

## Utpal Dutt: Labour, Revolutionary Organisation and the Question of 'Love'

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Writing a political history of the 'group' theatre in Bengal involves looking at a 'movement' that was in no way cohesive, a movement without a manifesto, as it were, or a unified aesthetic impulse, and many separate and conflicting articulations of political intention. Even though it could be said, that Bengali group theatre (at least in the period between the 1950s and 1980s) was chiefly driven by what has been called a 'leftist' ideology, the largely amorphous nature of this cultural enterprise allowed for the (not always peaceful) coexistence of many divergent politico-cultural strands - ranging from the broadly progressive and patriotic to the violently radical. This paper will attempt to look at the trajectory of Utpal Dutt's work as a Marxist playwright within the group theatre movement through the 1960s and 1970s, concentrating on two primary aspects. First, it will attempt to trace what I argue is his careful and self-conscious fashioning of the figure of the 'organic intellectual' as a dramatic character in his plays from this period. Second, it will examine the problem of 'revolutionary love': what is the place of desire in the time of revolution? In *Teer* (about the Naxalbari movement, written in 1967), Dutt seems, for the first time, to frame a political problem without knowing the solution. It seems to me that neither the text of class war nor the grammar of woman's empowerment within the revolution is able to justly tackle the problem of love: I attempt to examine Dutt's grappling with this radical question.

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