

# BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF MARXISM

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Greenwood Press  
Westport, Connecticut

83, respectively. He was the president of the Indian Sociological Society for 1980 and 1981. Desai was active in the student movement during his college days and in the trade union and the Kisan movements since the 1930s. He was also a member of the Communist Party of India during the period between 1934 and 1939, but he opposed the Party for supporting the war efforts of the British government and resigned in protest. During this period he was influenced by Trotsky's\* writings, particularly *The History of the Russian Revolution* and *The Revolution Betrayed*. He is a well-known Trotskyist and has been closely associated with the Fourth International. He was a member of the Revolutionary Socialist Party between 1953 and 1981, but resigned from the RSP in 1981. At present he is affiliated with the Communist League, an Indian section of the Fourth International. He is one of the most influential Marxist scholars among the various extant left groups in India.

Desai is one of the first Marxist sociologists to use historical materialism to analyze the structural transformation of Indian society during the British and postindependence periods. He shows that Indian nationalism was generated by the political subjection of the Indian people by the British. For their own imperial interests, the British introduced capitalist norms of production. It established a new type of centralized state based on capitalist needs and introduced modern education, modern means of communications, and other institutions that resulted in "the growth of a new social class and the unleashing of new social forces unique in themselves" (*Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, p. 15). The rise of an Indian bourgeoisie and an educated middle class came into conflict with British imperialism and became the basis of, and motive for, the rise and development of Indian nationalism.

In his various writings, Desai refutes the theory of the "two-stages revolution" propounded by major left parties such as the Communist Party of India, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), and the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist). These parties argued that India must pass through two stages of development. The first stage will entail a "national democratic," "people's democratic," or "new democratic" revolution. The second stage will commence thereafter and will take the form of a socialist revolution. Desai argues that India has already followed a capitalist path of development under British rule. The native Indian bourgeoisie that now governs is, according to Desai, historically weak. Moreover, it functions at a time of general crisis in the world capitalist system. Desai exposes, with empirical data, the inherent limitations of the welfare state, which has been adopted as a strategic means to save Indian capitalism. He examines both the rural and urban tensions that have appeared in the wake of India's capitalist path of development, as well as various indigenous aspects of Indian society, e.g., caste, class, family, tribe, and religion. He concludes that even elementary bourgeois democratic tasks cannot be attained by the present bourgeoisie. Under capitalism it is simply not possible to liquidate mass poverty, mass unemployment, mass illiteracy, and mass ignorance. These tasks can only

one. The Party must guide the efficient management and development of social resources; at the same time it must check against, and control, tendencies that interfere with efficiency. This requires suppression, on the one hand, of revolutionary demands for egalitarianism. To achieve this end, the Party must be made into a coherent bureaucratic organization capable of acting in unity and discipline.

Deng's "second revolution" is reminiscent of the "second revolution" under Stalin\* in the Soviet Union, which replaced revolutionaries with managers in the Party. In a basic sense, it is closer to the idea of "democratic centralism" than the "mass line" policies of Mao Zedong, which had sought closer integration of Party and people. Deng's conception of socialism as an instrument of national political and economic development is justified by a dependency-corporatist interpretation of Marxism. The task of revolution, in this view, is to liberate the nation from foreign economic and political domination and to launch an autonomous course of national development under the guidance of a state controlled by the Party. What this view shared with Marxism is its opposition to capitalism; but the future it envisions is not so much socialist as it is non-capitalist. The egalitarian-democratic vision of socialism is replaced in this notion of socialism with an administrative conception of economic and political activity that presupposes a hierarchical social organization. Indeed, Deng's approach to socialism in China makes room for the incorporation of capitalist elements into economic development as long as these elements remain under state control.

Deng is today the most powerful person in China, although he has scrupulously refrained from assuming the formal prerogatives of power.

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ARIF DIRLIK

**DESAI, AKSHYAY KUMAR RAMANLAL** (b. 1915). Akshyay Desai was born on 31 May 1915 at Nadiad, Gujarat, western India, into an upper-caste Hindu, Brahmin family. His father was a renowned literary figure in Gujarat who also served in various official capacities in Baroda State. A. R. Desai took his primary and secondary education at several places in Gujarat, as his father was transferred from one place to another for administrative duties. He graduated as a social science major from the University of Bombay. He also earned a law degree and a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Bombay in 1946. He began his academic career as a lecturer in sociology at his alma mater in 1946 and officially joined the Department of Sociology as a lecturer in 1951. He became a professor and head of the department in 1969, and retired from the university in 1976. Desai was then appointed a senior fellow and a national fellow of the Indian Council of Social Science Research in 1973-75 and 1981-

be attained through a socialist revolution. Desai argues that Indian social and economic conditions have ripened to the point that this noncapitalist alternative is now both desirable and necessary.

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GHANSHYAM SHAH

**DIAZ, JOSÉ** (1896–1942). A baker by trade, José Diaz was a member of an anarchist labor union, Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores, when, after being jailed in 1925, he came in contact with the Communist Party. Together with several anarchists from Seville he joined the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) in 1927, thus forming one of the few labor groups of the then minority party. The accusations of the representatives of the Third Communist International\* against the leaders of the Party, then headed by José Bullejos, brought about the Seville group's domination of the Party's Political Bureau during the Fourth Party Congress, which met in Seville in March 1932. In October of that year, as a result of what was considered improper conduct on the part of the Communist leadership when faced with a military uprising, the International decided to expel Bullejos and bring in José Diaz and his cohorts to head the Secretariat of the PCE. Diaz immediately became secretary general.

Although the official history of the PCE may have presented the rise of Diaz and Ibárruri\* as the origin of the "*gran viraje*" (great swing) attributed to Spanish communism, the truth is that, during 1933 and until the first half of 1934, the new leaders of the Party continued the same policies of the previous leadership: radical rejection of the Republic and accusations of Spanish socialism as really being social fascism. Only in September 1934, with the entry of the PCE into the Alianza Obrera (Workers' Alliance), did there begin (due to pressure from the International and under an evident French influence) the political swing that led the PCE into forming a popular front with the Socialists and the leftist Republican parties.

José Diaz, an affable person, had passed into the history of Spanish communism as the leader who best personified the ideal of the Popular Front. Although Jesus Hernandez was, undoubtedly, the leader who explained more rigorously the new policy, Diaz had to convince a Communist Party noted for its leftist politics of the need for a popular front. On his return from the International's Seventh Congress (where he was elected a member of the Executive Committee) he gave several speeches, which contributed no new ideas concerning official policy formulation but which did carry great conviction. Because of the general policy of the Popular Front (and under Diaz's direction), the PCE was

able to increase its membership from 300 in 1932 to between 50,000 and 60,000 in the spring of 1936.

During the Civil War Diaz stayed on as Secretary General of the Party, from which position he tried to maintain a balance between the continued pressure exerted by the International and the needs of the leftist coalition that governed the Republic. However, his capacity to lead the Party effectively was diminished, due in part to the clear hegemony of the International and also to the breakdown of his health. He was exiled to the Soviet Union at the end of the Civil War, and his authority was further diminished, while that of Dolores Ibárruri rose. She criticized him severely before the International's Secretariat, further reducing his authority.

Because of Nazi advances he was transferred to the Caucasian city of Tbilisi, where he was hospitalized, isolated, and able to see only a few relatives and the secret police. He ended his life by jumping from a window on 19 March 1942.

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SANTOS JULIÁ

**DOBB, MAURICE HERBERT** (1900-1976). Maurice Dobb was born on 24 July 1900 in London. Dobb received his M.A. in 1922 from Pembroke College of Cambridge University, where he had become a member of Keynes's Political Economy Club. From 1922 to 1924, with a research studentship, Dobb worked in the graduate program of the London School of Economics and Political Science. There he wrote a Ph.D. thesis that was later to function as a beginning sketch for his magnum opus of 1946, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism*. Dobb began teaching in 1924 as a university lecturer at Cambridge University. In 1948, he was elected a fellow and lecturer of Trinity College at Cambridge University. It was at this time that he started his collaboration with Piero Sraffa in editing the *Works and Correspondence of David Ricardo*. In 1959 Dobb was appointed a reader in economics at Cambridge University, a post he shared with economists of such high repute as Kaldor and Joan Robinson. Upon his retirement from teaching in 1967, Dobb was elected a reader emeritus. In addition to his posts at Cambridge University, Dobb held visiting positions at the University of London, School of Slavonic Studies (1943-46) and at the University of Delhi, India (1951). In autobiographical notes written in 1965 and published in a Maurice Dobb memorial issue of the *Cambridge Journal of Economics* (June 1978), Dobb credited his stay in India for an interest in problems of development, which culminated in 1960 in his publication of *An Essay on Economic Growth and Planning*. Dobb received honorary degrees from the Charles University of Prague, from the University of Budapest, and from the University of Leicester. He