

THIRD WORLD MARXISM: A VIEW FROM BELOW

by Gerrit Huizer

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There appears to be a growing consensus that marxism is in retreat in the face of the advances made by world imperialism. Particularly marxists or socialists living in Europe or the USA have come under pressure from the triumphalist attitude that at present is widely reflected in Western media and scholarly publications since the demise of Eastern European forms of command socialism. Viewed from a global perspective, taking into account developments, and particularly underdevelopments, in different parts of the globe one wonders if such pessimism is justified for those who for years have experienced the political-economic analysis of Marx as a rather appropriate reflection of what is happening in the world. Isn't the contradiction between rich and poor increasing everywhere? Aren't old and new social protest movements occurring in every corner and not only among men and women of the lower classes but including other sectors of society, negatively affected by the 'global reach' of fewer but larger corporations and banks?

In a discussion on the future and usefulness of marxist analysis for mankind it appears most appropriate to concentrate on its applicability on a world scale, probably transcending the debates of Western intellectuals, now apparently in a spiritual crisis (postmodernism) and those in Eastern Europe which are in process of transformation (modernism).

Since the recent Western military interventions in Panama and Iraq, immediately following the breakdown of the command socialism model in Eastern Europe, it has become clearer than ever that - on a world scale - the main contradiction is

not so much between one ism or system and another (capitalism versus socialism), but simply between the rich and the poor, haves and have-nots, capital and labour, though in a manner different from Marx' days. In this confrontation the few rich have the most ruthless technology and other power and information instruments at their disposal. Is this new clarity regarding the main contradictions in our world a sign of hope rather than a reason for pessimism?

From *Global 2000*, the Report to the President (Carter) brought out in 1980, it can be seen that the people in Western Europe and USA, altogether a small minority of 10% of the world's population use, consume or dispose of over 60% of the goods of the earth. In other words: the relatively few average Westerners consume per capita 24 (twenty-four) times as much as the average citizens of most of the world. A highly privileged position, a great responsibility! The (formerly) socialist countries and Japan which together also make up about 10% of the world's people consume about 20% of the goods available. Their lifestyles come, compared to the West, closer to that of the majority (80%) of mankind. To some extent their economic development models have long functioned as examples for a variety of Third

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World countries to achieve a greater share of the world's cake. A few rather small countries following the Japanese model have succeeded in that. They became the newly industrialized coun-

tries. The Eastern European model of development now has lost its exemplary value.

A crucial question emerges regarding the year 2000 and beyond: Is the Western capitalist model able to solve the contradictions of 24:1 and 10% against 80%? This is questioned even in the West and some experts fulfill prophetic roles announcing the doom that will befall the West - and to the some extent all mankind - if the cancerous growth of the Western consumer's economies continues: Environmental doom, spiritual doom (drugs, crime, over dissatisfaction), massive immigration of those from the South. The signs are already on the wall. Will they be noticed? Growth in some of the most advanced economies has already come almost to a standstill: recession in USA and UK where consumerist "voodoo economics" has been most aggressively applied.

The Western forms of more or less effective political democracy are presently limited to a minority of the world's people, that has for centuries amassed its wealth by subjecting and colonizing the majority in what is now the Third World. How can the present structures of Western democracy abandon disproportionate (24:1) privilege as regards participation, sharing, in the produce of Mother Earth?

Participation in fulfillment of basic needs is a prerequisite for any other form of participation and world-wide democracy. While the structures of institutionalized democracy that have flourished in the West show increasing signs of erosion (e.g. the decreasing percentages of the electorate that actually use their right to vote), among the majority of mankind, often under very adverse conditions, many forms and expressions of people's power and people's participation have emerged or are being revitalized in a great variety of social movements. Andre Gunder Frank and Marta

Fuentes¹ recently stated that social movements, particularly of the type commonly called 'new' social movements (to distinguish them from 'classical' social movements such as labour union move-

ments), have existed since time immemorial. Among these are ethnic-, peasant-, slave-, women's-, religious and other broad movements that have influenced social transformation including changes of the state. Such movements continue to play crucial roles, though they may take new forms, such as indigenous, the green and the peace-movements. It should be emphasized that ecology movements are not new, as most peasant movements reclaiming land alienated from them by colonial settlers or large-scale farm enterprises, in fact can be classified as ecology movements *avant la lettre*.² Most observers seem to agree that old and new social movements are a reaction to the frustrations caused by the advance of the capitalist world economy. Such a critical observation about the capitalist world system came recently from a representative of one of the most outstanding religious social movements in Latin America at present, the thousands of ecclesial base communities spread over Brazil struggling for land reform and other issues. One of their main spokesmen, Franciscan theologian Leonardo Boff, in the light of recent criticism of marxist theories (as regards Eastern Europe), strongly emphasized the usefulness of Marx' original analysis to come to grips with the influence of 'bourgeois society' in Brazil (and most of the Third World). It may be worthwhile to quote what Marx wrote almost 150 years ago in the Communist Manifesto about that 'bourgeoisie', the force behind the creation of the world market and the growing of what he called "universal intercourse, of all-round *interdependence* of the nations.":

"That which characterizes the bourgeois epoch in contradistinction to all others is a continuous transformation of production, a perpetual disturbance of social conditions, everlasting insecurity and movement. All stable and stereotyped relations with their attendant train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, and the newly formed becomes obsolete before it can petrify. All that has been regarded as solid crumbles into fragments; all that was looked upon as holy, is profaned; at long last, people are compelled to gaze open-eyed at their position in life and their social relations."

This statement is more true to-day than ever. The term 'interdependence' has even become fashionable in develop-

ment literature as a cover-up for the 'dependency' denounced by marxists in different continents.

In a recent work Samir Amin, Giovanni Arrighi, Andre Gunder Frank and Immanuel Wallerstein³ try to come to grips with the role of 'anti-systemic' movements that over the last 150-200 years reacted to the capitalist 'world system' penetrating and transforming different societies all over the globe. Andre Frank (together with Marta Fuentes) show in this book that many of the social movements that have emerged the last two centuries often appear to follow, more or less, the cyclical trends, ups and downs, in the world economy, known as the Kondratieff cycles. They give evidence that in the areas where the world economic trends are most strongly felt, in Western Europe and the USA and those Third World areas most strongly dominated by or integrated in the Western capitalist economy, social movements of peasants or workers and those for anti-colonialist or environmental protest are strong.

Frank and Fuentes observe considerable 'coincidences' in the emergence and decline of a variety of social movements in different countries and continents. Perhaps these are reacting more or less simultaneously to changing historical circumstances in the world. However, both authors openly recognize that they have a different opinion as regards the cyclical nature of movements, Fuentes arguing that this idea implies too much economic determinism that leaves little room for 'voluntarism'.

The role of 'voluntarism' is a difficult one because it implies some measure of subjectivity, the role of the subject(s) and their stand and action in certain cases. On the one hand there is no doubt that certain trends in macro- or micro-socio-economic conditions (e.g. the Kondratieff cycles, or urbanization or extention of plantations) are related to or conditional for the emergence of social movements. On the other hand one has to take into account the level of consciousness about the effects of such trends and the willingness and ability to react to such trends or not.

In peasant movements the role of leaders and their understanding of prevailing conditions and ideological orientation is crucial for the strategy used in or

by a movement. In most cases there is a certain measure of voluntarism involved. The power elite strategies to cope with anti-systemic movements also seem to imply voluntarism and consciously applied leadership or guidance which is — dialectically — taken into account by their opponents.

One recent expression of awareness about this dialectics between movement and power elite strategies comes from representatives of many social movements of christian origin in a document presented at the World Council of Churches' Assembly in Canberra, Feb. 1991:

"Local elites in almost all communities have been co-opted into the global power system controlled by the owners and administrators of transnational capital. The strategy of 'low intensity warfare' (LIC) has been developed to control and even destroy any social movements, Christian base communities, liberation theology, and also national governments trying to establish a more just order. Military interventions, political pressures, economic destabilization, disinformation campaigns and socio-psychological warfare are all part of this strategy."⁴

Some Latin American experiences

It has been noted that the variety of strategies applied on both sides appears particularly advanced in Latin America. About this continent Amin observed that the early political independence won by the oligarchies of large landowners, added to the strong European cultural influence there, gave social movements some original patterns depending on the role of countries concerned in the world capitalist system. Perhaps for this reason my learning experience during the 50's and 60's regarding the struggle between the 'bourgeoisie' and opposing social movements in Latin America can be useful in the present discussion.⁵

During many years of involvement with a good member of more or less marxist-orientated peasant movements our main question was: why do such social movements emerge in some places and become large-scale and effective and why not in others? An even more pragmatic and important question was: how exactly do they emerge and what can be done to stimulate or support them?

I would gradually learn about the answers to these questions through

participation and active involvement in a number of movements, and discussing these experiences with the people concerned and with activist and scholars involved in other similar movements. Generalizations about the emergence of social movements based on such experiences in Latin America were largely confirmed by observations and experiences with similar movements in several South-East Asian countries.⁶ Important pre-conditions for social movements to emerge were in almost all instances a mixture of objective and subjective conditions:

1. The occurrence of a strongly felt case of injustice or disadvantage (e.g. a deterioration of the actual situation or the rising of false hopes of improvement or redress), which triggered off the movement, mostly having economic as well as moral/spiritual implications;

2. The availability locally of able, mostly *charismatic* leaders who could clearly voice the discontent and indicate steps for expression of grievances and inspire their peers towards action;

3. Some measure of tolerance by the state or active support from urban allies including trade union leaders, politicians, priests, intellectuals or development workers, in coping with the effects of the state's repressive power;

4. How a movement actually emerged depended further on its strategy being originally not explicitly directed against the state but starting with demands that corresponded to the most strongly felt concrete grievances and needs. When the elites and/or the state instead of responding positively to those demands tried to block the growing movement, it could well become more radical and, if violently oppressed, become revolutionary. The state loses its legitimacy by violently oppressing movements which are strongly felt as representing justified demands. Such a process of growing revolutionary struggle may take months, years or decades to come about.

The struggle itself following this escalation pattern helps the peasants involved to develop from a 'class-in-itself' to a 'class-for-itself'. Important in this process proved to be the spiritual endurance and resilience of the people and the quality of leaders in their relation to the 'masses', subjective factors that have been seriously neglected in most marxist litera-

ture. From my participatory experiences in this field it can be concluded that charismatic personalities, either from among the peasantry or coming from outside, play a most crucial role in raising or enhancing the (class) consciousness and guide the setting up of some kind of effective organization. Such outstanding though not always well-known leaders were, among many others Emiliano Zapata, Ursalo Galvan, Primo Tapia, Jacinto Lopez in Mexico, José Rojas in Bolivia, Hugo Blanco in Peru, Francisco Juliao in Brazil, Louis Taruc in the Philippines, Lino Alvarez in Cuba, Aidit in Indonesia. Almost all of them were practical marxists, many were members of a communist or socialist party. It is hard to imagine certain movements to have come about and be effective without the presence of such leaders. On the other hand their role should not be exaggerated or misunderstood as being the only determinant in the emergence of a movement. They could be outstanding precisely because they had the quality to be well-rooted among their followers.

In the context of debating the successes and failures of marxism and socialism in the world, most authors focus too much only on the problems that certain Eastern European states have recently run into. Hardly any of these forms of socialism were applicable to the Third World. One wonders why not more attention is given to the kind of pragmatic peasant socialism that emerged as a result of twenty years of (class) struggle in China.

It cannot be emphasized enough that most of these movements were initially not very hierarchical (but hierarchical to some extent, depending on the qualities of the leadership) and often had a considerable influence or backing of women (though not often in leading roles). They were purposely non-violent and just tried to correct strongly felt injustices. Only when such movements gained impact but were then, mostly through intervention of the state, violently oppressed, they became more militant, and prepared to use violence to counter state violence felt as illegitimate. In their reaction to the strongly hierarchical and bureaucratic instruments of the state (army, police) they then also had to become more hierarchical. Some tended to lose the character of a movement and became a revolutionary organization or party.

In most cases this latter was the objective of those who, as urban supporters, joined and guided the emerging peasant

movements. Some times it happened because using organized violent resistance was the only sensible reaction to the oppressive action of the state. Generally peasants follow revolutionary political leaders only after all other alternatives of peaceful achievement of a more just and sustainable livelihood have been ruthlessly blocked.

The Chinese experience

One of the most successful organizers of a marxist social movement, the Chinese peasant leader Mao Ze Dong has pointed out in his strategic writings that the peasants movement had to be developed taking into account a great variety of contradictions of interests. In order to achieve an effective mobilization it was necessary to study in each different local grassroots situation the composition of the prevailing contradictions and to distinguish between those which are fundamental and those which are of secondary importance. Mobilization could often be achieved along the lines of the most fundamental contradiction, e.g.

against the 'enemy' which provokes most wide spread or acute opposition. Such strategic study-cum-action regarding the locally nationally and internationally operating contradiction has made the successful advance of the Chinese peasant movements possible as well as that of many others, depending on local circumstances and the broader world-economic and political context.

In China during the 1920's, when over half of the peasantry was landless or semi-landless and prevailing exploitative relationships had become more blatant because of corruption and regional power struggles between the so-called warlords, social movements emerged that would result in outright revolution, or 'liberation' as the Chinese call it themselves. Rural unrest and social movements were encountered by Mao Ze Dong when he returned to his province of origin Hunan after his efforts to rally the Shanghai working class for a

communist revolutionary uprising had been ruthlessly crushed by the Kwomintang Government in 1926. Mao's 'Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movements in Hunan' (1927/1971) shows the strength of the movements and also the surprise of its author to find peasants organizing on their own behalf, since to his theoretical marxist conception only the urban proletariat could be the class destined to do this. Learning by trial and error from and with the local people Mao Ze Dong followed the age-old folk tradition of (mostly taoist inspired) people's rebellions in Hunan when he helped the peasants there to get better organized against overwhelming odds. In his strategic writings about organization and guerilla he later used folkwisdom and taoist texts as much as those of Marx and Lenin. One of the great feats of the more than 20 years of struggle of the Chinese peasant guerilla armies was a kind of modern Exodus, the Long March in 1934-35 in which they escaped total annihilation by the overwhelmingly superior armies of Chiang Kai Check by withdrawing through outlying inhospitable parts of China to isolated Yenan province. Here the numerically weakened but spiritually and morally strengthened peasant rebels could establish their base, distribute the land to the tillers and build a society based on 'rural equalitarianism' which served as a base for the conquest of all of China in the late forties.

As the World Bank's Report '*China: Socialist Economic Development*' (Washington, 1983) clearly recognizes, this success and the following radical land and other socialist reforms laid the foundation for a consistend and sustainable development.

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The World Bank's 1983 Report mentioned above shows that during the period between 1950 and 1980, thanks to the radical redistribution of assests (land reform, nationalization), and other socialist measures, China achieved spectacular industrial growth of about 10% per year. This industrial growth was accompanied by a reasonably equable distribution of income and benefits with the result that the standards of living of the Chinese people rose considerably so that life-expectancy for Chinese in 1979 was 13 years above that in India and 17 years above that in Indonesia. (World Bank, 1983, vol. III, p.26). This in spite of all the ups and downs of extremist and in many ways disastrous campaigns such as the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. In the 1991 World Bank's Development Report it is observed that; 'starting in 1780, the UK took 58 years to double its per capita output. Beginning in 1885 Japan took 34 years. Starting in 1977, China doubled living standards in only a decade' (Fin. Times, July 8, 1991).

A few other statistics that give an indication about the relative successes of a 'socialist economic development', also taken from the World Bank's Development Report (1990) show that China had between 1980-89 a considerably higher GDP growth rate (10.1) than the rest of East Asia (6.4) and GDP per capita growth rate was in China 8.7, more than double that of other East-Asia (4.2). A comparison with the extremely low and tragic GDP per capita growth rates for Sub-Saharan Africa (-2.2) or Latin America (-0.6) even more strongly highlights that capitalist and World Bank promoted 'growth' in most of the Third World was a dismal failure compared to that of socialist China, now in the process of gradually liberalizing to some extent.

Another significant indicator is the percentage of 'extremely poor' in China as 8, while this figure is 33 for India, 30 for Sub-Saharan Africa and 12 for Latin America. These differences show that in countries, which mostly belong to the 'low-income' category, those who follow a socialist path (China) appear to be able to keep their people significantly better alive and healthy than those who follow a capitalist road (Indonesia, India), and implemented no land reform. At least one kind of human right, that of survival

and livelihood, appears to be well respected under socialism. As regards other human rights the situation in China does not seem to be much worse than in many other Third World countries mentioned, e.g. Indonesia, to which Western media pay hardly any attention.

The land reform issue

At present land reform is still on the agenda and a main motivation for considerable social mobilization, if not violent struggle, in countries like Brazil, the Philippines, El Salvador, Guatemala, Indonesia, Bangaladesh and where not. In India the percentage of landless rural workers has risen over the past decades till the level existing in China in the 20's, when the revolutionary movements emerged. In only a few countries is the redistribution of land to the landless presently being tried out. One is Zimbabwe where the marxist ZANU forces, mostly trained in China, sufficiently indentified with the popular spirituality related to the land and the ancestors, to be able to mobilize the peasantry and topple the militarily superior white government after a few years of struggle in 1980.⁷ The other is Nicaragua where the marxist and christian inspired Sandinistas mobilized peasants and other sectors of the contra-war instigated by the (CIA) agents of the US 'bourgeoisie' which did not want another socialist redistribution-cum-growth experiment in its backyard.

Interestingly both these marxist inspired peasant based revolutions had like China — a strong popular-spiritual component. (Not taking this component sufficiently seriously was a main mistake made in Mozambique, facing the undermining activities of Renamo).

That a radical, if not revolutionary redistribution of productive assets such as land, can be a good start for a rapid more or less *independent* industrial development, as is the ideal of marxists everywhere, has not only been shown in socialist China, but also, following in part the Chinese example, the highly or newly industrialized countries in Asia: Japan, Taiwan and South-Korea.

Already before the triumph of the Chinese peasant movements the land reform implemented in the areas under their control had a strong radiating influence in some surrounding countries. In

CAPITALISM & SOCIALISM

Contd from page 19

Japan semi-landless peasants, mainly tenants; had been organizing since the First World War to achieve better tenancy conditions. This movement was growing rapidly, but was seriously hindered by the Japanese military when these came to power after the Manchuria incident in 1931. After the defeat of the Japanese army in 1945 the peasant movement proved to be still alive, though many leaders had spent years in jail, and it was quickly re-activated and able to pressure for reforms in the land tenure situation. The Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) exercised strong pressure on the post-war Japanese Government to implement land reform. Between 1946 and 1949 almost all land property in excess of one hectare was redistributed among the tillers mainly through purchase and resale. In this process the organized peasants played a crucial role together with the rich farmers and landlords, whose tight grip on rural social life, however, was broken. A broad internal market for industrial goods was created by giving the peasantry access to the means of production and helping them further to improve their situation by officially sponsored farmers' associations. A few years later a similar land reform was implemented in Taiwan, strongly backed by the Rural Reconstruction movement created by James Yen with US support and guidance. The Taiwanese government was in those years dominated by Chinese including Chiang Kai Check, who had fled from mainland China and had no landed interests to defend in Taiwan.⁸ Later also the Syngman Rhee government in South-Korea initiated a radical land reform under pressure from the US occupation forces to counter the growing rural unrest and movements sympathetic to the communist government in North Korea that had carried out reforms similar to those in China.

A crucial question that should be raised is: what is the reason why World Bank and other US and Western dominated agencies have not sponsored in other Third World countries the radical redistributive reforms that helped to sustain or trigger off rapid industrial development in Japan, China, Taiwan and South Korea. Are the Western economies not interested in any more powerful competitors? Is it more advantageous to

keep the rest of the Third World in some kind of *dependent* development? A global labour reserve army? It is hard to find clear policy statements in this respect but in some of the reports published by the Trilateral Commission in the mid-seventies one finds indications about such considerations. And in fact certain Third World governments that seriously tried to introduce radical reforms in a democratic manner have been overthrown with CIA support (Brazil, 1964; Indonesia, 1965; Chile 1973).

A most crucial learning experience in this respect was Chile during the Allende regime. At that time the state (in Chile) responded positively to grassroots social movements for land-urban and other reforms. The established economic system and the power of the multinational corporations, was so seriously challenged and possibly in a too drastical manner that a strong and violent reaction

Power elite management and class struggle

This was so clear, e.g. in Brazil, that as a reaction to military dictatorship bishops and archbishops in North-East Brazil had issued in 1973 a Pastoral Letter analysing the situation in their country and denouncing the international power elite in terms of 'class struggle' that to many people's surprise did not differ much from that used by Marx 135 years earlier. The liberation theologians in Latin America have since 1973 repeatedly denounced and carefully studied the role of the international 'bourgeoisie', particularly the Trilateral Commission.

In 1973 at the initiative of topmen of the world's largest multinational corporations David Rockefeller (Exxon, Chase Manhattan), John Loudon (Royal Dutch Shell) and others and with help from their intellectual supporters (Zbigniew Brzezinski) the Trilateral Commission was

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could be expected. With funds from abroad social mobilizations of sectors of the middle class (transport entrepreneurs, house-wives) were staged to disrupt the processes of change, at times somewhat chaotic on their own, that had resulted from the grassroots social movements. Finally in September 1973 the reformist state was violently overthrown by the army with direct support from the CIA and foreign companies. The National Security ideology that had inspired military in other Latin American countries to overthrow democratically elected and populist governments that responded to social movements, had shown its most brutal face in Chile, thus however, dialectically, provoking an adverse reaction worldwide. It became clear that the Western 'bourgeoisie', and particularly the US corporate elites, were not going to let themselves be limited in their expansion drive by reformist social movements and regimes in the Third World. As Marx had observed in 1848 (see above): "...all that was looked upon as holy is profaned; at long last people are compelled to gaze open-eyed at their position in life and their social relations."

formed, uniting most of the corporate elites and statemen of the US and Western Europe, that had already been meeting for years in a less formal way in the Bilderberg Conferences, but now trying to co-opt the Japanese. More sophisticated ways of dealing with Third World and Western social movements were designed.⁹

Representatives or supporters of social movements have analysed the ways the Trilateral Commission and the corporate, state and other interests and 'strategic groups' it represents designed its 'management of interdependence'. The policies followed by the International Monetary Fund, headed by Johannes Witteveen, and the World Bank, headed by Robert McNamara, were explicitly part of these designs. The past decade has shown that these designs had for almost all but a few Third World countries rather disastrous effects and helped the Western elites to maintain their hegemony, resulting in an increase of the discrepancy between rich and poor.

It appears the refusal of the established development bodies to support sufficiently radical structural reforms (as has

been advocated for three decades, such as land reform), has created and continues to do so a climate in which even Catholic bishops feel inclined to use and even propagate marxist *analysis*. It should be observed however that this does not mean that revolutionary violence is as broadly accepted as is marxist analysis.

Particularly in view of the ruthlessness in which the international 'bourgeoisie' has of late shown its brutal force in El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama, most marxists and people's movements now are looking more for non-violent ways of dealing with their opponents. The falling away of logistical or material support from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union has contributed to this shift in view. Guerilla leaders such as Gaspar Ilom are now sitting around the

present, the sharpening of contradictions worldwide should be a stimulus to carefully assess the manipulations of the agencies of that 'bourgeoisie', such as the Trilateral Commission, World Bank, IMF, G7, and other formal and informal power elite gatherings. For decades the 'bourgeoisie' (and particularly the military-industrial complex) has been able to make and keep itself strong because it had a concrete and real enemy in the socialist economies (and military industrial complex) of the Eastern bloc. Now this bloc has lost the race for military and moral strength with its — technologically and financially — far superior opponent, which had a history of over two centuries of 'accumulations of capital' as a start. But on the other hand, as a result of dedicating most of its energies to the armaments races, the

such as IBM is authorized to occupy a belt in the earth's orbital field and launch communication satellites or satellites housing data banks. Who will have access to them? Who will determine which channels or data are forbidden? The State? Or will the State simply be one user among others? New legal issues will be raised, and with them the question: 'Who will know?'"¹⁰

Particularly Cees Hamelink analysed the growing influences of banks and other finance-capital interests behind the information-industry, and emphasized that the "battle for minds" had become a new arena for international conflicts, since large-scale military confrontations now have outlived their usefulness.¹¹ The process that implies that "all that was looked upon as holy, is profaned" (as was observed by Marx in 1848) is apparently continuing unabated. Or is it beginning to reach its own ecological and other limitations, as even suggested by the Club of Rome's Report and many following statements emerging from the power elite circles themselves (e.g. the Vatican's recent encyclicals). When the "bourgeoisie's" expansion clearly becomes like a zero-sum game the scenario of the dinosaurs no longer fitting their environment and destined to die out may come on the agenda. Some representatives from the corporate circles have predicted that the 1992 European unity market will result in the fast disappearance of about half the present large-scale corporations, as they will be swallowed up by the other half (Fin. Times Nov. 23, 1988). Is this part of the "super-struggle" that futurologist Alvin Toffler predicted? In a more recent statement based on his frequent contacts with top-managerial people, Toffler pointed out: "Our managerial elites are staggering under an impossible decision load. That will force the elites to allow more people to participate to help carry the decision load. That's why we hear more and more about participatory management...", adding that he does not mean "to suggest that all this happens without conflict. In fact, I anticipate tremendous conflict about the right to participate."¹²

A puzzling question for careful and creative marxist analysis is: what is it that motivates those who lead "the bourgeoisie (which) cannot exist without incessantly revolutionizing the instruments of production" as Marx observed? Another relevant question is: what are

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negotiating table (under his own name Rodrigo Asturias) with the Guatemalan generals under the guidance of an increasingly progressive and people-oriented bishop. The ideals of such leaders, and the movements they represent, remain the same: radical reform of the social structures, particularly land reform as a basis for sustainable development. But the strategy to reach these goals has changed.

When accepting the idea of a global advance of the 'bourgeoisie' which could imply the global advance of a class-struggle, we have to recognize that — supposing we are on the side of the disadvantaged — we don't know enough about the strategies and tactics of the 'bourgeoisie', not to speak of its weaknesses or inner contradictions. While most marxist (influenced) scholars such as C. Wright Mills or Harry Magdof have—years ago—made careful studies of the 'bourgeoisie' in the USA, there is little up-to-date knowledge about how the 'bourgeoisie' presently operates on world-scale, creating contradictions.

Rather than indulging in pessimism regarding the 'bourgeoisie's' apparent economic and ideological advance at

Western 'bourgeoisie' has neglected the opportunity to extend a solid popularly based market worldwide, as happened in Japan, Taiwan and South-Korea at the beginning of the 'containment-policy' in the fifties. Now class-contradictions on a world-scale are bigger than ever. And can this be contained in the long run? Isn't, moreover, the 'bourgeoisie' losing (part of) its legitimacy in the face of the growing awareness of limited resources of Mother Earth not allowing much further expansion?

At present even scientific knowledge itself is increasingly entangled in the games of corporate actors, as was expressed by the post-modernist Lyotard when he denounced that science is now becoming a merchandise, no longer controlled by its producers:

"Already in the last few decades, economic powers have reached the point of imperiling the stability of the State through new forms of the circulation of capital that go by the generic name of multinational corporations. These new forms of circulation imply that investment decisions have, at least in part, passed beyond the control of the nation-states. The question threatens to become even more thorny with development of computer-technology and telematics. Suppose, for example, that a firm

the differences between corporate elites of Western Europe, Japan and U.S.A. as regards long-term or short-term strategies?

An outstanding example of the US managers approach, the I.T.T. General Manager Harold Geneen (who offered US\$ 1,000,000 to the C.I.A. to overthrow the Allende regime) stated about his management approach:

"I wanted to create that kind of an invigorating, challenging, creative atmosphere at ITT. I wanted to get the people there to reach for goals that they might think were beyond them. I wanted them to accomplish more than they thought was possible. And I wanted them to do it not only for the company and their careers but also for the fun of it" (Geneen 1984: 129).

The main objective of this management effort was "a steady stable growth of 10 to 15 percent increase in earnings per share for each and every year. Together we set out the double our earnings in five years." This motivation (increasingly absurd in the context of a zero-sum ecology) was apparently enough to overcome moral qualms about killing thousands of Chileans and overthrowing a democratically elected government. To what extent is this part of the "abstract heatless philosophy" that according to two experts in management studies Peters and Waterman predominates among the top-managers who reach "excellence" in their field. It was also observed by these experts:

"Professionalism in management is regularly equated with hardheaded rationality. We saw it surface at ITT in Harold Geneen's search for the 'unshakable facts.' It flourished in Vietnam where success was counted by body counts. Its wizards were Ford Motor Company's whiz kids and its grand pajandrum was Robert McNamara. The numerative, rationalist approach to management dominates the business schools."¹⁴

When facing the escalation in the confrontation with social movements such as the peasant rebellion in Vietnam this "hardheaded" management approach, an "affliction" as it was called can lead to catastrophe, as noted by Peters and Waterman:

"Our obsession with body counts in Vietnam and our failure to understand the persistence and long-time horizon of the Eastern mind culminated in America's most catastrophic misallocations of resources—human, moral and material."

A careful study of the leading circles in the (main fractions of) Western power elite(s) and their motivation, strategies and mutual relationships appears highly relevant particularly since the last few years the operations and activities of the "bourgeoisie(s)", appear to head for a moral (legitimacy) or ecological/economic crisis. Tom Peters in his latest work on excellence in management, speaks of "facing up to the need for revolution" and "thriving on chaos":

"Mergers and de-mergers are just one past of the madness. Strategies change daily, and the names of firms, a clear indicator of strategic intent, change with them."¹⁵

Such recent management literature is full of (movement) language on creative and "revolutionary" leadership. The "superstruggle" predicted by Toffler that now appears to emerge in and among sectors of the "bourgeoisie" may open perspectives for old as well as new social movements and serious marxist analysis.

Some recent work, particularly on U.S. foreign policy and the role of the

Western states (such as the G7) seem to follow the same line and therefore have, as Riad El Ghonemy shows, systematically discouraged radical land reforms in countries that badly needed such reforms, thus forming the most important final obstacle to a variety of peasant and ecological movements.¹⁷ To what extent are these policies self-defeating if seen in a long-term perspective.

Ironically, as Kolko shows, it is this kind of dependent development policies imposed or promoted by these bodies on countries like the Philippines which create conditions favourable to the emergence of radical social protest movements, even 'creating a revolution.' Similar policies of late, strongly de-emphasizing social services and state-intervention while pushing privatization and the 'free market' economy have even in Europe led to the emergence of 'new underclasses'. Since loss of legitimacy of the prevailing order may result, social movements could eventually come up to counteract these trends either from the toiling masses in the Third World or from the 'new underclass' in Europe and USA,

What is it that motivates those who lead "the bourgeoisie (which) cannot exist without incessantly revolutionizing the instruments of production" as Marx observed?

CIA in the Third World points out that though there is some degree of consistency in the reactions from above to grassroots movements, there are also considerable variations, and many ad hoc decisions on counteractivities, sometimes even giving the appearance of muddling through. Kolko shows, with a wealth of official sources, that important but sometimes contradictory U.S. economic and political interests are often behind those complex and controversial events, particularly since the early seventies. These interests want to ensure a form of export-oriented development in Third World countries which has been characterized as "dependent capitalism" and is monitored on a world scale by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.¹⁶ As Kolko shows particularly the US government, and corporate interests which it more or less openly represents, are using these international bodies to monitor the economies of Third World countries rather than doing this directly. The networks of various

possibly joined by that of Eastern Europe.

Finalizing, there appears to exist considerable scope for continuous and up-to-date marxist analysis of the effects of the growing contradictions in the world as a whole. In addition to the purely political economic aspects of this crisis, now the moral, spiritual-religious implications as felt among the common people, the subjects of historical changes, should be taken into account more seriously than has been done in the past.¹⁸ It is a hopeful sign that the last few years a solid marxist journal like the *Monthly Review* has given considerable attention to "spiritual revolutionaries" and the impact of liberation theology. Similar spiritual-religious (under)-currents that reflect the resistance of the people to increasingly 'spiritless' conditions imposed by the 'bourgeoisie' worldwide appear to show themselves everywhere, not to be branded too easily as mere 'opium of the people' but to be

Contd. on page 56

Contd from page 55

taken seriously as potential advantages for emancipations struggle in a marxist perspective.

Notes

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