

**POLICIES AND
PRACTICES**

82

People, Politics & Protests - III

Marxian, Literary Debates & Discourses



December 2016



Policies and Practices 82

December 2016

Published by:
Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group
GC-45, Sector-III, First Floor
Salt Lake City
Kolkata-700106
India
Web: <http://www.mcrg.ac.in>

ISSN 2348 0297

Printed by:
Graphic Image
New Market, New Complex, West Block
2nd Floor, Room No. 115, Kolkata-87

*Gefördert durch die Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung e.V. aus Mitteln des Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland.
Sponsored by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation eV with funds of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of the Federal Republic of Germany.*

The Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RLS) is a Germany based foundation working in South Asia and other parts of the world on the subjects of critical social analysis and civic education. It promotes a sovereign, socialist, secular, and democratic social order, and aims at present members of society and decision-makers with alternative approaches to such an order. Research organizations, groups working for self-emancipation, and social activists are supported in their initiatives to develop models that have the potential to deliver social and economic justice. The work of Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, South Asia can be accessed at www.rosalux.in.

People, Politics and Protests III
Marxian Literary Debates and Discourses

Subhoranjan Dasgupta

2016

Marxian Literary Debates and Discourses

Subhoranjan Dasgupta *

We want no sectarianism in our literary and art criticism, and subject to the general principle of unity for resistance to Japan, we should tolerate literary and art work with a variety of political attitudes.

Mao Zedong

How can the heart feel the urge of creation, if it does not look at life? The life of the commoners is the source of the 'lake of this heart' though its blue water reflects the sky.

Bishnu Dey

Setting the Parameters

Almost all of us have heard about Bishnu Dey. A worthy pillar of post-Tagorian modern Bengali poetry, his creative endeavour and creative quests have won deserving accolades. But, pray, who amongst you have heard of Gurudas Pal? A bucolic bard at the best, some lines of a so-called poem written by him were used and utilized by the sectarian and Zhdanovite critic Prodyot Guha to make a crucial point of Marxian aesthetics. Prodyot Guha underscored the four lines that follow written by Gurudas Pal:

Indiscriminate killing of men women and students
If this is the law and security of the child-state
Then I cry aloud in this gathering
Five hundred thousand, countless times
I am an insurgent.¹

Then he also honoured this verse as the supreme example of *poesie de resistance*. He, however, did not stop with this thanksgiving and praise. Taking another step forward he challenged the 'ivory tower' poets to write such fiery and energetic lines. He fumed, "Bishnu Dey and the so-called other gentlemen poets – can they write a poem such as this? Do they have the required guts! It is beyond their power to write such poems! From where will they get that much-needed strength of life – these culture-vultures following the prescription of the reactionary bourgeoisie."²

*Researchers for MCRG-RLS Project on Social and Political Mapping of Popular Movements, Logistical Vision and Infrastructure.

Policies and Practices, Issue No. 82, December 2016

While castigating Bishnu Dey and applauding Gurudas Pal, Prodyot Guha blissfully forgot the more refined *poesie de resistance* of Bishnu Dey and other ‘gentleman-bourgeois’ poets. One such poem written by Bishnu Dey, *Moubhog*, is, equally, if not more, Marxian. Written to commemorate the Moubhog Kisan conference of May 1946, the poem celebrates the toil and commitment of the peasants:

The kisan there makes sickles of steel
Immediately after birth,
The kisan’s wife makes steel ornaments too.
They know that they have to travel a difficult road
To tie the *rakhi* on a teenage hand
The demons sharpen their nails to no avail.
Laikamal keeps vigil before Neelkamal comes
A sleepless and sharp sword flashing in his hand.
The rising sun honours him by putting a red tilak on his forehead.
Whose death warrant has been issued?³

The translator of this poem Anuradha Roy, applauds it “as one of the finest poems written by Bishnu Dey, with an unmistakable revolutionary fervour, drawing metaphors from a popular fairy tale of Bengal”.⁴

So, we have two poems in our repertoire - one penned by the village chronicler Gurudas Pal, which has been praised by the indefatigable Stalinist Prodyot Guha, and the other written by Bishnu Dey, which has been praised by Ashok Sen and others. Now, the crucial query is: which poem fulfils the precondition of aesthetics per se and also Marxian aesthetics in particular? Without belittling a bit the fervour, commitment and directness of Gurudas Pal’s verse, we need to state that this poem in question is not a poem by itself. It is propagandistic. On the other hand, Bishnu Dey’s poem fulfils not only the precondition of aesthetics in general but also Marxian aesthetics in particular. Its rhyme and rhythm, simplicity and ardour, splendid use of the lively fairytale, linguistic felicity and the message it delivers lead us to conclude that this poem is a poem, a truly inspiring socialist poem at that.

The well known Marxist critic Swadesh Basu underlined this comparison in his *Pragati Sabityer Samalochona*.⁵ He wrote emphatically that Gurudas Pal’s verse was bold, direct and programmatic. But it was more journalistic than poetic; it described the event but did not layer it with irresistible lyricism. He wrote, “[t]he most striking quality of this poem quoted – as underscored by the critic Prodyot Guha – is its outspokenness but is this a genuine poem, that it is not, there is no doubt about it”.⁶ Indeed, Swadesh Bose quoted from the Bible-like *Illusion and Reality* by Christopher Caudwell and George Thompson’s *Birth of Poetry* to fortify his argument. He wanted to stress that though Gurudas Pal’s verse was direly needed by the revolutionary proletariat, it lacked the imaginative dimension and linguistic excellence, which are the sine qua non of genuine poetry.

It is by now clear, why I have begun on this note. I have presented two specimens of socialist verse and accompanying praise as well as criticism to underline the still ongoing though much-muted debate on what constitutes Marxist poetry and its critique. The battlelines are also clearly drawn. On one side we have Prodyot Guha and Gurudas Pal, and on the other we have Bishnu Dey and Swadesh Bose.

The Debate on and around Tagore

The dividing line was thus clearly etched between the ‘diehards’ and the ‘enlightened’, between the Zhdanovites and Lunacharskies, and the sharp division turned out to be quite categorical when the Marxists began to formulate a comprehensive critique of the Olympian, namely, Tagore. Surprisingly enough, the first onslaught in this debate was launched not by Marxian-Bengali critics but by S.A. Dange. In a letter to the *Amritabazar Patrika*,⁷ Dange attacked both Gandhi and Tagore for turning away from the industrial age and remaining obsessed with ancient Indian civilization. The content of Tagore’s play *Muktadhara*, which opposed the machine age, was trenchantly criticized by Dange. Even Bepinchandra Pal who was neither a literary critic nor an avowed Marxist took Tagore to task for indulging in *Bastutantrabeenata* or emphatic dearth of reality in his religious writings and short stories. Pal marshalled his criticism with two arguments. These are: “First, Tagore had not accepted a guru in his religious practice, hence his spiritual quest was anti-shastra. Second, Tagore belonged to a rich family and thereby had no contact with the masses”.⁸ Bepinchandra Pal, as we know, was a leading exponent of political extremism that combined a sort of Hindu revivalism with an urge for mass contact.

What were the prime objections raised by the Marxists who supported the opinion of Bepinchandra Pal, namely, Tagore belonged to a rich family and was placed at a distance from the masses? First, Tagore was irreparably grooved to religion and idealism. Therefore, he was not a historical or dialectical materialist. Second, he fully belonged to the rich and privileged class which had nothing to do with the trials and travails of the middle class, workers and peasants. Third, he was a bourgeois to the core and also a vocal representative of the landowning and zamindari class. Fourth, he created his own romantic and ideal world that was farplaced from the searing reality. There is a perceptible catch in the third objection – was Tagore a hardcore bourgeois or a member of the feudal section who went to Silaidaha and Patisar to ‘persecute’(!) the peasants? After much deliberation, the Marxian critics in order to strengthen their critique, labeled him a bourgeois and feudal in one breath.

The onrush of Marxian criticism of Rabindranath reached its apex or nadir in the polemical evaluation of Benoy Ghosh. In 1939-40, his two books *Shilpa, Sangaskriti, Samaj* and *Natun Sabitya O Samalochona* launched a vitriolic assault. He claimed that Tagore was given to mystic, bourgeois idealism, thereby escaping from reality. Moreover, he was adept at weaving fantasies, sentimentality etc. and the resultant product was a vapoury literature full of wistful, humanistic universalism which had nothing whatsoever to do with dialectical or historical materialism. Indeed, to quote Benoy Ghosh, “Tagore is sitting in the desolate and secure chamber of the Middle Ages under the tutelage of rajas, badshas and wazirs. Further, he was patronized by the minority of rajas, maharajas and capitalist class; and his abstract, vapoury and vague humanism are meant to glorify his own class directly”.⁹

Ghosh’s iconoclastic evaluation raised a storm, with the anti-Tagore brigade applauding his breakaway courage, and the pro-Tagore brigade determined to take up the cudgels on the poet’s behalf. Evaluating the assault of Benoy Ghosh, Dhananjoy Das observed, “[t]o sum it up, Benoy Ghosh’s two books generated a fierce debate in the Marxist camp. These also infuriated the non-Marxist intellectuals who held Tagore in devoted admiration. In fact, these two books fomented a hectic debate within and outside the Marxist circle”.¹⁰ Expectedly, Tagore had his adherents. Amal Home, Tagore’s follower, reacted sharply to the critique above by writing a rejoinder carrying the suggestive title *Kerani Rabindranath*.¹¹ Bhowani Sen, who in the past belonged to the diehard camp and had cooperated with Prodyot Guha penned an essay full of respect having the revealing title *Ekjon*

Manishee Ekti Satabdi.¹² The famous historian, Sushobhan Sarkar, drew a cogent balance in his pathbreaking article *Rabindranath O Agragati*.¹³ I shall give you three brief extracts from the above-mentioned three essays to emphasize the difference that was created by the detractors and supporters. First, from Amal Hom: “I would like to remind and warn you once again – please do not get trapped in the snares of telltale slogans. Don’t be perplexed by the criticism of leftist writers. Rabindranath belongs to the entire human kind, he is not the spokesman of any particular ideology. Whatever is the human being’s good or bad, his conflict and suspicion, his hopes and desires, his fulfilment and failure – are reflected in his poems, stories and songs”.¹⁴ Second, from Bhowani Sen: “That great poet who began his creative life by asserting the bourgeois worldview against feudalism, and then came breathclose, without any hesitation, to the side of socialist internationalism was forever guided and steered by the lifeview of humanism. In point of fact, this vibrant humanism served as the bridge between his idealism and his materialism, between personalism and socialism, between capitalism and his social weltanschauung.”¹⁵ One notes in this context that, that humanism, which was severely castigated by Benoy Ghosh, is the object of undiluted praise in Bhowani Sen’s essay. Third, from Susobhan Sarkar, “[o]ne should reflect on the basic nature of Tagore’s religion. The principal note which we hear again and again in his religious songs and religious writings – I feel – is at a great distance from organized religion and even from conventional, personal religion. It is distinctive and independent. That is why, some have traced an expression of secular worldview in his intellectual and creative position”.¹⁶

At this point, I would like to raise the following question – which essay on Tagore and that too by a Marxist has evaluated his uniqueness and comprehensive, creative worldview in the best possible style and manner? The answer is *Rajay Rajay* by Bishnu Dey. In a series of succinct sentences, he has summarized the genius of Tagore. This summary is simply brilliant: “It is difficult to launch a comparison. Perhaps if we decide to merge Chaucer with Goethe and Hugo, we shall come close to measuring his genius, but even then, the comparison will be inadequate. In fact, his arrival and emergence in the Bengali literary world is a phenomenal event, as earth-shaking as Galileo’s arrival in the medieval world. Every book of his marks a progress in technique and expansion of the subject matter. He taught us civilized disposition. No amount of stubborn myopia can overrule or belittle the inheritance of this sophisticated taste. He introduced the world standard, directly and indirectly, in the provincial terrain of Bengali literature. The romantic poet’s yearn to transform and the rebel romantic’s power and ability to reconstruct, the subtle nuances of beauty and tenderness are all his gifts. His primary commitment to beauty marked him out – it was a part and parcel of his total aesthetic worldview. The Victorian artist’s strong adherence to truth, the sense of responsibility embedded in a work of art, his skyhigh personal commitment distinguish him, we have inherited these sterling qualities from him. We cannot compare him with a raging current; he is more like a deep and profound lake in the Himalayas”.¹⁷

I have stated earlier that the battle lines were clearly drawn between the diehards and the enlightened. Nevertheless, the lines at certain specific points were obliterated by Tagore himself, whose overwhelming presence simply could not be negated. One such ironic communion has been recalled by Anuradha Roy: “That some of the Bengali Marxists dithered between ‘hard beliefs’ and ‘human instinct’ in their aesthetic thinking was most glaring in their attitude to Tagore. Bishnu Dey, of course, found a ‘radical need’ for social change in Rabindranath Tagore and there were others like Susobhan Sarkar and Satyendranath Majumdar who asserted that Rabindranath because of the human values nurtured in his writings would be more meaningful in the post-revolution society. Most of the Bengali Marxists felt instinctively attracted towards Rabindranath and yet felt obliged to reject him as a bourgeois writer. Chinmohan Shehanobis, an important organizer of the cultural front

of the Party, told me the following story in this connection. It was the ultra-leftist '*Ye Azadi Jhuta Hai*' phase and he along with a number of comrades was in jail. One morning, one of them gave a long lecture denouncing Tagore in accordance with the Party line and immediately after that proposed, 'Oh, life has become unbearable! Come, let's sing a Rabindrasangeet !' On hearing this Sehanobis exploded in anger and shouted, "There must be a limit to hypocrisy!"¹⁸

In sum, most of the Marxian critics notwithstanding some objections accepted Tagore as genuinely creative and also progressive. Benoy Ghosh, whom I interviewed in June 1984, also admitted that he had been much too abrasive in the past. This ultimate acknowledgement of Tagore's genius, weltanschauung and creativity led to the conclusion of this lively and committed debate. One could also claim that Bishnu Dey's excellent analysis brought the debate to a close.

Debate on and around the Bengal Renaissance

Rabindranath was the final, ultimate, finest, most powerful and the most multifaceted embodiment of the so-called Bengal Renaissance. Obviously, his forebears and predecessors were also subjected to dichotomous and contradictory assessments by the Marxist critics of the last century. Prodyot Guha (pennane Urmila Guha), Bhowani Sen (pennane Rabindra Gupta), Ganen Bandyopadhyay (pennane Nabagopal Bandyopadhyay), and Sitangsu Maitra focused on, what they called, the bourgeois-semi feudal literary heritage of the 19th century and sharply reviewed the role, spirit and actions of the pillars of the Renaissance. The entire cosmovision was critically surveyed and the senior theoretician, Bhowani Sen, contended that this Renaissance was reactionary from its inception and so was its creative statements. The detractors even widened the ambit of their critical exploration and crossed over from literature to socioeconomic and political views of Rammohan Roy, Iswarchandra Vidyasagar, Michael Madhusudan Datta, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Kaliprasanna Singha, Dinabandhu Mitra and Swami Vivekananda. What was the main contention of the Marxists? The contention – according to Rabindra Gupta and his lieutenants – was that the literature flowing down from Rammohan to Rabindranath was not merely comprador bourgeois in character but also a reflection of the decadent Hindu feudal class. This criticism, they held, was obvious and expected because British imperialism did not destroy feudalism. In fact, it nourished and sustained feudalism through the medium and basis of the Permanent Settlement. In short, whatever reforms were professed was starkly 'collaborationist' in character. Moreover, these catered to the interests of only the decadent feudal cum comprador class. Rabindra Gupta's invective was unforgiving and one of his aides quoted him to declare, "[t]he working class today refuses to carry the garbage in the name of this tradition. The Babu culture should be thrown into the dustbin downright".¹⁹

At that point of time, a wall was raised between the Babus and the Subalterns. The followers of Rabindra Gupta placed Rammohan et al on one particular side and branded them 'collaborationists'; while on the other side they claimed that the Santhal Revolt of 1855, the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 and the Blue Mutiny of 1859 constituted the genuinely rebellious and combative tradition of Bengal. They also went three steps backward to include the 1772 Sanyasi-Fakir revolt in their epistemological and political programme. It is not surprising that they castigated Bankimchandra for distorting the political truth of the Sanyasi Revolt in his *Anandamath*. This almost seemingly impregnable wall that was raised with the Sanyasi Revolt on one side and its deliberately erroneous representation in Bankim's novel on the other, they said, amply proved the 'cooperative' role of the Bengal Renaissance. We recall in this connection the Hakim Bankimchandra's clever twist which endorsed British rule in India and advocated the gross lie that foreign domination for another

hundred years would benefit the motherland greatly. In other words, the series of abortive revolts against the British displayed highstrung and rebellious 'peasant' consciousness in contrast to which Vidyasagar and Rammohan's social reforms appeared weak and colourless. Further, the names and personas of Dinabandhu Mitra, Kaliprasanna Singha and Michael Madhusudan were posited against Vidyasagar and Rammohan who indulged in collaboration, as real representatives of the progressive though colonial bourgeoisie. It needs to be recalled in this context that the first literary essay on Michael Madhusudan was written by Bishnu Dey who applauded his breakaway courage but also underlined his intrinsic limitations, which were inevitable in the unfree, colonial setup.

Now we come to the contrary views and to the debate that broke out between the two Marxist camps. Critics like Narahari Kabiraj, Mangalacharan Chattopadhyay, Nirendranath Roy, Satindranath Chakravarty, Amarendra Prasad Mitra (penname Animesh Roy), Manik Bandyopadhyay and Sanat Bose applauded the Renaissance layered with reforms with some reservation and expressed doubts and vacillations regarding the nature of the Sepoy Mutiny and the peasant uprisings. Their first criticism was that there was no peasant-bourgeois or Kulak class to marshal a peasant revolt. Second, the Sepoy Mutiny, though anti-British in form and content, was feudal in character spearheaded as it was by rajas, ranis and nawabs. Third, the so-called progressive bourgeois literature suffered from notable limitations. For example, *Neel Darpan* did not show any grim and militant retaliation by the persecuted peasants. More than this, it did not reject the rule of Queen Victoria. Ultimately, the two groups agreed to a handmade solution. Namely, that the Bengali progressive literature of the 19th century had more than one trend which included all four – Bankim, Rammohan at one level and Dinabandhu Mitra and Kaliprasanna Singha at another.

One tends to conclude with Anuradha Roy that this practice of searching for reactionary and progressive elements was arbitrary, and that it led to nowhere. To tell the truth, this approach was hopelessly confusing because each and every cardinal figure partly fitted into the laudatory mode and partly into the condemnatory mode. Take the specific example of Swami Vivekananda. The latter highlighted the importance of religion and to that extent he was an 'obscurantist'. Should we also label him communal because he did not address the Muslims? On the other hand, he cherished a democratic outlook, he placed faith in the emergence of Shudra power; he had a repulsion for despotism; he preached humanism and rationalism and, therefore because of all these positive attributes Narahari Kabiraj and Nirendranath Roy labelled him progressive. Anuradha Roy appears to be correct in her estimate when she writes, "[i]t seems that all these critics just tried to justify their personal likes and dislikes by applying sociological categories".²⁰

A selection of extracts from the essays of critics operating on both sides would give, in a nutshell, the focus, depth and extent of this debate which raged and simmered from 1947 to 1954. *Bhowani Sen* criticizing the inbuilt, limitations of the Renaissance wrote: "Armed peasant uprisings against the British, the strikes launched by the suffering indigo-workers largely contributed to the tradition of democratic culture in colonized India. If we try to suppress this truth and attempt to glorify the roles of Bankim and Vivekananda, who were faithful to the colonial rulers, we shall not only reject Marxism but also be guilty of distorting history".²¹ *Nirendranath Roy* supporting the literary tradition from Rammohan to Rabindranath observed, "we have to admit that from Rammohan and Michael to Dinabandhu, Bankim, Vivekananda and Rabindranath – all these great humanist writers were basically progressive in spite of some weaknesses and mistakes that were thrust upon them by their space and time".²² Manik Bandyopadhyay forwarded a cogent appraisal of the Bengal Renaissance. He said, "[a] stream of progressive thought and creativity flowed down Rammohan, Vivekananda, Kaliprasanna-Dinabandhu-Michael-Rabindranath-Nazrul. More or less, I was aware of my position which said that we should be scrupulous while accepting this tradition. We should

measure the bright and dark points. We should examine and judge the contributions of these figures and decide what the quality is of and how much is their progressivism. Take Rammohan as an example. We shall not accept his religious reform but welcome his fight against old, vicious practices and superstitions. The same is true about Vivekananda. We can reject his religious disposition but applaud him as an organizer. Indeed, he was the first one in our contemporary history to have organized a disciplined force dedicated to offering care and service. Quite a few who had worked for him joined us later”.²³ Like Manik Bandyopadhyay, Sanat Bose has also accepted the well-known Marxian principle of ‘acceptance and rejection *Graban and Barjan*. He has also been selective in his approach towards Tagore and he observed, “[t]here is no doubt that Rabindranath’s political point of view was reactionary. But his deep and pervasive humanism brought him close to the progressive world in his last phase. Not only this, quite a few drawbacks and mistakes were revealed to him during this last phase. That is why he could severely condemn Fascism and could support Soviet Russia. We have to admit that his creation constitutes a pillar in the tradition of progressive Bengali literature”.²⁴

Before ending this section I would like to draw your attention to one significant change that occurred in the course of these years. Bhowani Sen, penname Rabindra Gupta, mellowed and softened to a large extent and came to view Rabindranath with a changed viewglass. He termed Rabindranath a *Manishee* and traced his positive politics and creativity with sincere admiration. Prodyot Guha also recanted his view and sought apology from Bishnu Dey for his intemperate comments addressed towards the poet.

Debates on and around Contemporary Literature

In the fourth section of this paper I concentrate on the literature which stands much closer to us, that is, on creativity and accompanying criticism that flourished in the forties and fifties of the last century. There is of course a reason for this – if one considers the statistical quantum of Marxian literary debates, one will find that the contradictory appraisals of Tagore and the Bengal Renaissance, both account together for seventy per cent of the enlivening altercations. The remaining thirty per cent weighs the creativity and appraisal of the forties and fifties. In other words, not merely chronology but also quantum justify my sequence as it has unfolded and progressed.

Let us, at the very outset, enumerate the yardsticks that were applied to judge this later creativity. First, the major debates centred on such questions as the right attitude towards the traditional cultural heritage (already elaborated in the previous sections). Second, the urgent need was felt to create a new proletarian culture in conformity with the new proletarian consciousness; third, the desirable extent of Party control over the literary dimension had to be measured; fourth, the appropriate attitude towards fellow-travelers and towards different aesthetic forms and styles had to be formulated. What requires to be emphasized in this connection is the sway of Zhdanovism over the lively debates. The word ‘lively’ has been deliberately chosen because in spite of Zhdanovism, enlightened critics went back to Trotsky, Lunacharsky and Bukharin’s ideas and opinions. The clear indebtedness to Trotsky was however not specifically acknowledged because ‘Trotsky’ was the hated term in that diehard Stalinist phase. Yet, it has to be stressed that Trotsky was one of the finest critical evaluators of creative literature. The more we read his literary essays, the more we are struck by the catholicity of his mind, his non-sectarian attitude to literature and to creativity in general, and also to his clear-headed emphasis on the use of aesthetic principles to judge creative literature. Indeed, one can assume that though he was not acknowledged publicly, his influence pervaded over the criticism of the *Sabityapatra* group, especially over Bishnu Dey, Samar Sen and Nirendranath Roy.

I recall in this context my last dialogue with Bishnu Dey. On hearing that I was delving deep in Marxian aesthetics, he advised me to read Trotsky's essays on creativity carefully. On the other side, he was severely criticized by Prodyot Guha, Saroj Datta and Benoy Ghosh who stood by Zhdanovism.

Along with the endorsement of Zhdanov and his ilk, the sound and sane critical principles and constructive attitude of Mao Zedong were also conveniently ignored. Mao did not, like Trotsky, advocate that "a work of art should be judged by its own law, that is by the law of art". Nevertheless, he was poised explicitly against the narrow-minded and grossly reductive weltanschauung of Stalinist art criticism. In one of his lectures on art and literature, Mao said, "what we demand is the unity of politics and art, the unity of content and form, the unity of revolutionary political content and the highest possible perfection of the artistic form. We oppose both the tendency to produce works of art with a wrong political viewpoint and the tendency towards the poster and slogan style which is correct in political viewpoint but lacking in artistic power. On questions of literature and art we must carry on a struggle on two fronts".²⁵ No advice, or even admonition, could be truer, saner and more genuinely Marxian.

The first literary debate which flourished and underlined the difference between the Bengali Lunarcharskies and Bengali Zhdanovs centred around the evaluation of contemporary Bengali poetry. While Benoy Ghosh, Saroj Datta and Prodyot Guha castigated the so-called 'decadent' poets like Bishnu Dey and Samar Sen mercilessly, the poets themselves expressed their allegiance to their mentor T.S. Eliot and claimed that if decadence is the prevailing reality, it will naturally find expression in their verse. In short, there is no other way out. Saroj Datta took up the cause of 'revolutionary poetry' in 1940 and wrote his stinging critical *Ati Adbunik Bangla Kabita*²⁶ to challenge Samar Sen's text bearing the programmatic title *In Defence of the Decadents* published in 'New Indian Literature'.²⁷ The latter's contention went as follows: One, the capitalist society has reached the point of destruction, it is decadent through and through; hence this decadence will find a spontaneous entry in the verse written at that point of time. Two, it is impossible to invoke Satyam Shivam Sundaram, because there is no trace of the former in the life and reality all around. Three, it is not possible for the so-called decadent poets to write about workers and peasants and the probable, oncoming revolution because they have no actual experience of the latter. Saroj Datta fulminated against this text and took to task Samar Sen and his friends. In the words of Dhananjoy Das, "Saroj Datta attacked Samar Sen's thinking in severe critical terms. From his own Marxist position he described Samar Sen's poetry and life-view as decadent, technique and form-obsessed, reactionary and bourgeois. He also warned the readers to be aware of this decadent trend and urged them to be very careful against the spread of this negative, harmful disposition".²⁸ But there is a catch, a formidable catch, in this fierce contest. Saroj Datta while writing poetry could not himself avoid the hated bourgeois disposition. His poetry was also layered with the feeling of alien isolation, despair and sorrow. There is nothing progressive or revolutionary in the following lines that he wrote:

Sometimes I feel that I am treading a dangerous path
At night at the hypnotic call of some evil spirit
On waking up I will realize with a shudder.
That I have not a single fellow-traveller in this world.²⁹

If this is not a poem of lone bourgeois despair, what is?

This debate was followed by other, often vitriolic debates, and some of those were:

- (i) Manik Bandyopadhyay versus Bishnu Dey
- (ii) Narahari Kabiraj versus Bishnu Dey
- (iii) Manik Bandyopadhyay versus Chinmohan Sehanobis

As this short list indicates, Bishnu Dey was the favourite whipping boy of the diehards and their fellow-travelers. He was branded reactionary, form-obsessed, solipsistic and ultimately Prodyot Guha condemned him as the ‘Trojan Horse’ determined to pollute revolutionary consciousness. Narahari Kabiraj endorsed this verdict. Bishnu Dey, however, paid the ultimate tribute also to consciousness, which remained for him the bedrock and fulcrum of creativity. For him, the primary precondition of progressive literature was consciousness, unattached as it was either to brash revolution or tepid reaction. He said, “[a]s the bow is pulled, its pull acts on both the bow-string and the arrow. Similarly, for any lively piece of writing, both the artist and his art, both the theme and the technique, feel a pull. Sometimes the target looks blurred. The bow may even break at times. But the all-time distinct sign of progressive literature is pull of the bow of consciousness”.³⁰ At this juncture, we thankfully recall the fact that Prodyot Guha recanted later. Describing his early denunciations as products of youthful impetuosity, he sought forgiveness from Bishnu Dey and praised his contribution to the realm of progressive literature. Saroj Datta, however, stuck to his gun.

The debate between Manik Bandyopadhyay and Chinmohan Sehanobis can be best narrated by quoting their conversation.

CS: “The peasants are struggling and fighting in Bara Kamalpur. You need to go there to have an actual experience. This would also provide you material for your creativity”.

MB: “I think you are being *jantrik* or mechanical, such a visit is not integral to creativity”.

CS: “Okay, not as a writer but as a Communist you should undertake this visit”.³¹

Thereafter Manik Bandyopadhyay wrote his classic and stunning story “Choto Bakulpurer Jatri”. After reading this story, the fair-minded Sehanobis said that he had actually committed a mistake. He was being mechanical and Manik Bandyopadhyay has proved what he claimed.

The debate between Manik Bandyopadhyay and Bishnu Dey was one-sided. While Bishnu Dey praised fulsomely Manik Bandyopadhyay’s novels and short stories in his text *Golpo Uppanase Sabalok Bangla*, Manik Bandyopadhyay did not reciprocate this praise by lauding Bishnu Dey’s poetry. Bishnu Dey wrote “I have been held spellbound by Manik Bandyopadhyay’s artistry and ability. In particular in his novel *Chinha* the new style plus form and the revolutionary content has nourished each other. His achievements and reflective vision are brimming with new possibilities where the spread of life turns out to be objective and great”.³² Manik Bandyopadhyay did not quite reciprocate. He accused Bishnu Dey of being too formalistic, too bourgeois and farplaced from the masses and hence not progressive in the ultimate analysis.

Enough of debates. Let me focus for a moment on a union of minds and creative impulses across oceans. It is enlightening to note that in the same, temporal phase, that is in the forties and fifties, mainland Europe, specially Germany and France, experienced and witnessed spectacular debates on Marxian creativity and criticism. All the legendary stalwarts – Georg Lukacs, Ernst Bloch, Bertolt Brecht Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Jean Paul Sartre, Roger Garaudy, Louis Aragon – participated energetically in these interactions.

The aesthetic standard of these incisive debates was much higher, subtler and more refined than those which prevailed in Bengal. I used and utilized these theories and postulates lauded as Neo-Marxian to evaluate the poetry and prose of Bishnu Dey. It was a correct choice, because only Bishnu Dey, in subtlety and refinement, came close to the Western aesthetes. Indeed, Bishnu Dey, Adorno and Marcuse chose the same soaring lyric of Bertolt Brecht to underline the never-ending quest for human freedom and redemption from alienation. The lyric reads:

Sieh jene Kraniche in großem Bogen!
Die Wolken, welche ihnen beigegeben
Zogen mit ihnen schon, als sie entflohen
Aus einem Leben in ein anderes Leben.³³

Why and How did the Debate Die Down?

The Marxian literary debates raged in the forties and early fifties. The magazines and journals that encouraged and published the debates were *Agrani*, *Arani*, *Dak*, *Parichay* and *Sabityapatra*. The debates and cross-criticisms were meticulously compiled by Dhananjoy Das in the three indispensable volumes – *Marxio Sabitya Bitarka* (MSB). Without an iota of exaggeration I would like to state that these three volumes (later published as one magnum opus) reveal the debates in all their, depth, subtlety, range and erudition. Not one single essay which dwelt on the theme was excluded. Some changed or corrected their views, as for example Prodyot Guha. Some others, most notably, Saroj Datta, clung tenaciously to their opinions and attitudes.

The sudden termination or absence of debates since the mid-fifties raised the crucial question, why did it so happen? This is by all means an intriguing question. I spoke to renowned men of letters and Marxian scholars and requested them to shed light on this issue. I exchanged notes with Sankha Ghosh, Samik Bandyopadhyay, Partha Chatterjee, Ranabir Samaddar, Malini Bhattacharjee, Mihir Bhattacharjee, Sobhanlal Dattagupta, Sibaji Bandyopadhyay, Sudeshna Chakravarti and Ratan Khasnobis. What follows is the essential gist of their observations and my reflection on the latter. To the query, why did the debate die down, the following answers were given:

- (1) The removal of P.C. Joshi as the General Secretary of the Communist Party had a strong, negative impact. He was devoted to the study and assimilation of creativity and criticism and encouraged the debates and even confrontations at the literary level. Malini Bhattacharjee recalled that one could not conceive of IPTA without Joshi's support and commitment.
- (2) The next General Secretary Ranadive tabled another and different agenda. During his dispensation the stress fell on people's movement and militancy on both, the worker and peasant fronts. In this charged set-up literary debates were relegated to the background because these were no longer autonomous and self-fulfilling. A hiatus was created and proposals on art and creativity as well as criticism became handmaidens to the overall engagement with peasants and workers.
- (3) There is no denying the fact that the debates, when these raged, covered all issues threadbare and nothing more could be added. For example, the debate on Tagore and the Bengal Renaissance reached its predestined and comprehensive end in the early fifties.
- (4) Ajoy Ghosh followed Ranadive as the General Secretary of the Communist Party and under his leadership, the communists opted for the parliamentary path. In other words, in this phase of peace and compromise the once Ranadive-led militants turned into pucca Social

Democrats. And social democracy, as we know, prefers conciliation and reconciliation to debates and altercations.

- (5) A debate flourishes when two sides, opposed to each other's viewpoints, table their arguments forcefully. First, the broad agreement reached on acrimonious issues signaled the end of opposition and, secondly, the comrades by then were told to engage themselves more actively on the workers and peasants' front. Whatever pronouncements were made on art and literary products were mere additions to the overriding issue dealing with the exploited classes.

Since the late fifties and early sixties articles and essays on creativity adopting the Marxian standards were published in journals like *Parichay*, *Aneek*, *Anuketa*, *Eksbon*. But they remained as occasional pieces and obviously they did not sponsor any enlivening debate comparable to what had taken place in the past. The last debate, also quite intense, erupted in the late sixties and early seventies during the summer heat of the Naxalite movement. The old warhorse Saroj Datta, by then a full-fledged Naxalite, repeated his negative verdict on the Bengal Renaissance and directed the cadres to disfigure and dismantle the statues of the icons of the Bengal Renaissance. He was opposed by another theoretician and activist Sushital Roychaudhuri but his opposition proved to be futile. This thoroughly iconoclastic practice was condemned by the Bengali middle class. It displayed rank sectarianism and hidebound stubbornness on the part of the Naxalites. Indeed, the militants who swore by Mao trampled his cardinal principle outlined in the epigraph right at the beginning. Mao had said, "we should tolerate literary and art works with a variety of political attitudes we want no sectarianism".

The Maoist Movement which gained steam in the new century, did not witness any comparable debate. Abhishek Bannerji, a theoretician of the Maoist Movement, roundly condemned Saroj Datta's position and attitude. He was labelled as the 'Kalapahar' or Vengeful Destroyer by Abhishek.³⁴ The Maoists did not however regard the Bengal Renaissance as sacrosanct. They adopted the 'accept and reject principle' and held that the icons of the Bengal Renaissance deserve due recognition and approbation.

A Brief Note on the World of Drama with or without Debate

My friend Ranabir Samaddar pointedly requested me to examine the movements of drama and dramatic production and find if similar controversies and debates erupted in that sphere as well. I availed myself of the first opportunity to engage Samik Bandyopadhyay in a discussion on this theme. Samik Bandyopadhyay, as we all know, is the best authority on this subject. My interview with him is a part of this text. When I asked him if similar debates cropped up among playwrights, directors and drama groups, he answered with conviction that there was no such conflicts of views and attitudes in that particular sphere. For example, no open debate broke out among the adherents of Stanislavsky on the one hand, and adherents of Bertolt Brecht on the other. To be even more particular, Sambhu Mitra, a close reader of Stanislavsky's dramaturgy did not cross swords with Utpal Dutt, a disciple of Brecht's epic theatre. In fact, the two maestros did not indulge in any exciting debate or clashed swords with each other. An anecdote in this context would appear most appropriate. It goes like this: a young actor joined People's Little Theatre (PLT) and tried to curry favour by criticising Sambhu Mitra and his productions. His attitude was tolerated for the first few days, and then he was summarily told not to waste his time on such antics because the PLT held Sambhu Mitra and Bohurupee in deep regard. To cut it short, the critic would have to leave PLT if he persisted with his tirade.³⁵

But that does not mean that this particular ambit was totally free of controversies and debates. The historic production of *Nabanna* provoked some sharp reactions which opposed or questioned one another. Tarashankar Bandyopadhyay, the illustrious novelist, acclaimed scholar Kalidas Roy; the intellectual par excellence Hirankumar Sanyal and connoisseurs as well as critics like Sushil Jana. Hirendranath Mukhopadhyay, Swarnakamal Bhattacharjee and finally the great actor Manoranjan Bhattacharya nursed different impressions. While Tarashankar, Manoranjan, Kalidas and a few others penned effusive reviews to greet that breakaway production, Hirankumar Sanyal expressed the view that the play *Nabanna* by itself was a mediocre play which suffered from inconsistencies and contradictions. However, he was full of praise for the production itself which was novel, original and pathbreaking.

A list of some comments would reveal the nature of response and expose the cleavage or division.

Hirankumar Sanyal: Swarnakamal Babu feels that I have given a summary verdict, which is, *Nabanna* as a play is neither able nor effective. Giving such a summary verdict was not my aim. I only wanted to state that *Nabanna* cannot be regarded as a fully genuine and full-fledged drama. To give one example of the flaw, the first scene which focuses on the situation in a particular village and in fact on the entire country has a very tenuous connection with the scenes that follow.³⁶

Kalidas Roy: In a word, *Nabanna* has moved me deeply. It has stirred my heart and sensibility. I saw the play one month ago but it is still haunting me. But I would not label it as a full-fledged drama. Rather, I would describe it as a series of spectacular scenes brimming with poetry.³⁷

Manoranjan Bhattacharya: The ability to act differs from one person to another. Again, not all have been equally educated. Therefore, bearing this in view, I shall not indulge in comparative estimates. But, at the same time, there is no doubt that all have realized the importance of this drama and acted with heartfelt sincerity. Their intense portrayal on almost a bare stage and simple background has invested the dramatic representation with a new life.³⁸

Tarashankar Bandyopadhyay: Bijan Bhattacharjee has created a new tune and new emotional intensity in the sphere of contemporary Bengali drama. That is his signal contribution. This new tune and new emotional intensity has flowered with *Maanantar* or famine as the theme and subject. It could be that this play has not followed the accepted grammar of playwriting, but the ardent, suppressed emotion which comes out with the acting is really incomparable. At the same time, I ought to praise his outstanding acting prowess. Without a doubt it can be stated that Bijan Bhattacharjee's arrival in the world of Bengali drama has roused great expectations.³⁹

If one is asked to cite the most vituperative example of blatant criticism of a single playwright-cum-director by another, one would not have to go too far. The August 2012 special number of *Epic Theatre*,⁴⁰ a journal founded by Utpal Dutt, begins with such a scathing criticism. In the latter, Utpal Dutt, under the pseudonym of Rafiqul Islam, launches a frontal assault on Badal Sircar's plays and his dramaturgy. Decrying and deriding Badal Sircar's concept and production of the Third Theatre, Utpal Dutt observed: "First, the interpretation of the Third Theatre offered by him is radically different from the accepted interpretation given by the practitioners of this dramaturgy. It could well be that the governmental patrons of Badal Babu would accept his definition without a doubt, but if he thinks that the theatre-world of Bengal will do the same, he is sorely mistaken. The theatre world of Bengal is well versed in Western dramaturgies as well as in the indigenous tradition of Bengali theatre. Badal Babu has committed nothing short of a blunder".⁴¹

It needs to be mentioned that the mild-mannered drama-activist did not hit back. To give the other side of the picture, Sambhu Mitra applauded Badal Sircar's pathbreaking play *Ebong Indrajit* in his book *Prasanga: Natya*. The critic Utpal Dutt greeted Sambhu Mitra's production of *Raktakarabi*.

He wrote, “I think that I am indulging in some small and insignificant criticism just because I have donned the cap of a critic and am holding the pen. The real estimate should prompt us spontaneously to acknowledge the brilliance and greatness of this production. I end by expressing my heartfelt gratitude to Bohurupee for what it has given us”.⁴²

Excerpts from the dialogue between Samik Bandyopadhyay and Subhoranjan Dasgupta.⁴³

Q1. Why did the world of Bengali drama not join others in the literary debates that flourished in the late forties and early fifties?

A1. The reason is simple. Dramatists, directors and actors were not in a position to join the hectic debates. The new and modern Bengali theatre was just surfacing in that period and the dramatists, directors and actors were extremely busy trying to give shape to the new productions. As you may recall, the famous IPTA was crumbling then. Sambhu Mitra walked out of it and formed his own drama group Bohurupee in 1948. Bijan Bhattacharjee followed Sambhu Mitra. He left IPTA to form his Calcutta Theatre in 1950 and, finally, Utpal Dutt established his Little Theatre Group in 1952. In other words, these theatre-activists were extremely busy from 1947-48 to 1952-53 trying to find their own feet. They simply did not have the time and energy to participate in the debates on Rabindranath, Bengal Renaissance and modern Bengali poetry. Moreover, most of the members of the newly formed drama groups were actually newcomers, even novices, who did not have the wherewithal to take part in the debates.

Q2. How would you describe the relationship between Sambhu Mitra and Utpal Dutt?

A2. Sambhu Mitra, on his part, simply chose to ignore Utpal Dutt. Two volumes of Sambhu Mitra’s prose-writings are now being published, and Utpal Dutt’s name has not even been mentioned once. Even reviews of contemporary dramas written by Sambhu Mitra simply refused to accept the presence of Utpal Dutt. It is as though Utpal Dutt simply did not exist. Utpal Dutt’s attitude was different. Not only did he shower praise on *Raktakarabi*, mentioned earlier, but also he devoted quite some space to his other productions in his comments and evaluations of contemporary Bengal theatre. He praised as well as criticized Sambhu Mitra’s productions. For example, he wrote a well-argued critique of *Raja Oedipus*.

Q3. How would you evaluate the flurry of praise and criticism that greeted *Nabanna*?

A3. As you have already pointed out, intellectual viewers of *Nabanna* welcomed the breakaway production but questioned the play itself as not proper and grammar-bound theatre. Only the great actor Manoranjan Bhattacharjee went beyond mere eulogy to claim that *Nabanna* pioneered a new and different dramaturgy. Hence, conventional tools of criticism should not be applied to judge the construction and flow of this original effort. In fact, Manoranjan Babu claimed that *Nabanna* has attempted a new codification of drama itself.

Q4. Which Bengali play, according to you, raised the greatest controversy in the post-colonial phase?

A4. The answer is simple *Kallol*. Utpal Dutt was accused of, first, distorting history and second, of inciting violence. He was sent to jail under the Defence of India Rules, though the play was not banned.

Along with Samik Bandyopadhyay, I also interviewed Soumitra Bose⁴⁴, a noted playwright and director of the present generation. When I asked him to reflect on the exits of Sambhu Mitra, Bijan Bhattacharjee and Utpal Dutt from the Gana Natya Sangha, he said: “Internal debates and internal divisions led to their exit. In fact, nothing short of a vertical division occurred which hastened their exit. Critics like Mrityunjay Adhikari and Sudhi Pradhan adopted the Ranadive cum Zhdanov line calling for strictly political plays which would have to toe the basic political line of the party. Moreover, the plays would have to be enacted almost everywhere – in factories, in villages, on streets. Further, the plays would have to be simple and understandable so that the main audience comprising workers, peasants and the middle class could comprehend and respond. Neither Sambhu Mitra nor Bijan Bhattacharjee nor Utpal Dutt were prepared to accept this thoroughly agitprop programme. Sambhu Mitra, for example, said that instead of short readymade plays, the plays would have to be well chosen, minutely rehearsed and complete with infrastructural support. He also opposed a simple emotional merger between the actor and the protagonist in the play. While Bijan Bhattacharjee advocated full merger – he differed with Sambhu Mitra on this particular aspect – he agreed with him as far as dramaturgy was concerned. Utpal Dutt also emphasized the importance of stage design, lighting, stage sets and said that plays should not be treated as instant coffee. Indeed, he took another crucial step forward and said that the opponents of his views in the Gana Natya Sangha were uneducated and had no idea as to how a modern play should be produced. Their detractors, on their part, ran a campaign against the three rebels and said they were not good and sincere communists. They branded Sambhu Mitra and Utpal Dutt as careerists who were not resolute or brave enough to accept the fact that the Communist party at that point of time was banned. They were branded cowards who wanted to adopt the commercial grammar in order to pamper to the bourgeois audience”.

Here I intervened and said, “But Bohurupee’s first production was *Nabanna*”. Soumitra Bose agreed and replied, “That was Sambhu Mitra’s last salute to the breakaway play. Thereafter, Bohurupee enacted *Chera Tara*, *Ulukhagra* and *Char Adhyay*. Interestingly enough, the great Thespian Manoranjan Bhattacharya first objected to Sambhu Mitra’s plan to stage Rabindranath’s *Char Adhyay*. He was also under the impression that this play catered to the interests of the ruling British and sharply criticized the terrorists or revolutionaries. Sambhu Mitra requested Manoranjan Bhattacharya to read the novel once again meticulously, which he did. Therefore, he withdrew his objection”.

A typical example of the thinking of party-fed diehards is reflected and underlined in Mritunjay Adhikari’s article⁴⁵ on the crisis experienced by Gana Natya Sangha. He wrote or issued almost a diktat which read, “[t]he leadership of the organisation needs to be wielded not by the middleclass, but by the workers and peasants. Each and every member of Gana Natya Sangha has to merge at the intellectual and at the creative level with the rank exploited workers and peasants. Drama programmes would have to be planned and executed having the workers and peasants in mind. They have to be in a position to understand and appreciate what is going on. Finally, the subject matter has to be given priority, not technique or artifice. In short, we shall depict and propagate the lives and struggles of the proletariat.”⁴⁶

Mrityunjay Adhikari’s thesis did not go unchallenged even within the Gana Natya Sangha, not to speak of the sharp critique it generated among those who had already left Gana Natya Sangha for good. Critics and activists like Surapati Nandy and Digin Bandyopadhyay took him to task for

professing an extreme left line which underscored the importance of subject matter at the expense of complete dramaturgy that involved stage set, lighting and sheer dramatic technique. Surapati Nandy tried to widen the range and extent of response and appreciation by stating that the Gana Natya Sangha would have to stage plays not only for worker and peasants but also for the aware often vacillating middle class and students. It could turn professional too if the need so arose⁴⁷. The other critic whose write up has also been included in *Marxbadi Sahitya Bitarka*, Digin Bandyopadhyay, did not mince words when he stated that the Gana Natya Sangha committed quite a few blunders in its formative stage. It tried to adopt the agit-prop technique in feudal-colonized India, whereas the success of the latter in China and Vietnam was assured by the totally different political constellation prevailing there.⁴⁸

This implies that the world of drama was also riven by debates, often acrimonious, ideological struggles and contest of opposing lines and attitudes. It is perhaps true that those who belonged to the world of drama did not participate to any worthwhile extent in the debates on Rabindranath, Bengal Renaissance and modern Bengali poetry. They were extremely busy finding their own feet in the new soil. But when it came to themes of drama production, choice of subject matter and commitment they aired their views openly. The world of drama had its own debating digits.

Notes

¹ Anuradha Ray, *Bengal Marxism: Early Discourses and Debates* (Kolkata: Samya, 2014), 145.

² Prakash Roy, "Bangla Pragati Sahityer Atmasamalochona", in Dhananjoy Das (ed.) *Marxbadi Sahitya Bitarka* (henceforth *MSB*) (Kolkata: Karuna, 2013, revised complete edition), 97.

³ Ray, *Bengal Marxism*, 167.

⁴ Ray, *Bengal Marxism*, 167.

⁵ Swadesh Basu, "Pragati Sahityer Atmasamalochona," *MSB*, 194-205

⁶ Basu, "Pragati Sahityer Atmasamalochona," 199.

⁷ *Amritabazar Patrika*, November 27, 1927.

⁸ Ray, *Bengal Marxism*, 124.

⁹ Ray, *Bengal Marxism*, 125.

¹⁰ Das, 'Marxbadi Sahitya Bitarka Prasange', *MSB*, 13.

¹¹ Amal Hom, 'Kerani Rabindranath' in *MSB*, 412-419.

¹² Bhowani Sen, 'Ekjan Manishee O Ekti Shatabdi', *MSB*, 139-146.

¹³ Sushobhan Sarkar, "Rabindranath O Agragati", *MSB*, 420-425.

¹⁴ Hom, 'Kerani Rabindranath', 418.

¹⁵ Sen, 'Ekjan Manishee O Ekti Shatabdi', 143.

¹⁶ Sarkar, "Rabindranath O Agragati", 424.

¹⁷ Bishnu De, 'Rajae Rajae' in *MSB*, 554.

¹⁸ Ray, *Bengal Marxism*, 177.

¹⁹ Ray, *Bengal Marxism*, 128.

²⁰ Ray, *Bengal Marxism*, 134.

²¹ Rabindra Gupta, 'Bangla Pragati Sahityer Atmosamalochona' in *MSB*, 98-122.

²² Nirendranath Roy, 'Bangla Pragati Sahityer Atmosamalochona', *MSB*, 232-244.

²³ Manik Bandyopadhyay, 'Bangla Pragati Sahityer Atmosamalochona', *MSB*, 209.

²⁴ Sanat Kumar Basu, 'Pragati Sahityer Bichar Paddhati O Banglar Pragati Sahityer oitijhyo Sandhan' in *MSB*, 282-303.

²⁵ Yenon Lecture on Art and Literature, Ray, *Bengal Marxism*, 103.

²⁶ Saroj K. Dutta, 'Ati Adhunik Bangla Kabita', Das, *MSB*, 381 – 384.

-
- ²⁷ *New Indian Literature*, No.2., 1939,25.
- ²⁸ Das, 'Marxbadi Sahitya Bitarka Prasange', *MSB*, 11.
- ²⁹ Cited in Sumanta Bandyopadhyay's article *Saroj Datta O Sasanka, Eksbon*, 1982, 45
- ³⁰ Author's interview with Bishnu Dey, 25 August 1977.
- ³¹ Author's notes from his past conversation with Chinmoy Sehanobish sometime in 1985 in Kolkata.
- ³² Bishnu De, 'Galpo Uponyashe Sabalok Bangla', *MSB*, 527.
- ³³ Bertolt Brecht, "Terzinen über Die Liebe," [Http://www.einladung-zur-literaturwissenschaft.de/](http://www.einladung-zur-literaturwissenschaft.de/), accessed September 11, 2016, http://www.einladung-zur-literaturwissenschaft.de/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=491:11-2-terzinen-ueber-die-liebe&catid=48:kapitel-11&Itemid=53.
- ³⁴ Conversation with Abhishek Banerjee in Kolkata on May 13 2016.
- ³⁵ Utpal Dutt, *Towards a Revolutionary Theatre* (Kolkata: Seagull, 2009).
- ³⁶ Hiran Kumar Sanyal, 'Natyakala: Nabanno', *MSB*, 435.
- ³⁷ Kalidas Roy, 'Nabanno', *MSB*, 438.
- ³⁸ Manoranjan Bhattacharya, 'Nabanno', *MSB*, 434.
- ³⁹ Tarasankar Bandyopadhyay, 'Manwantar O Sahitya', *MSB*, 442.
- ⁴⁰ *Epic Theatre*, August 2012, Pre Golden Jubilee Special Issue for Review Special edition, 9-15.
- ⁴¹ *Epic Theatre*, 9.
- ⁴² Cited in *Theatre Prayag*, 2015, 100.
- ⁴³ Author's interview with Samik Bandyopadhyay in Kolkata, August 11, 2016
- ⁴⁴ Author's interview with Soumitra Bose in Kolkata, 11 October 2016.
- ⁴⁵ Mrityunjoy Adhikari, 'Gananatya Sangathan -1', *MSB*, 314-318.
- ⁴⁶ Adhikari, 'Gananatya Sangathan, 317.
- ⁴⁷ Surapati Nandi, 'Gananatya Sangathan 2', *MSB*, 319.
- ⁴⁸ Digin Bandyopadhyay, 'Nabanatya Andoloner Sankot', *MSB*, 322.

CRG Series on Policies and Practices

74. Cities, Rural Migrants & the Urban Poor-III: Migration & the Urban Question in Delhi
75. Classes, People, and Populism
76. Logistical Space I: Logistics and Social Governance
77. Logistical Space II: Mobilities and Spaces
78. Logistical Space III: Hubs, Connectivity and Transit
79. Logistical Space IV: The Asian Paradigm
80. People, Politics and Protests I: Calcutta & West Bengal, 1950s - 1960s
81. People, Politics and Protests II: Bengal and Bihar

CRG Series on Policies and Practices

- 31 Local Dynamics, Universal Context : Border Trading through Moreh, Manipur
- 32 Two Studies on Asylum Seekers and Other Immigrants in Finland
- 33 Endangered Lives on The Border: Women in the Northeast
- 34 Globalisation and Labouring Lives
- 35 Right to Information in a Globalising World
- 36 Bengal-Bangladesh Border and Women
- 37 Between Ecology and Economy : Environmental Governance in India
- 38 Incomplete Citizenship, Statelessness and Human Trafficking: A Preliminary Analysis of The Current Situation in West Bengal, India
- 39 Place of Poor in Urban Space
- 40 Law and Democratic Governance: Two Studies from Europe
- 41 Finding a Point of Return: Internally Displaced Persons in Sri Lanka
- 42 Colonialism, Resource Crisis and Forced Migration
- 43 Situating Transit Labour
- 44 Two Essays on Security Apparatus
- 45 Governing Flood, Migration and Conflict in North Bihar
- 46 A Gigantic Panopticon: Counter-Insurgency and Modes of Disciplining and Punishment in Northeast India
- 47 Public Interest Litigation in India: Implications for Law and Development
- 48 Governing Caste and Managing Conflicts-Bihar, 1990-2011
- 49 Emerging Spaces and Labour Relations in Neo-Liberal India
- 50 Peace by Governance or Governing Peace? A Case Study of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA)
- 51 Women, Conflict and Governance in Nagaland
- 52 Tripura: Ethnic Conflict, Militancy & Counterinsurgency
- 53 Government of Peace
- 54 Bengal Borders and Travelling Lives
- 55 Financialisation, Labour Market Flexibility, and Global Crisis
- 56 The Chronicle of a Forgotten Movement: 1959 Food Movement Revisited
- 57 The Religious Nature of Our Political Rites
58. Social Impact of the City Planning Machinery: Case Study of Road-Widening in Bangalore
59. In Search of Space: The Scheduled Caste Movement in West Bengal after Partition
60. Stateless in Law: Two Assessments
61. Failed by Design? : The Limitations of Statebuilding
62. Contesting Ideas on Peace (A Report & Some Reflections)
63. Body/Law/Technology: The Political Implications of Society as Apparatus
64. Accumulation under Post-Colonial Capitalism-I: An Overview
65. Accumulation under Post-Colonial Capitalism-II: War, Debt, and Reconstruction of Economy
66. Accumulation under Post-Colonial Capitalism-III: The Arab Question in Post-Colonial France
67. Accumulation under Post-Colonial Capitalism-IV: Mobile Labour and the New Urban
68. West Bengal-Bangladesh Borders: Humanitarian Issues
69. Policing a Riot-torn City: Kolkata, 16-18 August 1946
70. Labour, Law and Forced Migration
71. Rohingyas in India: Birth of a Stateless Community
72. Cities, Rural Migrants & the Urban Poor-I: Migration & the Urban Question in Kolkata
73. Cities, Rural Migrants & the Urban Poor-II: Migration & the Urban Question in Mumbai

CRG Series on Policies and Practices

- 1 People on the Move: How Governments Manage Moving Populations
- 2 Resources for Autonomy - Financing the Local Bodies
- 3 Peace Accords as the Basis of Autonomy
- 4 Debates Over Women's Autonomy
- 5 Unequal Communication: Health and Disasters As Issues of Public Sphere
- 6 Globalisation, State Policies And Sustainability of Rights
- 7 Autonomies in the North and the North East: More Freedom or the Politics of Frontier Management?
- 8 Examining Autonomy : The 73rd Constitutional Amendment in Assam
- 9 Democracy, Autonomy and the Community Media
- 10 Women and Forced Migration
- 11 Flags and Rights
- 12 A Status Report on Displacement in Assam and Manipur
- 13 Weapons of the Weak: Field Studies on Claims to Social Justice in Bihar & Orissa
- 14 Towards a New Consideration: Justice for the Minorities
- 15 Conflict, War & Displacement
- 16 The Draft National Rehabilitation Policy: A Critique
- 17 Limits of the Humanitarian: Studies in Situations of Forced Migration
- 18 Prescribed, Tolerated, and Forbidden Forms of Claim Making
- 19 Three Studies on Law and The Shifting Spaces of Justice.
- 20 Primitive Accumulation and Some Aspects of Work and Life in India in The Early Part of The Twenty First Century.
- 21 Citizens, Non-Citizens, and The Stories of Camps
- 22 Tales of Two Cities
- 23 Ways of Power, Minorities, and Knowledge on Minorities: An Assessment of Research Policies and Practices.
- 24 Whither Right to Food? Rights Institutions and Hungry Labour in Tea Plantations of North Bengal
- 25 Hunger, Food Scarcity, & Popular Protests in West Bengal
- 26 Cyclone Aila & the Sundarbans: An Enquiry into the Disaster and Politics of Aid and Relief
- 27 View from India: Media & Minorities in Europe
- 28 Protecting the Rights of the Tsunami Victims: The Sri Lanka Experience
- 29 Nation Building and Minority Alienation in India
- 30 Environment and Migration Purulia, West Bengal

POLICIES AND PRACTICES is the research paper series brought out by the Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group (CRG). Writings under this series can be referred to and used for public educational purposes with due acknowledgment.

ISSN 2348-0297