above' this is the process of co-optation. Therborn explains the mode of interpellation instead of Pecheux's mechanism of interpellation. The importance of this part of the theory is that it explains how religion can function as a dynamic and powerful force in a society.

But the process of interpellation takes place in both the sides in class struggle. The point that one must note is that which particular ideology interpellates the individual. If it is the ideology of the dominant class, it will provide energy to the dominant class and provide them legitimation by making the dominated class think in the way the dominant class thinks. If it is the ideology of the dominated class, the process will work in the reverse order. Therborn further develops Althusser's concept of subject. He argues with Lacan that Althusser's subject is not a monolithic whole rather there is a contradiction and thus he, introduces the couplet

'Subjection-Qualification' by replacing 'subjection-guarantee' of Althusser. The subject, when subjected to certain ideology through the process of interpellation, not only becomes a passive actor but ~~also~~ the process of fresh articulation goes on. This concept brings home the possibilities of changes in the religious ideology in favour of the 'poor' or oppressed subjects of it. In the process of discussion we shall come to different points above mentioned and also we shall try to support the arguments with some empirical evidences.

(A) Religion and Ideology:

Before going into any detail about Althusser's theory of ideology and its implications for religious ideology, we must try to locate the place of religion in the ideological structure, which consists of so many ideologies other than religious ideology. In order to have a systematic understanding of interaction between religion and class on the one hand and religious ideology and other ideologies on the other we shall have, as explains Therborn, to draw a 'structural map of the Universe of Ideologies' as a whole'.⁴

The operation of ideology has been defined in terms of the constitution of human subjectivity and it follows than

4. Goran Therborn, The Ideology of Power and Power of Ideology, (London: NewLeft Books, 1980); p. 22.

that to search for the structure of the ideological universe is to seek the dimensions of human subjectivity. This has been done by Therborn in his book, 'The Ideology of Power and The Power of Ideology'⁵. At the most general level, it appears that two such dimensions of man's 'being-in-the-world' as a conscious subject can be distinguished.⁶ These may in turn be ordered along two axes, one referring to 'being', and the other to 'in-the-world'. Thus being a human subject is something existential - being a sexed individual at a particular point of one's life cycle, related to alter-sex individuals of different generations at a certain point of their life cycle.⁷ It is also something historical - being a person who exists only in certain human societies at a particular point in human history, say a tax farmer, blacksmith etc. Being 'in-the-world' and positional (having a particular place in the world in relation to other members of it, having a particular gender and age, occupation, ethnicity and so on).⁷

Therborn's thesis is that these four dimensions make up the fundamental forms of human subjectivity, and that the universe of ideologies is exhaustively structured by the four main types of interpellation that constitute these four forms

5. see Ibid., p. 22.

6. Ibid., p. 23.

7. Ibid., p. 23.

of the subjectivity⁸. According to Therborn these four types of subjectivity create four sets of ideologies:

(i) Inclusive-Existential Ideologies⁹:

This type of ideological discourse provides meanings related to being a member of the world, i.e. the meaning of life, suffering, death, the cosmos and the natural order. It concerns itself what life is, what is good and what is bad in life, what is possible in human existence, and whether there is a life after bodily death. And within this discourse comes religion, mythologies and secular moral discourse.¹⁰

These questions are universal in nature, in every society, at every historical juncture these questions are bound to be answered in some way. This explains the presence and continuity of religion in every social formation. This inclusive-existential ideologies constitute major part of, what Marx and Engels call, 'natural religion'.

(ii) Inclusive-Historical Ideologies¹¹:

Through these ideologies, human beings are constituted as conscious members of historical social world. These social

8. Ibid., p. 23.

9. Ibid., p. 23.

10. Ibid., p. 24.

11. Ibid., p. 24.

worlds are indefinite in number and variety, and it is only for purpose of illustration that we might mention the forms of tribe, village, ethnicity, state, nation, church etc.

(iii) Positional-Existential Ideologies¹²:

A positional ideology subjects one to, and qualifies one for, a particular position in the world of which one is a member. The most significant positions of the existential world, the most important aspects of the structure of the givens in human existence, are those delineated by the self-others and two genders distinctions and by the life-style of childhood, youth, maturity, and old age. Positional-existential ideologies than constitute subject-forms of individuality, (fe)maleness, of age and ageing.

(iv) Historical-Positonal Ideologies¹³:

Human beings also occupy positions in historical social worlds. Historical-positional ideologies form the members of a family in a structure of families and lineages the inhabitants of a particular locality in a wider pattern of social geography, the occupants of a particular educational status,

12. Ibid., p. 25.

13. Ibid., p. 25.

the practitioners of particular occupations and of particular life styles, the incumbents of positions of political power (and the place of those without it), the members of different classes. Positions may be differentiated and linked in terms of difference only, in terms of hierarchical grading along a single continuum of criteria, of complementarity, competition and final conflict.¹⁴

Therborn makes three important points relating to this ideological universe. Firstly, the distinction made above are analytical. They do not represent ideologies as they concretely appear and are labelled in everyday language. These may exhibit more than one of four dimensions, either at the same time or in different contexts.¹⁵ A religious ideology for instance, is not only an 'inclusive-existential ideology'. In a multi-religious or a partly secularized society it also operates as a 'historical-position-ideology'. This explains the phenomenon of communalism partly. Other example may be that of the ideology of nationalism. Nationalism may be both an inclusive-and a positional-historical ideology, in a latter form, constituting subjects of a position within an international system; the main accent of a given nationalist ideology may lie on one or the other.

14. Ibid., p. 25.

15. Ibid., pp. 25-26.

Inversely, in some tendencies of the labour movement, particularly revolutionary anarcho-syndicalism, 'class' becomes more an inclusive than a position of domination within a particular mode of production, as an alien, superfluous body outside the class of producers. In this perspective revolution is seen more as a displacement or deploration of alien parasites than as a transformation of society.¹⁶ Therborn quotes, Spanish Anarchist Gareia Oliver who says, 'after the revolution... the workers will have to do the same as they did the day before'.¹⁷

Secondly, the types of ideology indentified are exhaustive and irreducible¹⁸. One implication of this is that the ideological universe is never reducible to class ideologies. Even in the most class-polarized and class-conscious societies, the other forms of human subjectivities co-exist with the class subjectivity. Inescapably, the sex- and age- especifities of human individuals are ideologically constituted by existential-positional ideologies. And the meaning of a person's life and world is an existential question not wholly answerable by reference to the relations of productions rather addressed by the inclusive-existential ideologies of religion and secular morality.¹⁹

16. Ibid., p. 26.

17. Ibid., p. 26.

18. Ibid., p. 26.

19. Ibid., p. 26.

It will also be kept in mind that positional ideologies by definition always refer to positions within a broader world, held in common with incumbents of other positions. A class, for instance, forms part both of a common mode of production together with its opposite exploiting or exploited class or/and (the latter in the case of the petty bourgeois and patriarchal peasants, each supporting a non-exploitative mode of production) exists within a historical social formation composed of several classes. It is, then, natural - and not an aberration of underdeveloped class consciousness - that class ideologies co-exist with inclusive-historical ideologies, constituting the subjects of the contradictory totality of an exploitative mode of production and/or social formation.²⁰

Thirdly, the irreducible multi-dimensionality of ideologies means that a crucial aspect of ideological struggle and of ideological relations of force is the articulation of a given type of ideology with others. The efficacy of a given religion for example, will have to be understood in its articulation, explicit or implicit, with historical, positional and inclusive ideologies. 'Any analysis of the articulation of different discursive chains that

20. Ibid., pp. 26-27.

constitute a particular ideological complex', as rightly explains Kenneth Thompson, '... would have to consider the relations between religious discourses and those of ethnicity, politics and economics.'²¹ We shall come to this point later, in course of discussion of the process of articulation.

(B) Religion and Class:

Relation between religion and class can be explained with the help of Therborn's analysis of 'Historical Materialism of ideologies'.²² Therborn with the help of this theoretical construct explains how at the ideological structure of any social formation class-ideologies interact with the non-class ideologies. The non-class ideology, we are concerned here, is religion the nature of which we have already discussed earlier, so now we must see the nature of ideologies of different classes.

To begin with the 'feudal class', it can be noted as explains Therborn, that there are two subclasses, the feudal aristocrats and the feudal peasants. A feudal aristocrat has access to means of production in the form of landed estate -

21. Kenneth Thompson, Op. cit., p. 34.

22. Therborn, Op. cit., p. 32.

characteristically enjoyed with individual family property rights (though other forms may develop) and assumed through military powers or other services to supreme lord, and through inheritance and marriage. Ideologically, this implies a formation in which landed wealth, martialism and bravery - and/or services, obligation, descent and non-romantic marriage - are highly salient both in structuring conceptions of what the world is like, and what is possible in it and in defining what is good and right.²³

On the otherhand the world of the feudal peasants, by contrast, is first of all defined by the fact that they collectively belong to land without ownⁿing it. The peasants are separated from ownership of the land and from the surplus produced upon it, and subordinate to a lord or tillers of their estate. This historical form of social existence implied a collectivist orientation, and ideological attachments to one's native land and village, and an acquisition of agricultural skills that are traditional and slow-changing because of the slow pace of development of the feudal productive forces.²⁴ Although formation of feudal peasants does not extend to political questions of the state, it does include a consciousness and appreciation of legal rights and

23. Ibid., pp. 55-56.

24. Ibid., pp. 56-57.

obligations, '... they are not human beasts of burden', as explains Therborn, 'but occupiers of the lowest rung of a legally defined hierarchy of rights and obligations.'²⁵

Turning towards the class ideology of the bourgeoisie, it can be noted that a capitalist typically has access to means of production whose intrinsic character is irrelevant so long as they can be put to profitable use. This access can be gained through possession of liquid resources exchangeable in a competitive market, through inheritance or increasingly through membership of a corporate executive and successful realization of profits in an employed capacity. Corresponding to this is an ideological formation that emphasizes the making of wealth, industry, initiative, and peaceful risk taking, competitiveness of individual achievement and mastery of nature.²⁶

Again the capitalists typically participate in the work process of his enterprise, running it on the basis of the subordination of manual to intellectual labour. He has to face his workers in a labour market, as a buyer of Labour-power confronting legally free and equal sellers. His relations to other members of his class is one of the

25. Ibid., p. 57.

26. Ibid., p. 57.

competition and market exchange. Given the goals of capitalist production, both relations are governed by the rule of profit and imply ideological training in a commodity conception of the world, in commodity fetishism. Here the emphasis is on awareness and appreciation of judicial equality of unequal competitive performance, of the virtue of practical, enriching mental labour and a consciousness of precise object and man.²⁷

The institutionalized objective of capitalist production is the accumulation of capital-investment for profit in order to invest for further profit. This requires an ideological subjection to and qualification for rational calculation, orderliness, thrift and continuous effort. And given the existential problem of the meaning of calculation, it tends to be combined with a nuclear-family orientation that makes it possible to cope with continued accumulation and transfer of property. Under corporate institutionalization such as the thrift, the family, and so on are no longer crucial in the ideological formation of individual Capitalist.²⁸

The petty-bourgeois world of simple commodity producers and traders is, like the bourgeois one, a world of markets and

27. Ibid., p. 57.

28. Ibid., p. 58.

competition. But it involves no employees and no appropriation of surplus labour, and it is Economically oriented to family consumption rather than capital accumulation. These differences seem to imply that indiscriminate bourgeois wealth-making, initiative, risk-taking would here be replaced by ideologies according to which hard work and thrift govern access (and the maintenance of access) to the means of production; that subordinate mental labour would be replaced by economic practicality of the single producer or trader; that the egalitarian component would be stronger and more material; and that considerations of family security and independence would take priority over rational calculation of profits. So called professionals typically form part of the petty bourgeoisie as well - though many are in fact employed middle strata (e.g. public sector, doctors), and others are rather intellectual hangers-on of the high bourgeois (corporate lawyers, accountants, consultants). A professional 'orientation' may be a variant of petty-bourgeois ideology, with its emphasis on independence and disinterested work ethic unrelated to consideration of profitability.²⁹

Now, the world of the working class is one of individual and total separation from the means of production on the basis

29. Ibid., pp. 58-59.

of non-possession of earned or inherited capital. A working class existence carries both the legal freedom and equality of a market-subject owning undifferentiated labour-power, and the group-subordination that collectively independent manual workers experience in relation to managerial mental labour geared to the accumulation of surplus value. The ideological formation of a worker involves first of all an orientation to work, to manual labour, including physical powers, toughness endurance and dexterity. The wage contract implies a distinction between work and leisure, the purpose of work being consumption and family reproduction. The capitalist work process further implies a collectivist awareness of interdependence. Finally, as legally free and equal market agents who are 'citizens' of a state, workers under-capitalism differ from feudal peasants in that they are inherently open to political ideological formation.³⁰

However, as explains Therborn, the above elaboration of class ideologies are by no means exhaustive.³¹ Class ideologies may be made more specific according to the fractions in question. As has been made by Weber while elaborating the relations between religion and different status groups.³²

30. Ibid., p. 59.

31. Ibid., p. 59.

32. see Weber, Sociology of Religion, Op. cit.

Now the question does arise, how do these class ideologies interact with the other non-class ideologies like religion, art, culture etc. This problem can be solved with the help of four propositions provided by Therborn and similar theoretical constructs given by Ernesto Laclau.

Proposition one:

All ideologies exist only in historical forms, in historical degrees of salience and modes of articulation with other ideologies.³³ This means that while they are not reducive to the temporality of human history, existential ideologies operate only in historically determined forms. Thus religion always exists in particular historical patterns and in articulation with historical-position^{al} and historical-inclusive ideologies. The patterns are subject to change, though the existence of existential ideology per se is not. One implication of this proposition would be that the operation of different religious across and continents - its practice, acceptance or rejection and the struggle over it - has to be analysed in terms of its articulation with different historical ideologies and historical social forces.

33. Therborn, Op. cit., p. 32.

Proposition two:

All ideologies operate in a material matrix of affirmations and sanctions, and this matrix determines their inter-relationships.³⁴

The material matrix of any ideology can be analysed as operating through affirmations and sanctions, such that ideologies become effective by being related to the one or the other. In an affirming practice, if a subject acts in accordance with the dictates of ideological discourse, then the outcome predicted by ideology occurs, while if the subject contravenes the dictates of ideological discourse, then he or she is sanctioned, through failure, unemployment, bankruptcy, imprisonment, death and what ever.

Examples of such material matrix, in the context of religion, are immense. Religion may be materially affirmed by what they say or imply about the earthly capacities and practices of their respective non-believers, about their lack of power but also about their corruption and their misery. Religion may be affirmed by the mundane everyday succour of preachers and the Parish, and by the earthly effects of obeying the religious moral code. Religions have their deepest roots in the existential aspects of

34. Ibid., p. 33.

human subjectivity. But the strength or weakness of supernaturalist religion as well as the spread and decline of particular denominations and creeds are governed by their earthly affirmations and sanctions in their confrontations with other existential ideologies religious or secular.³⁵

Proposition three:

All ideologies (in class societies) exist in historical forms of articulation with different classes and class ideologies.³⁶

This means that the forms of individuality, (fe)maleness, religion, secular morality, geographic and ethnic positionality, and nationalism, are bound up with and affected by different modes of class existence and are linked to and affected by different class ideologies.

Laclau, making a similar point, explains that classes exist at the ideological and political level in a process of articulation and not of reduction.³⁷ This point becomes more clear when he explains the reason of transformation of ideologies or rather the changing nature of non-class ideologies. 'The class character of an ideological discourse

35. Ibid., p. 37.

36. Ibid., p. 37.

37. Ernesto Laclau, Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory, (London: New Left Books, 1977), p. 161.

is revealed in what we call its specific articulating principle'.³⁸ Laclau takes the example of nationalism, to provide as empirical evidence to this theoretical construct. It is a feudal, bourgeois or proletarian ideology. Considered in itself it has no class connotation. The latter only derives from its specific articulation with other ideological elements. A feudal class, for example, can link nationalism to the maintenance of a hierarchical-authoritarian system of traditional type we need only think of Bismark's Germany. A bourgeois class may link nationalism to the development of a centralised nation-state in fighting against feudal particularism and at the same time appeal to national unity as a means of neutralising class conflicts. Finally, a communist movement can denounce the betrayal by the Capitalist classes of a nationality cause and articulate nationalism and socialism in a single ideological discourse - for example, Mao's nationalism in China.

The existence of class ideologies, thus can not be in pure form. The class ideologies always exist in some form ~~at~~ of articulation with other ideologies, rather, as Laclau rightly explains, that class ideologies always require non-class-ideologies in order to exist. It is in this context

38. Ibid., p. 161.

Gramsci's concept of hegemony becomes useful. Hegemony is, as defined^{by} Gramsci,

'The 'spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is 'historically' caused the prestige (and consequent conflict) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production.'³⁹

This function of hegemony is carried out through the means of 'dominant ideology' which is class 'hegemonic ideology' or as Marx calls them the 'ruling ideas'. The formulation of hegemonic ideology takes place when the dominant class ideology articulates itself with other non-class ideologies. Thus any hegemonic ideology will have to articulate religion with itself in order to become hegemonic.

At this point one more thing must be made clear. That is, Kenneth Thompson's analysis of 'archaeology of culture'.⁴⁰ Kenneth Thompson makes the point that constitution of 'hegemonic ideology' is not a monolithic one but there are several ruptures. The notion of an 'archaeology of culture' is useful in so far as it suggests that it is necessary to excavate different layers of culture, which are in a sense,

39. Antonio Gramsci, Selection from the Prison's Note Book, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1973), p. 12.

40. Kenneth Thompson, Op. cit., p. 108.

discontinuous. Cultural studies have frequently lapsed into a 'wholistic' and deductivist approach which views the parts of culture as explicable and decodable as parts of a whole, totality or system.

Thompson argues that Foucault has contrasted 'total history' with 'general history' and the 'Archaeology of knowledge' has been described as a study of theoretical problems posed by the use in general history of such concepts as discontinuity, rupture, threshold, limits, series transformation. Foucault is interested ⁱⁿ discerning how cultural formations (discursive formation) of various types, are made to appear rational, unified, he wishes to deconstruct them, and to show how a unifying object of discourse comes to be formed - what are the rules of its formation. In so doing, he produces fascinating insights, practices and ways of thinking in a particular period. He treated the emergence of this discursive formation across several social or cultural areas - the family, the immediate social group, the work situation, and the religious community.⁴¹ The value of Foucault's contribution, does not lie in offering a theoretical resolution ^{to} the problem of finding the articulating principle of ^a cultural complex or the final causes of its

41. K. Thompson, Op. cit., p. 108.

ideological effects. But as comments K. Thompson 'its main value is in showing the fruitfulness of an archaeological method that drives us back again and again to uncovering the layers of culture, their specific interrelations, and the political processes (both macro and micro) that produce their ideological outcome.'⁴² Thus the 'dominant ideology' is not a homogenous structure rather it includes within itself the elements of class ideologies of subordinate classes too in order to become hegemonic. This happens by the process what Gramsci calls 'negotiations'. According to Gramsci, the subordinate classes did not passively acquiesce to the efforts of the dominant class to exercise cultural or ideological leadership and win consent to their authority. Consistent with his 'willed' conception of consciousness, Gramsci believed that in assenting to dominant conceptions and norms the subordinate classes also worked on (or negotiated) them.

Thus the concept of 'archaeology of culture' is useful in showing that how a single religion may be an articulated form of elements of several other religions ^{on} ~~at~~ the one hand and at the other, how a particular 'dominant ideology' may have elements of different class and non-class ideologies. We shall limit our discussion of 'archaeology of culture' to this extent and further examine the process of articulation itself.

42. Ibid., p. 108.

The process of articulation of one class ideology with with the other non-class ideologies, is carried out by what Gramsci calls 'organic intellectuals'. Gramsci characterizes organic intellectuals as:

'Every social group, coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, created together with itself, organically or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields.'⁴³

Thus these 'organic intellectuals' of different classes give different interpretations to the religious myths and religious doctrines. There is a continuous 'struggle to articulate meanings to these elements of religious ideologies, whose participants are these 'organic intellectuals'.

The language theorists have analysed how the struggle to articulate meanings goes on. The view of language advanced in this context, is that things have no unambiguous meaning 'in themselves' and language is the system which by representing the world, imposes meaning on the world. Religious discourses which may appear fixed in a dogmatic

43. Antonio Gramsci, Op. cit., p. 5.

mould may, infact, be able to express novel truths, new insights, emergent possibilities. Meaning is never fixed, once and for all. This open-endedness of religions and other types of ideological discourse means that we cannot explain how religions function now simply by tracing them back to their origins, since they have been subject to constant modification and transformation through history.⁴⁴

In short, we can say, that the class ideologies articulate with the non-class ideologies, in order to form a 'dominant or hegemonic ideology'. This process of articulation is carried out by the 'organic intellectuals' through the process of reinterpretation of non-class ideologies, literature, art, culture etc.

Fourth Proposition:

The patterning of a given set of ideologies (within class societies),^{is} overdetermined by class relations of strength and by the class struggle.⁴⁵

44. see for more detail discussion, Stuart Hall, Religions Ideologies and Social Movements in Jamaica, in R. Boccock and K. Thompson (ed.), Religion and Ideology, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985): pp. 269.

45. Therborn, Op. cit., p. 38.

Class overdetermination of an ideological structure implies, as is explained by an apt conceptualization developed by Eric Olinwright, that different classes select different forms of non-class ideologies and that class constellations of forces limit the possibilities of ideological inter-relationship and of ideological change.⁴⁶ As Kenneth Thompson rightly says, "... there are parallels between Therborn's discussions of the ways in which different classes (or class fractions) select different forms of non-class ideologies, and Max Weber's account of 'elective affinities' between different social strata and certain types of religious beliefs."⁴⁷ The implication of this proposition for religious ideology is that different religions get momentum in different societies due to its suitability to the classes in those societies.

The validity of the above discussed theoretical construct can be seen in the concrete empirical situation by taking example of Christian religious ideology in historical context. We shall see how the existential-inclusive ideology 'religion' has been articulated and re-articulated with different class ideologies and this provided different interpretations of ^{the} same religious doctrines, myths etc.

46. Erick Olinwright, quoted in K. Thompson, Op.cit. p. 19.

47. K. Thompson, Op. cit., p. 22.

As we have already discussed the nature of class ideologies of different classes, it is easy to detect the articulated class ideologies with different religious ideologies at different historical junctures.

To begin with early Christianity it can be noted that it was a movement of the 'ancient proletariat' as Neigel calls it.⁴⁸ The early Christians were mainly members of the ancient proletariat in the cities. The proletariat of the Roman Empire was not the same as the modern industrial proletariat: it consisted of dispossessed small farmers - driven off the soil by the competition from huge estates run by slave labours, impoverished and uprooted tenant farmers, poor artisans, unemployed farmer slaves, peddler and beggars. The aggregation of this mass can be called in Weber's term, the 'oppressed strata'.

It was among the Jewish Proletarians that Christianity had its inception. Jesus is often spoken of as the Messiah whom the Jews looked for to free them from Roman yoke. Jesus was considered as^A Jewish Messiah, he is the son of the God:

'It was Jesus, ... Whom God made the Saviour of the people of Israel, as he has promised... what God promised our ancestors he would do, he has now done

48. Neigel, Op.cit., p. 70.

for us, ... by raising Jesus to life. As it is written in the second Psalm, 'Ye are my son. I have become your father.'⁴⁹

Thus it was the urban poor^{who} longed most frequently for the Messiah Jesus conceived as son of God, who came to them to save^{them} from the ruins. It was said that 'He has brought down mighty Kings from their thrones, and lifted up the ~~slowly~~. He has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away with empty hands. He has kept the promise he made to own ancestors, and has come to help of his servant Israel.'⁵⁰ So too Jesus is represented as saying things which seems to be the persisting recollection of a radical leader: 'Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the world. No, I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. 'It is much harder for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God than for a camel to go through the eye of^a needle; I came to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already kindled', 'Who ever does not have a sword must sell his coat and buy one.'⁵¹ The kingdom of god is repeatedly said to be at hand in the life time of those Jesus is addressing, and in one passage it is represented in materialistic terms: I tell you that any one who leaves home... of fields for me... will receive much more in this present age'.⁵²

49. Quoted in Neigel, Op.cit., p. 71.

50. Ibid., p. 72.

51. Ibid., p. 72.

52. Ibid., p. 72.

Thus early Christianity was a product of the articulation of the class ideology of the contemporary oppressed class and religious ideology. God was represented as the supreme authority who, from the heaven sent his representative to the people on the earth to save them from oppression.

The new articulation of Christian religious ideology took place when it came into contact with the Greek-speaking Jewish proletariat of the cities of the Graeco-Roman world. Religion then made its way to the Gentile proletariat of these cities. The second destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 did away with the base of Jewish revolt. With the defeat of the national hopes of the Jews, Christianity became more and more a religion not of a revolutionary Jewish Messiah who was to bring the kingdom of God to earth but of a universal Messiah ('Christ' is the Greek word for Messiah) whose kingdom was not on this earth. It more and more dissociated itself from Judaism and made its peace with Rome, becoming a religion that provided solace for the disheartened proletariat masses. More importance was being given to personal salvation instead of bringing down kings from their thrones and filling the hungry with good things to eat. The message now ^{was} ~~is~~ that everyone must obey state authorities, because no authority exists without God's permission. This was a new kind of

articulation. Thus early Christianity's articulating class ideology was substituted by ~~the~~^a different class ideology, which produced such results.

~~The~~ Another articulation of Christian religious ideology took place with the feudal class ideology and the Catholic Church was the manifestation of this. The decrease in the ~~member~~^{nu} of independent farmers-who furnished the man power of the Roman army - meant a cessation of the expansion of the Roman Empire and a cutting down of the supply of slaves drawn from the conquered people. In time the Roman Empire was faced with the challenge of barbarians ~~pounding~~^c at its gates. In this atmosphere the ruling class lost faith in itself. It turned to philosophies such as Stoicism which preached the nullity of life and its goods and the need for the individual to ~~raise~~^{above} ~~superior~~[^] to the vicissitudes of existence. Christianity was no longer a threatening force, became congenial to it, and Social philosophy interacted with the new religion. One of the point that came out of this articulation was the concept of 'Law of Nature', which establishes a hierarchical order in the universe and in society.⁵³ The concept of the law of Nature was to be used by the Catholic church through the centuries to support the social order.

53. Ibid., p. 75.

Thus Christianity, originally a proletariat threat to Rome, transformed into its opposite, a bulwark of the social system. The Church opposed the abolition of slavery, every Parish Priest had the legal right to one male and one female slave. For the serf, as for the slave, the words of Paul applied: 'Slaves, obey your human master... For Christ is the real master you serve'.⁵⁴ Poverty continued to be glorified, but now ~~it was~~ hard-working, uncompromising poverty. Lenin, speaking of the members of the ruling class of his own days, said, it was "Religion teaches them to be charitable in earthly life, thus providing a cheap justification for their whole exploiting existence and selling them at a reasonable price tickets to heavenly bliss".⁵⁵ Thus the feudal class ideology when articulated with the Christian religious ideology gave ^a totally ~~a~~ fresh expression to the desires of ^{the} invisible God.

In its third phase of transformation the Christian religious ideology was articulated with the class ideology of the emerging bourgeoisie. The 'organic intellectuals' of this class were Calvin and ~~Martin~~ Luther, who gave new interpretations to Christianity. The nature of this fresh articulation can be seen in the treatment of the Protestant Ethic by Weber, that has already been treated earlier.⁵⁶

54. Ibid., p. 76.

55. V.I. Lenin, On Religion, (New York: International Publishers, 1983), p. 7.

56. See

However, in the modern phase the fresh articulation between religious ideology and the working class ideology is taking place which resulted in the emergence of 'Liberation Theology'. This will be discussed separately in the next Chapter.

(C) Religion and Politics:

In this part of this chapter we shall try to examine the role of religion in the process of class struggle. Firstly, we shall see how religion influences human behaviour in general and in turn becomes a powerful factor in the process of class struggle. Secondly, how at the ideological level of the class struggle religious ideology is articulated with both dominant and dominated class ideologies and influences the class struggle.

To begin with the first question it must be noted that, Marx's dictum that 'religion is the opium of the masses' has immense validity taken in specific sense. One ~~and~~^{of} the valid interpretation of this dictum may be that religion influences human behaviour to^a great deal to the extent that it can give birth to the phenomenon of religious fanaticism. This is the point on which Weber also seems to agree when he talks about 'Protestantism as spirit of Capitalism'. This concept can further be developed with the help of interpellation function of ideology, provided by Althusser's theory of ideology.

Explaining the functioning of ideologies, Althusser explains that ideologies have the functions of "Constituting concrete individuals as subjects... Ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it recruits subjects among individuals (it recruits them all) by the precise operation that I have called 'interpellation'.⁵⁷

So far Althusser's ideology 'hails' individuals as subjects. Not only does it hail them in the sense of catching attention but it succeeds so completely that subjects spontaneously misrecognize the conditions of their constitution as subjects, their 'vocations' and they in turn accept what the ideology produces in them. At the heart of this misrecognition is the spontaneous impression that the existence is really quite simple. This interpellation is the mechanism not simply of constituting subjects but of installing in them a profound sense of obviousness of their position.

Michel Pecheux in Language, Semantics and Ideology,⁵⁸ attempts to rectify and advance the conception of interpellation, especially in relation to the problem of meaning. His text stands as an attempt to sustain and develop the Althusserian position. Pecheux is concerned with elucidating

57. L. Althusser, Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays, (London: New Left Books, 1971), p. 162.

58. Michel Pecheux, Language, Semantics and Ideology; Stating the Obvious, 1982.

the relation of interpellation and especially the meaning of which the subject takes itself as self-evident, by which its status as an effect, a construction is concealed and annulled. He does this by developing the use of psycho-analytic concepts which has been hinted at in Althusser. Pecheux has raised the issue that how is it that the subject should be so convinced of the evident character of things including the subjects own identity. Pecheux has shown that how the process of interpellation takes place at the level of individual's ego. Through this process the subject receives a sense of obviousness and he thinks that what he thinks is ^{the} only truth. 59

Another aspect of the mechanism of interpellation is 'what is being interpellated'. Therborn explains that there are three fundamental modes of interpellation. Ideologies answer three pertinent questions of the subjects; 'what exists', 'what is good' and 'what is possible'. These three questions are important in every realm of human activity and answers provided by the ideologies, if satisfactory ^{facilitates} ~~facilitates~~ the interpellation of ideology. 60

59. For detail discussion see, Mark Cousins and Hussain, A. "The Question of Ideology:- Althusser, Pecheux and Foucault", Sociological Review (Monograph), Vol.32,1986.

60. Therborn, Op.cit. P. 18.

Thus instead of Althusser's 'subjection-recognition' couplet, Therborn suggests 'subjection-qualification'. The formation of human consciousness by every ideology conservative or revolutionary, oppressive or emancipatory, according to whatever criteria, involves a process simultaneously of subjection and of qualification.⁶¹ The amorphous libido and manifold potentialities of human infants are subjected to a particular order that allows ^{and} a favours certain drives and capacities and prohibits or disfavors others. At the same time, through the same process, new members become qualified to take up ^{and} ~~old~~ perform (particular part of) the repertoire of roles given in the society into which they are born, including ^{the} role of passive agents of social change. The ambiguity of the words 'qualify' and 'qualification' should also be noted. Although qualified by ideological interpellation, subjects also become qualified to 'qualify' these in return, in the sense of specifying them and modifying their range of operation.

The implication of this theory for the religious ideology is that whenever religion interpellates individuals there is all possibility to create a type of subjection which ~~makes~~ ^{may} *qualify individuals to change the religious ideologies.*

61. Therborn, Op.Cit. P. 17.

One of the dimensions of the mechanism of interpellation is the 'social psychology of religion', that has been analysed by Weber. This is similar to Theborn's analysis of 'material matrix' of ideology. The achievements individuals used to have due to accepting the 'callings' of Luther and 'the doctrines of predestination' of Calvin, fostered the process of interpellation. The achievements made them to think, that what they were doing was the correct thing to do.

Thus Althusser's concept of interpellation explains how religion functions as 'opium'. Individuals due to the above mechanism of interpellation, are constituted as subjects. And once recruited as subjects they start behaving as desired by ideology. This is one of the reason of successful mass mobilization in the name of religion in every social formation in general and in third world social formations in particular. At the sametime this explains, as said above, the importance of religion in the process of class struggle.

However, Therborn rightly explains, that Althusser's analysis of 'interpellation' becomes too mechanical. In the analysis of interaction between the interpellated subject and ideology there is^a lack of sense of dialectical relationship.

the individuals totally blind to the interpellation provided by the religious ideology of the different realities. But there is also all probability that a contradiction may develop between the two. New kinds of qualifications may be required and provided, new skills that clash with the traditional forms of subjection or conversely, new forms of subjection may develop that clash with the provisions of still needed qualification. This opens the possibility of division in the religious communities and emergence of different reform movements, different versions, in the same religion.

Now coming to the second issue that has been raised, the role of religion in class struggle, we can quote the comments of the Editors of the special issue of Monthly Review on "Religion and the Left" that all religions have two features in common :

'On the one hand they provide ruling classes with an institutional structure and an ideology by means of which they can fortify and perpetuate their dominance. On the other hand, as interpreted by exploited and oppressed classes, they become instruments of protest and revolt.... Throughout recorded history, religion

has been an important, and often decisive, organization and ideological element of both sides of the class struggle'.⁶²

Thus in the process of class struggle religion may be a participatory factor from both the sides. They can be called, as Bruce Lincoln chooses to call them, 'religion of status quo' and 'religion of revolution'.⁶³

The 'religion of status quo' is the product of the articulation of religious ideology with the dominant class ideology. Invariably the dominant party, ^{coalition} collision of classes, disseminates a characteristic ideology through all segments of society, propounding a set of fundamental values and principles. These values and principles are expressed in terms of lofty abstraction or eternal truths, ^{which} nevertheless serve to further the interest of those who hold power. The 'religion of status quo' will function 'as legitimation of the dominate party's right to hold wealth, power and prestige, and endowment of the social order, a social aura, mythic charter, ^{ac} or other transcendent justification, and a valorization of suffering within this world, concomitant with

62. Preface, Monthly Review, Vol. 36(3), July-August, 1984. P. 4.

63. Bruce Lincoln, Notes towards a Theory of Religion and Revolution, in Religion, Rebellion, Revolution, Bruce Lincoln(ed.), (London:Macmillan Press, 1985); Pp.266

the extended promise of non-material compensations for such sufferings'.⁶⁴ Thus 'religion of the status quo' will contain the revolutionary aspiration of the oppressed class and in doing so it will help the dominant class in the process of class struggle.

Even at the empirical level some relationship can be seen between the dominant class and this 'religion of status quo'. Religious institutions are established and professionals are recruited for the propagation of this religion throughout the society, and being vitally interested in the success of such propagation, the dominant party supports these institutions and individuals in any number of ways. Often they are granted a monopoly in receiving and/or administering educations. Again, a secure and often sizable income can be granted to the religious institutions and professions 'through such mechanism as state salaries, tax exemptions, and grants of property'. In turn the priestly class, consciously or unconsciously plays a dominant role in the further articulation of the dominant class ideology and class interest with the religious ideology. At the sametime the instruments of interpellations, like books and schools are

64. Ibid. P. 269.

also captured and given orientation by them.

Examples are numerous in almost every type of social-formation, of such 'religion of the status quo' and its relationship with the dominant class. We can see the role of Confucianism in the traditional Chinese society, that provides an excellent examples.⁶⁵ There were four broad classes in that society: Literati peasants, artisans, and merchants ranked in the descending order. The crucial division within this quadripartite system, however, was between the literati - who ^{were} ~~are~~ called 'Great-men', ^{and} hold all official positions, were the only educated members of the populace, and engaged in mental labour alone, directing the work of others - and members of all other classes who were called 'small men' and engaged in physical labour to produce goods and services. Literati were the largest landowners in addition to which they were exempted from taxation, conscription, the corvee, arrest without imperial approval, and corporal punishment. By virtue of explicit 'Sumptuary Law' they were entitled to different styles of dress, food, and goods from the other classes.⁶⁵

Throughout the history of China, from the Han dynasty

65. See, Tung-Tse Ch'u, "Chinese Class Structure and Its Ideology", in J.K.Fairbank (ed.), Chinese Thought and Institutions (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), Pp.235-50.
and, C.K.Yang, Religion in Chinese Society, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961).

onwards, the official religion of the class of literati was Confucianism. Central to their doctrine was an insistence upon the ancestral cult and filial obligation as proper model for all social relations, all other dealings being seen as, permutations of the 'father'/'son' 'bond': 'ruler'/'ruled', or 'superior'/'subordinate', 'great men'/'small men'. The central ethical values encouraged were thus in the words of Etienne Batatz, 'respect, humility, docility, obedience, submission and subordination to elders and betters'.⁶⁶

An elaborate system of ritualized behaviour was adopted, continuously studied and refined, and propagated among all strata. The purpose of such rituals being, as Tung-tsu chu puts it, to make social distinctions clear and to regulate men's desires according to their status.⁶⁷

Another examples of functioning of 'religion of status quo' can be seen in the ^{England} ~~the phase~~ between 1780 and 1832 as has been analysed by E.P. Thompson in his book 'Making of the English Working Class', and Elic Halevy in 'A History of the English People in Nineteenth Century'. They have shown that the pre-existing religious cultural elements were used by the

66. Quoted in B. Lincoln, Op. Cit., P. 270.

67. Tung-tsu Ch'u, Op.cit. P. 237.

new ideological currents of the rising bourgeoisie, as reservoir of Protestant dissent. There was an imposition on the working class of extraneous ideology emanating from the dominant class and transmitted through the agency of its intellectual leadership, what Gramsci calls the 'organic intellectuals, the clergy, Sunday Schools and Church building movements funded and encouraged by the state and the middle and upper classes. The functions that religion served for the working class in the period of disruption and hardship ^{may} ~~that~~ explain why religious solutions were adopted. Some of the suggested functions are: 'the opium of the people (Marx); a compensation for those who suffer in this life through the promise of higher status in the spiritual realm (Weber); a transitional ideology helping the workers to adjust to the requirements of capitalist industrialization or 'modernisation' by inculcating work-discipline (Weber). Religion in this period helped to separate off from ^{the} working class its leading strata, the so called 'aristocracy of labour', ^{who} might have been the 'organic intellectuals' capable of developing revolutionary working-class consciousness.

Turning towards, what Lincoln calls, 'religion of revolution', our thesis is that this type of religious ideology is a product of articulation between 'religious

ideology' and the 'working class ideology'. The 'religion of revolution' defines itself ^{by} promoting direct action against the dominant party's material control of society.

There are numerous examples of this 'religion of revolution' or what V. Lanternari calls 'religion of the oppressed'.⁶⁸ Some noted such ^{noted} movements are ^{the} 'North American Ghost Dance' and the 'Cargo Cult of Melan^asia', where religion provided an effective rallying point for opposition to the imposed religion, ideology and values of colonial powers, and in some cases colonial rule itself. But such movements are not confined to the colonial situations. Even in the European context the major revolutionary upheavels of modern Europe have come in for re-examination, as the religious content of English Civil War and French Revolution have been newly assessed by Christopher Hill, Michael Walzer and many others.⁶⁹ Role of Protestantism in the bourgeois revolution has also been elaborated by Weber as we have already discussed earlier.⁷⁰

The most significant ^{contemporary} form of 'religion of revolution' is the 'Liberation Theology'. 'Liberation Theology' is mass

68. Vittorio Lanternari, The Religions of the Oppressed, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963).

69. See, Christopher Hill, 'Puritanism and Revolution' (London: Seeker and Warburg, 1958).
Michael Walzer, Revolution of Saints (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1965).

70. see page,

oriented and more concerned with the well being of ^{the} poor and oppressed people. This will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

To conclude, in this chapter we have tried to see how religious ideology articulates with the class ideologies at the ideological structure. It has been argued that this articulation gives class expression to the religious ideologies. This explains the ongoing changes in the forms, and contents of religious ideologies. ^{Also an} ~~Again,~~ ^A the answer to the second question, that is the role religion plays in the process of class struggle by providing ~~the~~ individuals a frame of reference to interpret the world and their role in the world. Through the process of 'interpellation' religions make the individuals think that what they are thinking ^{is} ~~are~~ right, the profound sense of obviousness is installed in them. The religion of a particular class helps it in the class struggle by interpellating members of both the sides.

CHAPTER - III

Liberation Theology: The Spirit of Socialism

In this chapter we shall discuss the emergence of 'Liberation Theology' and role of this religious ideology in ^{the} process of class struggle. Our thesis is, as it has been discussed in Chapter II, that 'liberation theology' is a product of articulation between religious ideology and the working class or oppressed class ^{ideology} religion. Though this new articulation emerged in a particular context of Latin American social formation in the process of people's struggle for liberation against various oppressive mechanisms. But this can be seen as new mood, at present historical juncture, in the transformations of religious ideology throughout the world in general and in third world social formation in particular. What is important to note here is that this new articulation between religion and working class ideology, as ^{the} Editors of Monthly Review call it 'reapproachment between religion left', is providing great impetus to revolutionary struggles of the oppressed. It is not only defining theological concepts but also providing fresh interpretations of political and economic aspects of social realities. Thus ~~the~~ 'Liberation Theology' is an important religious ideology in the context of revolutionary struggle, of the oppressed classes, and ^{the} transition to socialism, as the Protestant ethic did in the context of bourgeois revolution. It is in this sense it can ^{be} said that 'Liberation Theology' is the spirit of socialism.

'Liberation Theology, as explains A.A. Engineer,'... is the need of the hour-^a a theology which puts great emphasis on freedom, equality and distributive justice and strongly condemns exploitation of man by man, oppression and persecution.'¹ The main characteristics of the Liberation theology in to grapple seriously with the problem of spiritual-material bipolarity of human life by re-structuring the present social order in favour of a non-exploitative, just and egalitarian one. As pointed out in the context of Marxism by Roger Garudy, religion "instead of being a method of critical detachment from the given, an instrument to search out, to create new possibilities, has become apologetics, an ideology of justification."²

The theology of Liberation has encouraged critical attitude towards the given and constantly ^{attempts} to ^{reveal} ~~expose~~ even new possibilities. A rich spiritual life cannot be lived in 'one dimensional' society. The theology of Liberation demands continuous struggle and striving for ^{the} betterment of life and ^{the} restructuring ^{of the given} environment. Unlike status-quoist theology, or 'religion of status quo', its primary aim is not to provide solace and justification for suffering and misery treated them

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1. A.A. Engineer, On Developing Liberation Theology in Islam, in A.A. Engineer (ed), Islam and Revolution; (Delhi: Ajanta Pub., 1984), p. 19.
 2. Roger Garudy, The Alternative Future, (London: Penguin, 1976), p. 108.

as inevitable conditions of life. Liberation theology is not theology of solace but that of struggle. The Liberation theology, in other words, does not advocate the concept of the 'God of gaps', assigned to fill in the temporary lacunae of science and the temporary limitations of technology with metaphysical hypothesis.³ It also rejects the concept of the 'God of alibis' charged with making up for man's active failures by 'super natural interventions'. Liberation Theology does not seek god in the limitations of man's powers in his failures, but at the centre of man, in his creativity and maturity. Liberation Theology does not treat the institutions once evolved as sacred and unalterable. Values and not institutions, should be treated as sacred. Institutions and instruments emerge as a result of historical process and stand in constant need of refabrications in order to come as nearer as historically possible to the divine goal. Liberation Theology ~~subordinates~~^{has} evolved in a historical process to a lively sense of living, active God who inspires human beings for passionate but rational pursuit of social justice which is dominant mode of faith.⁴

3. Ibid., p. 80.

4. A.A. Engineer, Op.cit., P. 23.

Nicaraguan social formation⁵ provides us an illuminating example of such transformation in the religious ideology. Historically, a vast majority of Catholic and Protestant clergy helped in legitimizing the system of political domination imposed by the conservative bourgeois^{regime} and US imperialism. Till 1893 the Catholic Church was acknowledged as the 'religion of the state' and it enjoyed an ideological monopoly.⁶ The Catholic Bishops' Conference in Nicaragua tried to dissuade the people from participating in anti-imperialist struggle led by the Sandino. After he was assassinated, the Catholic hierarchy legitimized the Somoza dictatorship through its blessings and participation in public acts. In fact they honoured Somoza with the title of 'Prince of the Church' in 1956. The Bishops of orthodox Catholic and Protestant Churches are against the revolutionary religion. Obviously the point of attack is not only that the ideology of Marxism-Leninism is a materialist ideology and is atheist in nature

5. Example of Nicaragua has been taken up for the specific purpose. Our concern is only to see the transformation in religion in this social formation. For details of the general history of Nicaragua and the revolution see, Forest D. Calbourn, Post-Revolutionary Nicaragua: State, Class and the Dilemmas of Agrarian Policy, (London: University of California Press, 1986).

6. Luis Serra, *op. cit.* p. 159.

but also the political and economic institutions. This becomes more obvious when we see the various methods used by them with the strategic objective of weakening the revolutionary government, of estranging the people from the revolutionary organisations, and of lessening Christian participation in the revolutionary process.

In the light of the above it is easy to understand the class nature of the Christian theology propagated by them. For example as George Arellano explains:

"For Catholics it must be a true and extolling doctrine that all authority comes from God... and that when they obey the government they do not debase themselves, but rather perform an act which deep down constilas as compliance with God."⁷

This was an important argument on the basis of which the Catholic priests justified the dictatorship of Samocista. Thus as it explains ~~that~~ since all authority comes from God, the dictatorship too is ^{the} march of God on earth. Hence it must be obeyed, no matter to what extent it is oppressive, no matter ~~to~~ which imperialist cause ~~does~~ it serves

7. Quoted in Luis Serra, Op. cit., p. 159.

Curiously enough, after the triumph of ^{the} revolution in Nicaragua, the different religious slogans were propagated by both Catholic and Protestant sectors of the Christian Church. Instead of obeying the authority now they were asking to disobey it. Both Catholic and Protestant Church authorities for this purpose sent groups of promoter to the most remote places in the country. Musical bands with professional entertainers sought to attract young people by cleverly mixing music with political and religious slogans. Thousands of pamphlets produced in Mexico and Guatemala flooded the country. Well known evangelical speakers were brought into the country. A systematic propaganda campaign was conducted by means of bumper-stickers, murals, posters, loud-speakers and fliers⁸, which bombarded the Nicaraguan people with slogans such as:

'Only Jesus Liberates, 'We have to be Militia men of Peace not of Hatered', 'only Christ Saves', 'Get ready Christ is Coming', 'Repent', and (in contrast to the Sandenista slogan, Sandino, Yesterday, Today and Always') 'Christ, Yesterday, Today, Always'.⁹

These slogans when put into ~~the~~ context reveal their own status quoist and anti-communist nature. It was a

8. Ibid., p. 161.

9. Ibid., p. 161.

carefully constituted viewpoint in order to erode the authority of the revolutionary regime, to suppress communism which had been raised to new levels of awareness, to reculcate fatalism, passivity, humility, ^{and} obedience to the dictates of God. Popular participation and mobilization was regarded as being a undesirable and subversive. New shades of meaning were given to the classical struggle between good and bad, translating it into a struggle between Capitalism and Communism.¹⁰

Thus the orthodox Christian religious ideology in Nicaraguan socialformation is articulated with the class ideology of the oppressive imperialist class and the prerevolutionary dominant class. Non-class religious ideology in being given interpretations by the class ideology of the dominant class.

Turning towards the other stream of the Christian religious ideology in Nicaragua, the situation is just opposite. While previously the Catholic Clergy were out of contact with the people and more concerned with their own personal well being. Liberation Theology is mass oriented and more concerned with the wellbeing of ^{the} poor and ^{the} oppressed classes.¹¹ The Clergy, previously, were only concentrated to in

10. For more details see, Michael Kearney, "Religion, Ideology and Revolution in Nicaragua." Latin American Perspectives, Issue 50, Vol.13, no. 3, Summer 1986.

11. see, T. Walker, The Churches in Nicaraguan Revolution. (New York: New York Press, 1982).

colleges schools and parish Churches within the urban areas. Opposed to this the propagator of the Liberation Theology went to the remote areas, and provided impetus to organise the lay community so that they could deal in a collective manner with the problems that surrounded them.

The prevailing Christian Theology was divorced from ~~the~~ ritualism. Catholicism was reduced to modernization, the religious population was devoted to ritual practice and religious festivities involving alcohol and games. Opposed to this the Liberation theologians started reinterpreting the Bible from the vantage point of the poor and oppressed people and the study of the Bible was linked with critical reflection of existing social realities.

The problem of reinterpretation, or can be said that of the rearticulation, was being solved by the 'organic intellectuals' of the working class, the Marxist leaders. Liberation theologians ^{they} seek to achieve ^{this} at the care of the teachings of religion. This care, stripped of mysticism, naturalism and dogma, is essentially one that is devoted to the same issues that plague third world societies - oppression, hunger, misery, poverty. They seek answers not in an escape from reality to other-worldism. The answers are found in this world. The answer to extremes of wealth and poverty,

domination and subordination are located in the structures.¹²

The mass-oriented strategy and the social-economic questions raised by the liberation theologians ~~explain~~^{imply} that even if ~~the~~ Christ remained the same, the holy Bible remained the same, somethings ~~has~~^{have} been changed. The same Bible, the same Christ meant something different than what it meant to old Catholic and Protestant theologians. Why did the difference ~~come~~ into being? The answer is that the change in ~~the~~ religious ideology ~~did~~ ~~come~~ due to its new articulation with the working class or the oppressed section of ~~the~~ society.

This becomes more clear when we examine the theopolitical statements issued by Roberto Flores, President of one of the Cooperatives:

"The true Christian will defend his home and does not think only of himself because if one sees that they come to kill Children as the Contras do, the Christians must fight. Just like ~~the~~ Jesus, we have to feel the pain of those who suffer aggression in the mountain and that is why we have to thrust out chest forward."¹³

12. For detail see, Munzer Fernohar, 'Latin American Theology: The response of Latin American Catholics to Socio-economic problems.' Latin American Perspectives. Issue 50, Vol.13, No. 3, Summer 1986.

13. L. Serra, Op. cit., p. 132.

The commitment to change the oppressive system is very obvious in the above statement, which is just contrary to the statement used to legitimize the Samocista dictatorship by the Catholic hierarchy. The nature of the ideology of the Liberation theology becomes more clear by the following stand Liberation theologians have taken regarding revolution:

'Christian opinion on the revolutionary process cannot be measured primarily in terms of the wellbeing of our Churches as institutions. What is decisive are the consequences the process has for the hopes of the poor.'¹⁴

Thus for the liberation theologians the measuring scale of the assurance of salvation is not serving the institutions like Churches but the poor subjects.

Regarding the state authority, ~~the~~ Liberation Theology explains:

'The support we give to the state must contribute at the time to the revolutionary vigilance against bureaucratic excesses... As Christians we must remember that no state apparatus has in itself its reason for being and that ~~is~~ ^{it has} continued structural temptations to exist for itself. Its reason for being is that of service...'¹⁵

14. Quoted in Ibid., p. 157.

15. Quoted in Ibid., p. 157.

Thus the duty of the true Christian has changed from obeying all ~~the~~ authority because it comes from God, to disobeying illegitimate authority. This change in the attitudes of theologians have specific features. They explain every thing from the vantage point of the oppressed people. So, it is the result of a new articulation between religious ideology and the oppressed class ideology.

How has this change become possible? This question has been answered in various manners, one explanation has been that of the organizational and theological changes fostered by the Catholic and Protestant Churches. This point of view emphasizes the Second Vatican Council. The Medellia Conference (Ecuador, 1968), the progressive Encyclicals of Paul VI and the theology of liberation.

However, these organizations and theological changes played a minor role. This process can be better explained by Therborn's 'interpellation-qualification!'. The mass mobilization and participation during the anti-Somocista struggle paved the way for a new articulation. Due to scarcity of priests during this period, the training of laymen for Catechism and administration of the Sacrament was encouraged in this period, particularly in the rural areas.

Consciousness-raising methods¹⁶ were used for their training. The training included, in addition to biblical teachings, the subjects of health, literacy, agriculture and politics. These individuals when subjected by the Christian ideology started reading the Bible with the perspective of the oppressed.¹⁷

Thus in this specific social context, the people became the conscious authors of history and they also appropriated the religious domain by interpreting ~~the~~ ^{and} practising religious matters in a revolutionary manner. The 'Delegates of the World' and the clergy committed to the poor ^{became} ~~because~~ the organic intellectuals of the people who knew how to unmask the religious teachings and practices influenced by bourgeois ideology. Their aim was to develop an alternative evangelical praxis and organization. In this task these organic intellectuals saw the original intent of Jesus message to be the expression of the oppressed in an hierarchical society subordinated by imperialism. The Christian values of justice, equality, the sharing of goods, defence of the meek, they interpreted as interests of the exploited ^{to} classes against slavery, feudalism and Capitalism. Change in vantage-point

16. This method was firstly developed by Paolo Friere in Brazil.

17. For more discussion see, L. Serra, Op. cit., pp. 152-3.

caused changes in the interpretation of the same texts which had been used to legitimise oppression. Decoding of the texts and of the myth led to new interpretation, new meaning and new hopes.

This 'Liberation Theology' has provided a big support to the revolutionaries in the class struggle in the Nicaraguan socialformation. This is a 'religion of ^{the} oppressed class', a 'religion of revolution'. In the transformation of semifeudal socialformation religion in Nicaragua is playing a great role. As agrees Rosen:

"With its influence on large numbers of the popular masses, liberation theology is a meaningful political feature of the Latin American landscape today."¹⁸

Thus religion plays an important role in favour of the oppressed class in the process of class struggle. Thus 'liberation theology' can be considered as ^{the} spirit of socialism. Because it can provide three kind of support to ~~the~~ socialism: i) It will expose the class-nature of the dominant class religion, ii) the interpellation of this religion's ideology will install a understanding of social realities that will help the revolutionary struggle. At the sametime the dominant class will feel sorry for the whole

18. Bernard Rosen, 'Marxism and Religion', Monthly Review, Vol.40, Sept. 1988, p. 49.

state of affairs. iii) In the phase of transition this interpellation of this rearticulated liberation theology will abolish the contradiction between religion and Marxism and will provide a milieu for smooth^{er} socio-economic change.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion instead of summing up the discussion that has been carried out in this dissertation, an effort will be made to examine the validity of the framework of analysis that has emerged in the process, specific to the Indian context. However, the socialformation in India is too complicated as far as religion is concerned. It is a multi-religious socialformation having too many sub-religious groups. Any effort to examine the validity of any framework of analysis, raises more questions than gives answers. It always involves a risk of oversimplification. Thus the treatment here can only be tentative and would be subject to much rigorous evaluation.

There are three points necessary to be taken into account while discussing religious phenomenon in Indian context - a) the ideological structure of the Indian social-formation b) phenomenon of communalism and c) of secularism.

To begin with the first point, we shall try to draw a map of ideological structure of Indian social-formation. These ideologies can be divided, for the analytical purpose, into four groups:

<u>Positional-Historical Ideologies</u>	<u>Inclusive-Existential Ideologies</u>	<u>Positional-Existential Ideologies</u>	<u>Inclusive-Historical Ideologies</u>
Bourgeois class	Hinduism	Male(ness)	Language,
Feudal	Islam	Female(ness)	religion,
Middle or	Sikhism	etc.	nation,
Service	Christianity		etc.
Peasants	Budhism		
Peasants	Jainism		
Workers			

The complicated character of the class configuration of the Indian social-formation has been a matter of debate since long. But instead of going into any detail of the debate we can make some general observations for our purpose. The most dominant ideology among the other 'Positional-historical ideologies' was earlier feudal class ideology. It was only in the period of Raja Ram Mohan Roy in the history of modern India when the emergence of bourgeois ideology can be noticed. Since then there has been a struggle between these two ideologies to retain or to establish their hegemonic position in 'dominant ideology'. However, further development of capitalism, what ever may be the form, consolidated the bourgeois class ideology, and gradually started replacing the feudal class ideology as a constituent of the 'dominant-ideology'.

On the otherhand though peasant ideology in the medieval India, existed it was not in a consolidated form and could not be forceful because of this reason. The ideology of the working class developed simultaneously the bourgeois class ideology. However, it only could be come ~~upsurge~~ ^{upsurge} visible in the phases of revolutionary and of workers' strikes in modern Indian history.

Coming to the concept of 'inclusive-existential-ideologies' one can mark different religions in India as having emerged in different social and geographical contexts. There are several inherent differences in them that emerged due to differences in their experiences in historical development. Two such examples are Hinduism and Islam which have been most important religions in India.

Leaving the two other ideologies, 'positional-existential' and 'Inclusive-Historical', aside we shall try to see how the doctrine of articulation and that of interpellation explain the Indian situation. Now the 'dominant class' ideology in Indian context, the 'bourgeois-feudal' ideology has articulated with religious ideologies and this marks the dominant stream of religious ideologies. The dominant 'Hindu religious ideology' before Raja Ram Mohan Roy phase was predominantly a feudal ideology. It was Raja Ram Mohan Roy along with other leaders of that phase, who initiated the process of fresh articulation between Hinduism and bourgeois class ideology.

Islam, on the otherhand, was a feudal ideology during the medieval period of Indian history. In the colonial period due to several reasons, outside the realm of debate here, Muslim population took less part in the process of modernization. This caused less embourgeoisement of the Muslim population. This further caused feudalised Islam to continue as the dominant ideology. Even now the dominant stream of Islamic religious ideology is more feudal. The articulation with bourgeois class ideology could take place only in a very fragmentary way.

Turning towards the issue of communalism we must note that it is a very complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon cannot be dealt with adequately in totality. However, the only point, ^{to all the} phenomenon of communalism in its totality we shall have to consider, ^{is} that communalism cannot be reduced to any one cause. However, one possible cause of communalism in India seems to be the articulation of

different religious ideologies, particularly Islam and Hinduism, with the dominant class ideologies. This sort of articulation gives momentum to the issues which are not in the interest of the oppressed class within both the religions communities.

The interpellation of such religious ideologies hamper the consciousness of the oppressed classes towards their own interest and the interest of the class as a whole. This hampers the revolutionary consciousness of the oppressed class. The mechanism and mode of interpellation are such that it is not an easy job to raise class consciousness among them. The process of interpellation becomes much more complete in case of religious ideologies because of three reasons: 1) the material matrix, that is the relative economic backwardness of one community, policies of the state etc. 2) the fear psychosis among the members of both the communities that emerged due to communal riots and many other factors. 3) the interpellation of religious ideology begins from childhood. Thus any 'movement against communalism' ^a has to be carried out at different levels.

Turning towards the third issue that is Secularism, Manoranjan Mohanty rightly explains that there are two types of secularism - a) Hegemonic and b) Democratic.¹ The secularism that is advocated by the state and the forces which include Gandhian socialists and host of liberals be called hegemonic secularism'. This secularism is hegemonic because, it advocates either 'no interference in religious matter' or 'Sarva Dharma Sambhav' without taking into consideration the exploitative nature of 'social principles of

1. M. Mohanty, Secularism - Hegemonic and Democratic, Unpublished paper.

religion'. This also ensures the existence of such religions articulated with the dominant class ideologies and interpellation of these religions ensures the continuity in the dominance of the same class. Hence hegemonic secularism will always fail to combat communalism.

On the otherhand 'democratic secularism', according to Mohanty can be defined as the mode of reconciliation of identity groups in the process of democratic transformation based on reason. This assures that it is a part of the struggle against social and class domination and the underlying concept of rationality is not positive rationality but democratic rationality'.² Thus democratic secularism is a part of a process of human liberation from domination, therefore it is one element of the process of democratic, transformation.

Now, regarding the strategy to achieve democratic secularism Mohanty only says that '... if religious^u forces form part of the democratic struggle they should be welcome. Because the democratic struggle propets rationality and an ideological battle with religion, a dialogue with religion in course of the struggle against class domination may eventually expose the irrationality in religion".³ It is at this point the framework of analysis that has emerged in this dissertation seem to be very important. The strategy for democratic secularism can be carved out with the help

2. Ibid., p. 7.

3. Ibid., p. 9.

of the two doctrines emerged in this framework: a) doctrine of articulation and b) doctrine of interpellation.

The argument of Mohanty that 'the struggle against class domination may eventually expose the irrationality' can be put in a better way that there will be new articulation between the oppressed class ideology and the religious ideology. A conscious effort will have to be made for this purpose. This new articulation can be carried out by the 'organic intellectuals'. The new articulation will be the part of the formulation of 'counter - hegemony'. Interpellation of this religious ideology articulated with the oppressed class ideology will facilitate the process of socialist revolution.

Thus to conclude it can be said that the phenomenon of religion can be understood in a better way with the help of the framework that has emerged in this dissertation. The framework has been developed on the basis of Althusser's 'theory of Ideology' and subsequent development made in it by Goran Therborn, Laclau, Pecheux et al. Two doctrines, emerged as part of this framework, a) doctrine of articulation and b) doctrine of interpellation are extremely useful for the purpose of both understanding and praxis in the context of achievement of a better society.

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