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NST

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Lukács on Socialist Democracy

Erich Hahn

An international symposium on the hundredth birthday of Georg Lukács took place in March 1985 at the Academy of Sciences of the German Democratic Republic (GDR). It was sponsored by the philosophical institutes of the academies of the GDR, the USSR, and the People's Republic of Hungary, as well as the Berlin Academy Institute for Literary History. Its purpose was to pay due homage to one of the most significant and influential Marxist thinkers of the twentieth century. In the course of the conference, a debate emerged between different evaluations of the life work of a scientist who was deeply enmeshed in the political drama of the epoch (Buhr and Lukács 1987).

Robert Steigerwald presented a contribution on the treatment of Georg Lukács's writings after World War II in West Germany. Citing relevant publications, he differentiated between two periods. The first—prior to 1956—was mostly dominated by the utilization of literary-historical and philosophical works published in the Soviet-occupied zone (later the GDR) dealing with virulent fascist positions and the foundation of Marxist orientations and knowledge. The main focus in the second period was the New Left or neo-Marxism appearing since the midsixties with the intent “of blocking the way to Marxism-Leninism by founding a different Marxist philosophy (a more general theory)” (Buhr and Lukács 1987, 147). This was the start of intense debates on Korsch, Gramsci, Rosa Luxemburg, and, of course, Georg Lukács. In

reference to Lukács, there was a clear clash of openly antagonistic, objectively bourgeois, revisionist, Eurocommunist, and more-or-less Marxist-oriented positions. By the 1980s (at the latest), this tendency was also passé. Steigerwald stated in 1985, "I would hope this is the beginning of a third, Marxist-oriented, comprehensive treatment of Lukács" (Buhr and Lukács 1987, 155).

The treatment Robert Steigerwald envisioned did not materialize, for well-known reasons. There is today even more urgency in preventing stagnation in the processing and absorption of Georg Lukács's intellectual heritage, especially in the face of attempts at new formation of the Left on the basis of contemporary capitalism and the defeat of the socialism of the October Revolution. Lukács did not experience this defeat, but in his later years he was deeply convinced of the necessity of a Marxist renaissance. And it is not as if there is no interest in Lukács!

One must especially recognize the activities of the International Georg Lukács Society [*Internationalen Georg Lukács Gesellschaft* (Paderborn)] in correspondence with Budapest. The achievements of this association, founded in 1996 under the leadership of Frank Benseler, Rüdiger Dannemann, and Werner Jung, in the ongoing recognition and spreading of Georg Lukács's ideas cannot be overestimated. Beside important single publications, seven yearbooks have appeared since 1996 with previously unpublished works by Lukács and more than seventy scientific contributions by competent national and international authors. The society members are aware of the historical conditions under which they are working to further the scientific and public debate about Lukács and to open up his estate. A release about the founding of the society states that the main point is "to continue the critical-socialist, open, non-dogmatic thinking in the spirit of Georg Lukács, which has been sacrificed after the [East-West German] 'turnaround' (and many international turnarounds) out of necessity or opportunism, but against historical insight." And one must agree with Dannemann and Jung's 1995 sarcastic-realistic words: "No doubt: Lukács is not exactly the fashionable philosopher of our day. Just like Hegel and his school of rationalism, like Marx, Lenin, and the whole crowd of classics of what used to be called Marxism-Leninism (we

do not need adjectives like orthodox or undogmatic). The West, market economy, and capitalism are aglow in the light of final historical victory. After them: the end of history” (7). One would hope that those dealing with Lukács in the formerly socialist countries, as well as in the Communist parties of Western countries, would bring their experiences to the forefront more forcefully in today’s debates.¹

From the point of view of the new century, the fascination with Georg Lukács is caused in no small measure by the fact that he was an intellectual who was influenced by and maintained a lifelong connection with a certain middle-European tradition of thinking, but at the same time he joined the Communist movement, and for the last four decades of his life he identified himself with the realization of the socialism that oriented itself on the October Revolution, and he involved himself on its behalf with all his resources and great enthusiasm. His specific Marxist position and his interpretation of Marxism must be understood with regard to his bourgeois origin, his philosophical and cultural development prior to 1918, and his sense of the deep crisis of bourgeois culture and the historical downfall of the bourgeoisie. Those formed the foundation and the stimulus for his lifelong passion for the relation between Marx and Hegel, and one of the origins of his enormous contribution to Marxist-Leninist thinking as well as his sharp disagreement with certain aspects of this theory and practice.

It is understandable that discussions of Lukács often concentrated on those controversies, became a part of them, and took sides. It was sometimes said, with good reason, that the often-explosive political content of the debates tended to overshadow their scientific substance.² It was the genius of Georg Lukács always to highlight, with his theoretical contributions, single-mindedly and directly, basic questions of political and historical practice. Key words are history and class consciousness [*Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*], the “Blum thesis,”³ the destruction of reason [*Zerstörung der Vernunft*], democratization today and tomorrow [*Demokratisierung heute und morgen*], and ontology. And even such a strictly philosophical (at first glance) essay as the “Young

Hegel” caused a clash of opinion with political implications not always doing justice to the purpose of the work and the thoughts of the author. It was perhaps inevitable that the view from the outside, from Western countries, of the discussions in the framework of Communist parties and especially the Marxist-Leninist discourse of societal practice in the socialist countries, could not always grasp its real social foundation—since it often escaped even those who were directly involved in the debate.

It is generally known, for example, that Lukács’s thinking focused on the question of subject-object and its various aspects. Ethical problems were a practical and intellectual challenge to him in 1918 as well as fifty years later. The determinants and real effects and the historical role of conscious human activity were at the core of his famous early work as well as his not-yet-so-famous later work. One cannot dismiss the thought that this focus was also found in his biography, as Lukács at times stated himself (Lichtheim 1971, 36). But Lichtheim neglected the fact that these topics are existential questions of any socialist practice. The question of opportunities for intervention and the limits of conscious action and political action are the alpha and omega of every social movement that seeks a social alternative to capitalist spontaneity. This question continues to engage Communist parties since Lenin’s contributions to the debate on trade unions in 1920—always under the force of elementary practical, not the least economic-political, requirements. One must remember this in order to do justice to the ongoing intellectual wrestling by Lukács for the solution to this cardinal question and to his arguments and positions. Without knowledge of this constellation as the final foundation and content of the symbiosis of politics and theory, an objective judgment on the communist development of Georg Lukács is only possible in a limited way. To understand the phenomenon of Lukács, it is useless to label him Stalinist or anti-Stalinist, or, as is fashionable right now, to acknowledge him when he is critical of socialism and disregard him when he is defending it.

This throws light on the responsibility of those who have been involved in Marxist-Leninist practice to bring their point of view into the prevailing processes of reception. Also we have the

opportunity, brought on by the defeat of this practice, to combine the view from the inside with that from the outside. What must have been difficult for those who were involved in the intellectual debates of those years may now be possible—to bring into its own the historical and societal whole in which our controversies were embedded.

I see another compelling reason to deal again with Lukács from this perspective. In his theoretical critique of wrong developments and deformations of existing socialism, he spoke from a socialist point of view—that is, he gave socialist criticism.

His unfortunately too little-known *Democratization Today and Tomorrow* is instructive in this regard. He wrote this in the summer and fall of 1968. It was published in 1985 in German, but without final editing, by the Hungarian Academy of Science. I shall illustrate my understanding of “socialist criticism,” based on Lukács’s argument, in five steps.

First: Lukács saw his critical analyses and judgments in clear opposition to bourgeois criticism of socialism. He saw the “main purpose” of his work as “differentiating any criticism of Stalin’s system from bourgeois criticism of any kind, which—ever since the implementation of the NEP—always” served to cause the blurring of differences between the two systems. “Any doubt about existing socialism’s objectively socialist character [and Lukács knew well how to distinguish it from ‘subjectively socialist character’—E.H.] belongs to the category of bourgeois nonsense and defamation” (Lukács 1985, 156). He saw the hallmark of a bourgeois position on democracy in the attempt to measure socialist democracy against the characteristics and criteria of bourgeois democracy, and “to see bourgeois democracy as a real alternative to contemporary socialism” (38). Any attempt to realize this alternative would “inevitably lead to liquidation of socialism and likely of democracy itself” (54). In 1968, Lukács directed “caustic” (11) criticism against those “ideologists” (38) and “reformers” who were infatuated not only with the institutions of bourgeois democracy but also with the market economy (177). One needs to keep in mind that the text was written during the time of the “Prague Spring,” although Lukács does not once mention this event.

Second: The basis of his position was not simply his Communist conviction or a moral rejection of bourgeois democracy, but his insight into the differences between those two historic types of democracy. His theoretical source was Marx's analysis of the dialectic of political and human emancipation, of the "dualism" that marks bourgeois society—and democracy—"between individual life and species-life, between the life of civil society and political life" (1975, 159), the contradiction between man as member of bourgeois society (the private individual—*homme*) and man as abstract citizen of the state (the public man—*citoyen*).

According to Lukács, Marx and Engels had no intention of trying "to force a *citoyen* character onto socialist democracy" (1985, 70, 141). Socialist democracy's task is to overcome this dualism between "a materialist 'homme' and an idealist 'citoyen'" (141), and to abolish the antagonism between "established democratism" and "parliamentarian liberalism" (37). Socialist democracy cannot be an "idealist superstructure on the spontaneous materialism of bourgeois society" but a "material moving factor of society itself" (71). As did Marx and Engels, Lukács saw the essence, the function, and historical determination of socialist democracy in practical collective cognition of society's affairs by the people, the united producers and citizens on the basis of social ownership of the means of production. Democracy in socialism has to develop into the mechanism with which man tries "to realize his socialization in day-to-day life as well as in important matters of state, in collective cooperation with his class comrades in a material-realistic way" (120). Lenin saw clearly that collectivization of the means of production would inevitably lead to a new period of human social activity, the conscious awareness of social activities with regard to the economic whole. "The Organon of this self-education of people—seen historically, self-education to the 'real human' in the sense of Marx—is socialist democracy" (62).

Third: Lukács had no illusions about the complexity of social and political conditions under which the question of socialist democracy was being posed in the late sixties. "Revision of the Stalin era" had become a contemporary task (1985, 114). He wrote that socialism was in an "unexplored interval" (169), and it would

need a “transition period” to “restore real Marxism” (113). At the same time, he understood that with the theses, presented here in draft form, he could only put up for discussion the general theoretical prerequisites of socialist understanding of democracy, that it would take wide-ranging research and experience to attempt a promising practical or new beginning. Last but not least, one had to consider the risk of external factors of such a deep-reaching socialist rebuilding. He warned of the possibility of something “spectacular, even a ‘Happening’ like a sudden radical-revolutionary ‘overthrow,’ which is what a good portion of youth and left intelligentsia deeply desire today” (179).

For all these reasons, he was firmly convinced that a “democratization movement in a socialist sense” could not develop spontaneously. Rather, one should talk about an activity “with the Communist party as its naturally moving and guiding force” (1985, 170).

Fourth: It would be a mistake to deduce that Lukács’s criticisms were not radical enough because of his determination to practice socialist criticism of socialism. Radicalism for Lukács was not a question of “strong language,” although he was not shy about making sharp judgments: he spoke about “destruction of socialist democracy” in the Stalin era (1985, 100), and about the fact that, regardless of all disagreements among Lenin’s successors “on all sides in the same way . . . nobody kept alive Lenin’s passionate searching for real guarantees for a socialist development through deepening and strengthening of the beginnings of socialist democracy” (81).

The determining factor is that Lukács names what were for him the fundamental objective and subjective causes of these aberrations. If one wants to throw light on the leading principles of this fateful historical era in the development of socialism, in order to “decide on the proper reforms to straighten the bent twig, to heal the diseased,” then one has “to begin at the beginning,” with the understanding that the Russian revolution was not a “classical” embodiment of Marx’s vision of the world historical transition (1985, 56). According to Lukács, Lenin was aware of this and was wrestling with the necessary consequences. After Lenin, Lukács

believed that politics had become more and more determined by mostly tactical moves and countermoves. Lukács saw Stalin's cardinal mistakes in giving tactics priority over strategy and theory. The fundamental problem of socialist politics and theory in the USSR, precisely the problem of a "nonclassical origin," had disappeared from discussion (89). No serious in-depth economic and social-historical analysis of this socialism occurred until recently (55).

Lukács did not mince words in his criticism of the development of theory. He talks about a distortion of the whole of Marx's method (1985, 166). Lenin had preserved the continuity with Marx in fundamental theoretical positions, but Stalin conducted a radical break with both (76, 79). For this reason, a renaissance of Marxism is inevitable, but is not to be expected in the near future.

It is beyond the scope of this essay to demonstrate how Lukács reconstructed in detail the disastrous theoretical and practical consequences of this fundamentally wrong orientation.

Fifth: Lukács's criticism must also be considered socialist in the sense that it includes acknowledgment of important results and accomplishments of the criticized period, and not in the empirical-eclectic sense of the contemporary fashionable statement that besides deformations and aberrations there were positive sides to the system, but in spite of, not because of, its fundamental principles. As emphasized above, Lukács leaves no doubt that the economic reductionism (the "original accumulation" of socialism) that was typical of the Stalin era has prevented the development of socialist democracy (1985, 132, 146). But at the same time, one has to state that during this period most important results were achieved in one "decisive, undeniable question of development of socialism": the Soviet Union was no longer an economically backward country, which it was without a doubt at the beginning of the period. This created, on one hand, the economic basis for compensation for the disadvantages of the "nonclassical" origin of this socialism. On the other hand, without this basis the Soviet Union would not have been able to play its role in saving and preserving civilization, the prevention of Europe becoming

a Hitler *Reich*, and the breaking of the nuclear monopoly of the United States (78, 122, 146).

For professed Marxists, rereading Lukács is especially rewarding not only because he urged and prophesied a renaissance of Marxism. In addition, especially in his later works, he offers productive approaches to problems that again and again have presented difficulties for Marxist thought and socialist practice.

For example, Engels pointed out in the 1890s that the encompassing theoretical regard of the historical effectiveness of ideological spheres has often been neglected in favor of the emphasis on its deduction from the fundamental economic factors in Marx's works. In the historical process, cause and effect should not be understood as rigidly opposite poles; one cannot overlook their interaction and the role of ideas. Although in philosophical circles in the socialist countries this was often mentioned, prominent self-criticism and related remarks were taken as proof that correction was made. It was often said that "regardless" of the primacy of material conditions and the derived, secondary character of consciousness, one could not underestimate the role of ideas in society and history. This was often combined with reference to Lenin's statement that consciousness does not only reflect but also "creates" the objective world (1972, 212). I am, of course, simplifying.

Lukács takes a different path.⁴ He is looking for a fundamental alternative to the dualism of thinking and being and recommends a change of perspective. The cardinal problem is not the dependence of consciousness on being, or its (relative) independence, but the clarification of its determining function in the existence and movement of social being. He sees the uncovering of the connection and differences between the three modes of being (inorganic nature, organic nature, and human society) as the main task of his *Ontology of Social Being* [*Ontologie des gesellschaftlichen Seins*] (1984a, 8, 26). Especially from this perspective the indispensability of the thinking processes becomes understandable, as providing goals for work (societal practice) in the process of the development of social being (300).⁵ "A metaphysical contradiction between social being and social consciousness is exactly opposite

to Marx's ontology, where every social being is inseparable from conscious acts (with different settings)" (1984a, 675).⁶

Lukács understands the importance of the question of the theory of cognition in the priority of thinking or being. He demonstrates its scientific productivity in his works as convincingly as the many methodical consequences connected with this fundamental question of philosophy. For example, in *Ontology* he thoroughly discusses the problem of ideology. Ideology should not be understood "(cognitively) as 'false consciousness,' but (according to Marx) as means to create awareness and to fight out the conflicts created by economic development" (291). This does not prevent him from thoroughly exploring in the same work the (cognitive) question of truth or falsehood of specific ideological beliefs and their evaluation under this aspect. The main factor is that he manages, through differentiation and combination of gnoseological and ontological perspectives to do justice to the role of ideas in society and history, without slighting the derivative and reflective character of ideas.

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Berlin

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NOTES

1. Dietrich Schiller's cultural-historical research serves as exception and encouraging example. His findings have been published in numerous, although unfortunately little-known, issues of *Hefte zur DDR-Geschichte*, edited by Herbert Mayer, Helmut Meier, Detlef Nakath, and Peter Welker.

2. Cf. Lichtheim 1971, 10; Dannemann 1997, 21; Wilharm 1990, 192, 214.

3. "Blum thesis" refers to Lukács's proposal in 1928 that the Communist Party unite with other parties in a struggle against the Horthy regime.

4. I have dealt with this in more detail elsewhere. See Hahn 2001, 112ff.

5. See also Lukács 1984b, 269.

6. My agreement with those considerations contains the correction of previous opinions of mine.

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**Opening Speech at the International
Conference, “The Work of Karl Marx and
the Challenges of the Twenty-First Century,”
Havana, 3 May 2006**

Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada

Let us remember that he said that it was not enough that the idea clamored to be made reality, but that it was also necessary that reality shout out to be made into idea.

—Franz Mehring

I will not attempt to delineate here the ample and rich intellectual production of Karl Marx, his deep analysis of capitalism or the principal events of his era, nor will I touch upon his exemplary life as a social fighter and revolutionary leader. I know that these themes are familiar to you all.

I propose, if you allow me, to separate Marx from Marxism. With that I allude to the necessity of thinking of Marx as Marx, rather than any of the versions of Marxism, to imagine him declaring the challenges of the twenty-first century, separating what is essential in his work from what others made of his work. Instead of embarking on the endless succession of reviews of his thinking that goes along with those who have claimed him as their own, as well as with those who have tried unsuccessfully to bury him, it is necessary to rescue his fundamental legacy, that which makes

him transcend his era to be with us here and now in the struggle for human emancipation.

I take as a starting point the warning, not always heeded, of Rosa Luxemburg:

The work of Marx, *Capital*, like all his ideology, is not gospel in which we are given Revealed Truth, set in stone and eternal, but an endless flow of suggestions to keep working on with intelligence, in order to continue researching and struggling for truth.

Besides any other consideration, his work may be taken as a source of inspiration and guide by those who wish, as did Marx, not only to explain the world but, more than anything, to transform it, fighting until achieving socialism.

We are not trying to find in his texts data that may seem useful to the analysis of contemporary reality, of capitalism as it is today, something that he did not try to do nor would have been able to propose doing.

Our obligation is to arm ourselves with all of his ideology and from that build a theory and practice that correspond with that reality and help to transform it.

There is probably no higher or more urgent priority for socialists than this: to define a strategic conception and precisely delineate the tactics and methods of struggle adequate for confronting the capitalism that exists now. The theoretical tools at our disposal need to be sharpened for their efficient employment in this era that presents new challenges for the revolutionary movement.

These notes have no other aim than to contribute to the discussion of that crucial theme and obviously lack any pretension of exhausting it. We should bear in mind Rosa Luxemburg's statement about Marx's great unfinished work:

Incomplete as they are, these two volumes enclose values infinitely more precious than any definitive and perfect truth, the spur for the labor of thought and that critical analysis and judgment of ideas, which is what is most genuine in the theory that Karl Marx has left to us.

Another quite indispensable observation: The necessity of elaborating a revolutionary theory that brings victory in the confrontation with what has been called “neoliberal globalization” has absolutely nothing to do with a supposed liquidation of Marxism, and much less with the imaginary disappearance of class struggle, which some intended to convert into immovable dogmas in rushed texts that inundated the planet at the beginning of the last decade of the twentieth century.

The collapse of the USSR and the bankruptcy of so-called “real socialism” gave way to a triumphalist operation skillfully launched by the main centers of imperialism that, nevertheless, could hardly hide their essentially defensive character with its apparently total and definitive victory. Capitalism, in reality, has entered a new phase that could be terminal, in which its contradictions and limitations are manifested with a frank crudeness, and in which arise new, unsuspected possibilities for revolutionary action.

That paradox may perhaps explain the short duration of triumphalism on the academic level. Few today repeat that nonsense about the “end of history.” Not even Fukuyama does it; he is more busy these days criticizing the failure of the policies of Bush, which are, nevertheless, much due to his own laborious and wordy work. The present crisis within the U.S. neoconservative movement suggests quite a few questions about whether they were really the winners of the Cold War.

Self-critical reflection is called for on our side as well.

We should admit our own errors, especially those that served as fertile ground for the bourgeois manipulation of the destruction of the Soviet model. This is not the time for profound analysis of the failure of an experience that now belongs to historians. But it is inevitable that we underline here something that led to the defeat, and to its advantageous use by the enemy.

That project—independently of Lenin and of the creative spirit that animated the first years of the Bolshevik revolution—reduced Marxism to a determinist and mechanist school of thought, transformed research into dogma, thought into propaganda, to the point of confining it to a condition of terminal hardening of the arteries.

It constructed a simplified “science” thought to demonstrate that socialism would inevitably come about by itself as an unavoidable consequence of a predetermined history and that socialism would continue its march, also incontestable, according to laws and rules codified in a strange ritual. Socialism, therefore, was inevitable and invincible; with it one would truly arrive at the end of history. Not any socialism, but that one in particular, that which, with admirable struggle, Lenin and the Bolsheviks tried to achieve, whose enormous meaning no one will be able to tear out of the memory of the proletariat but which was a specific project—that is to say, a human work, with virtues and defects, glories and shadows, a result of immense sacrifice of a concrete people in circumstances and conditions likewise concrete—and not the outcome of a predestined and universal idea.

The conversion of the Soviet experience into a paradigm for those who in other places fought their own anticapitalist battles, and the imperative obligation of defending it from its inflamed and powerful enemies, led to the subordination of a great part of the revolutionary movement to the policies and interests of the USSR, which did not always correspond to those of other peoples. The Cold War and the division of the world into two blocs of antagonistic states threatening each other with mutual nuclear annihilation reduced to a minimum the capacity for critical thought and reinforced dogmatism.

In honor of the truth, one must render homage to the numberless men and women who sacrificed their lives, the greater part in total anonymity, and died heroically in any corner of the planet defending the land of the Soviets, its policies and its application in its own native soil, as wrong as it may have been in more than a few cases. For them, respect and admiration. But what is being considered now is recognizing the very harmful consequences of that tendency.

The tendency to “tail” blindly penetrated many organizations and individuals thoroughly, and they could not react rationally when the system that supported their faith collapsed. They had lived convinced that they were part of an unbeatable force, the owners and administrators of truths scientifically demonstrated,

and they marched in an enthusiastic procession in which, curiously, the founder did not march, having declared, with all naturalness, "I am not a Marxist."

The myth destroyed, old dogmatists were incapable of appreciating the new possibilities in the revolutionary movement, the spaces heretofore nonexistent that it was necessary to explore with audacity and creativity. There were those who, in unsurpassed acrobatics, joined the "conquerors," converting treason into their new religion.

But there is a growing number of those who do not conform, who are unsatisfied and rebel. All the rhetoric about U.S. hegemony falls to pieces with its bogging down in Iraq, the undeniable contradictions and limitations of its economy, the awakening of masses that were supposed to be asleep there, and the corruption and moral fissure that undermine its political system.

Their associates in Europe are in the same boat. Accustomed as well to the "bloc" discipline and "tailism," they do not arrive at the knowledge of the depth of the insurmountable crisis of what had been, but no longer is, an omnipotent boss.

In Latin America and in other parts of the Third World, meanwhile, radical processes are affirmed and plans are put forth that seek to eliminate, or at least reduce, imperialist domination.

For the first time, anticapitalist malaise is manifested, everywhere simultaneously, in advanced countries and in those left behind, and is not limited to the proletariat and other exploited sectors. This is not only expressed today in the struggles that we may call "classic"—between exploited classes and nations and exploiters—but, at times with more vigor, in additional groups, those that demand the preservation of the environment, or work for the rights of women and discriminated people, and those excluded because of gender, ethnicity, or religion.

A diverse group, multicolored, in which there is no shortage of contradictions and paradoxes grows in front of the dominant system. It is not yet the rainbow that announces the end of the storm. Spontaneity characterizes it; it needs articulation and coherence that need to be stimulated without sectarianism, without being carried away with wildness. The great challenge of revolutionaries, of

communists, is to define our part, the place that we should occupy in this battle. For that we need a theory.

In that sense, one must return to the well-known but forgotten definition by Lenin: "A correct revolutionary theory is only formed in a definitive manner in close connection with practical experience in a movement that is truly mass and truly revolutionary."

That theory, on a world scale, does not in fact exist to serve as a guide in the struggle to substitute the present order and transform it in the direction toward socialism. That theory has to be formed, and its definitive formation has to take place in constant interrelation with practice, in a process in which both form an inseparable whole. But we are not speaking of just any practice, but that of a movement that is both "truly mass and truly revolutionary."

When can a movement be defined as truly a mass movement and when does it acquire the quality of being truly revolutionary? The answers will not be found in a research laboratory, nor will they erupt from academic debate. Revolutionaries themselves will have to create them, men and women of flesh and blood, acting from the masses, building their movement and trying to make it ever more revolutionary. The entire life of the genial Bolshevik leader can be described in that commitment. A persistent legend attributes to the author of *Capital* the saying "Man thinks as he lives," which more than a few militants still repeat, without warning of the mistake nor of its paralyzing effects. The relation between man and his surroundings is of decisive importance for ethics and politics and in order to understand the Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach. To transform the world, the key is in the Third Thesis. Let us remember the statements of Marx:

The materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men who change circumstances and that the educator must himself be educated. Hence, this doctrine is bound to divide society in two parts, one of which is superior to society (in Robert Owen, for example).

The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity can be conceived and rationally understood only as revolutionizing practice.

In the Second Declaration of Havana, Cubans proclaimed that “the duty of every revolutionary is to make revolution.” To make it means to create a new world in spite of the obstacles and limitations that circumstances impose, in a ceaseless battle in which both man and reality will go on transforming each other reciprocally.

A socialist form of society will inevitably emerge from an equally inevitable decomposition of capitalist society

—Joseph A. Schumpeter

The prediction that I just cited has been the object of implacable denunciation on the part of bourgeois thinkers. In 1942, it was difficult to see the fall of capitalism as something inevitable. Its author, nevertheless, did not cease believing in it until the end.

Eight years afterward, just before dying, he said: “Marx was wrong in his diagnosis of how capitalist society would fall; but he was not wrong in the prediction that finally it would fall.”

In 1950, U.S. capitalism reached the zenith of its hegemony. It was the only nuclear power, it had not suffered the devastation that World War II had wreaked on the other developed countries; it dominated Western Europe and Latin America economically and politically; it possessed a superiority in science and technology.

At the middle of the last century, the world was quite different from what it is today. By a route that they probably did not foresee, we are now nearer the fulfillment of the prophecy in which, paradoxically, both the author of *Capital* and his tenacious Austro-North American critic coincided.

The protagonist has changed—the subject of history, man. The world population has grown in an exponential manner since the days of the publication of the *Communist Manifesto* and it continues doing so. Man traveled through tens of thousands of years to arrive at the first billion. It took a century to triple twice that figure. Each twenty-five years adds to that figure a quantity similar to that representing the whole planet when Karl Marx was

born. At a similar rhythm, the natural resources of the earth are being exhausted and animal and vegetable species are being annihilated forever. Man is the only being that has dedicated himself with so much fury and efficiency to the destruction of life.

Irreversible climate changes, forests transformed into deserts, poisoned waters, unbreathable air, irremediably degraded soils, astounding conglomerations of human beings in uninhabitable and continually growing urban clogs are distressing worries that compose a reality not known before.

Beyond ideologies, people continue to discover that which is obvious. In 1992, at the Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro, governments and civil society reached agreement that in order to save the earth it was necessary “to change the patterns of production and of consumption,” words subscribed to by many, including Bush Senior. They were words, certainly. But they imply explicit recognition, although in the text of a document, of the necessity of the radical transformation of the relations between men and between them and nature.

The subject, furthermore, is inevitably in motion. Population grows exponentially, but it does not do so equally in all parts of the world.

In the so-called developed countries, the population is frozen and even tends to shrink. In the rest, in that part of the world that was baptized as the Third, there are more people, ever many more—in spite of early death, misery, hunger—and also those who, in an unstoppable spiral, are displaced toward the enclaves of opulence.

The Third World penetrates the First. The latter needs the former and at the same time rejects it. In Europe and North America appears an undesirable protagonist, a mute guest that demands its rights. While here we carry out this important collective reflection animated by the example of a truly creative and humanist thinker and try to find the paths toward a better world, the U.S. Congress continues discussing what to do with those who number at least eleven million people—that is, the Cuban population—and the so-called undocumented, searching for formulas that will allow them to continue to be exploited while access to that society is closed.

The migratory phenomenon will be maintained with its present characteristics, and will grow in size along with capitalism, and expand through the whole world. Capitalism cannot stop it, just as it is neither capable of abandoning those characteristics, or much less transform itself into another thing.

The Central Intelligence Agency of the United States has predicted that, as a consequence of that phenomenon, deep changes will very soon be produced in the cultures of several European countries. The struggle for the rights of immigrants and against discrimination expressed in public demonstrations that mobilized millions of people and in the historic May Day protest—a date that never before had been expressed in this way in the United States—brings to the forefront a political force that now cannot be easily ignored.

The presence of millions of people discriminated against and lacking civil and political rights raises an essential question that goes to the very roots of the political system that the West has attempted to set as an obligatory model for all. There is an increasingly growing number of those who work hard in the West, pay their taxes, die in its wars, but cannot vote or be elected. In today's Rome, the participation of the citizens is reduced, while the mass of those excluded is constantly growing, the modern "barbarians." In this very building, recently, Professor Robert Dahl—prominent apologist for the archetypical capitalist—recognized in such marginalization the principal failing of contemporary liberal democracy.

The end of that exclusion, the struggle for democracy, specifically including the democratization of Western societies, should be a priority for those who wish to transform the world. This is yet more urgent if we perceive the other face of the migratory phenomenon that grows together with it, in parallel—racial hatred or xenophobia, which feeds fascist tendencies today present in an obvious manner in those societies.

The migration problem thus reflects an aspect of capitalism today that it is also worth reflecting on. While the emigrants are humiliated and super-exploited in the countries where they end up, they are used there also as instruments for the oppression of

the local workers. Being used as the international reserve army, stripped of rights, and until now not organized, they serve to lower wages, are forced to accept conditions that, as Bush the lesser likes to say, U.S. workers do not accept.

To free the immigrants from their exploitation becomes, therefore, essential for the emancipation of the workers in the developed countries. To forge a union between both exploited sectors in an area that has had advances, although insufficient, the importance of which cannot be underestimated, is today a task that cannot be postponed. To rescue the role of the labor union, true bulwark of civil society, and to guarantee the rights of all workers, without exceptions, to organize are indispensable as a response to a capitalism that ever more openly casts off its "liberal" mask and demonstrates the perverse face of tyranny.

Fascism must be stopped. It is necessary to prevent it from being able to gather its own victims into a senseless opposition. Never again should a Nixon be able to mobilize construction workers against the youth who, in the seventies of the last century, rebelled against the war in Vietnam. It is possible to unite youth and workers. We saw them united, in Seattle, both opposing neoliberal globalization.

One must help them to converge, and it is possible to propose this to them, and it is a crucial aspect of the world today and in the struggle to change it.

The poor try to emigrate to the rich world to escape poverty. The rich, meanwhile, try to place their capital in the poor countries in order to increase their profits with the misery of others, thus inevitably worsening the conditions of work and of life for workers in the developed countries. Few in the United States and Europe would identify themselves as members of a worker aristocracy, beneficiary of the dropping of crumbs coming from the colonies. Today they are seen as those defeated by a system that, among other things, depends ever more on "outsourcing" and the *maquila* and that imposes everywhere the dogma of the omnipotent market and "free trade."

To forge convergence, later on to achieve unity between the exploited people of the First and Third World, is now not only

possible but necessary. But it is not enough to work for unity among all the proletariat of the world, of the First and Third World, of the South and of the North. Antifascist unity is essential for democracy, peace, and life. To fight to create new models, to forge alliances where possible, or meanwhile promote points or moments of coincidence between the diverse forces that today, for the most varied motives, are out of step with the world as it is, should constitute the principal guide for revolutionaries.

To struggle so that the antiwar and antiglobalization movements flow into the same great stream, and so that all those discriminated against and all the marginalized are included, is the main duty of revolutionaries today. It is the way to create a better world. It is the road to take in advancing toward socialism. To achieve socialism in this century there must be “heroic creation,” a creation that is authentic and independent—therefore diverse and unique.

A CubaNews translation by Joe Bryak

Edited by Walter Lippmann

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MARXIST FORUM

In the struggle against imperialist oppression, Marxist movements often confront the necessity of forming alliances or establishing relations of solidarity with forces with which they otherwise have major political or ideological differences. The Israel-Palestine-Lebanon crisis and the war in Iraq provide examples of fields in which these strategies are being worked out. The resulting complexities are currently the focus of attention of Marxist political movements worldwide.

In this section of the Marxist Forum, *Nature, Society, and Thought* reprints two articles with firsthand analysis of these two current situations.

Lebanon and Gaza: The Myth of Israel's Self-Defence

Prabir Purkayastha

Israeli and Western media have built the myth that the attacks on Gaza and later on the Lebanese population are a response by Israel to their one soldier being kidnapped by the Hamas on June 25 and two others being kidnapped by Hezbollah on July 12. The occupation of Palestinian land and Arab lands, the ethnic cleansing of Arab population from Israel, an earlier 18-year long occupation of Southern Lebanon, imposition of an apartheid state in Israel and occupied territories, targeted assassinations of resistance leaders, the shelling of Gaza for a month before the capturing of the Israeli soldiers, continued presence in Israeli prisons of over 9,000 Palestinians and some Lebanese, all of these are apparently not the cause of the current conflict. In this media war, only two dates are important—the date the Hamas captured an Israeli soldier, sitting in his tank and shelling Gaza and the other in which Hezbollah captured two Israeli soldiers in a bid for a prisoner swap. Once the two dates and incidents are established as the proximate cause, then at best, the argument that Kofi Annan has also echoed that though Israel has a right to self-defence, there is “disproportionate force” used.

In this account of the war, the Israeli attacks on Lebanon is always coupled with Hezbollah using rockets against the Israeli civilian population: Israel's savage aerial bombardment, which has

reduced Lebanese infrastructure to rubble and killed about 1000 civilians, being somehow equal to these slightly improved Second World War vintage Hezbollah rocket attacks that has killed about 30 Israeli civilians. The myth-making is so pervasive that every time either BBC or CNN talk about Israel's barbaric attacks on the civilian population in the almost forgotten war in Gaza and now the more visible one in Lebanon, it also repeats all these myths.

Manufactured myths

Not only is the sequence a manufactured one, so is the language. Palestinians and Lebanese are always arrested or captured; Israeli soldiers are always kidnapped or abducted. One can go on. The United Nations Resolution 1559 in which Hezbollah was supposed to have been disarmed is mentioned time and again. No mention of the dozens of resolutions that Israel has violated including the resolution that mandated that Israel vacate its occupation of the West Bank, continued now for almost 40 years. In this calculus of violence and action-retaliation, the Western media and governments have always echoed the Israeli line: Israel only retaliates; it is always "Arab terrorists" that attack. The story—in this version of history—is one of a besieged Jewish state, never one of most powerful military machine in the West Asia, armed with more than 300 nuclear bombs.

Before we examine the current war in Lebanon, let us look at the Gaza kidnapping of an Israeli soldier that led to bridges and its only power station being bombed. For a month before this incident, Israeli had been shelling Gaza, killing more than 30 civilians. One day before the attack on its soldiers, the alleged trigger, Israeli commandos kidnapped two Hamas activists from Gaza. Why the Hamas attack on its soldiers and kidnapping of one soldier should not be seen as retaliation for Israeli kidnapping is what the Western media needs to answer. The Hamas did not attack a soft civilian target: they attacked a tank, which is a part of a force that has been shelling Gaza for a month, one of these shells being held responsible for the death of a family of seven, of which three were little children. The Israeli response to all this was not only flattening large parts of Gaza but also abducting 60 of leading

Hamas representatives in the Palestinian Authority, including 20 ministers and members of parliament.

There is also the other myth—that Israel withdrew from Gaza and has now been forced back due to this “kidnapping” of its soldier. Israel controls all the entry and exit points for Gaza, has not allowed a seaport to be built there and also controls its air space. This—in international law and in view of United Nations—is occupation and Israel is still the occupying power in Gaza. Israel has used this control to starve the Gaza population of even food and medicines, let alone allow other goods.

The wall Israel is building on the occupied West Bank, though declared illegal by the International Court of Justice, not only takes away some of the best lands of the West Bank but also encloses most of the aquifers there and therefore its water. Israel remains and plans to remain on West Bank as occupying power, with the Palestinian territories cut up into little pockets, with roads that only its Jewish settlers can travel, its best land and almost all its water under control of the Jewish settlers and Israel. It is this apartheid vision of Palestinian Bantustans it is peddling as unilateral withdrawal and “peace.” A Palestinian “state” in which Palestinians will have to seek the permission of Israeli army every time it crosses from one little enclave to another, with no control over its own resources and under the gun of the Israeli state. All this, in the name of its security, dutifully echoed by the Western media and governments. And if the Palestinians reject this vision of the “two state” solution, then Israel claims it has no partners for peace!

The Lebanon war is similarly clouded with Israeli myth making and complicity by Western media and governments. Hezbollah is painted as a fundamentalist force, part of an international terror network that is incompatible with “Western” values. The reality is that Hezbollah grew out of Israel’s 18-year long occupation of South Lebanon, initially as a loose grouping with an Islamic nationalist ideology and has now crystallised as a political party with both civil and military wings. It has currently 14 members in the 128-member Lebanese parliament and two ministers in the government. It is no longer a simple resistance group, which is

what it started as. It is also a reflection of the patchwork Lebanese nation state that emerged after the Second World War.

Lebanon was sliced off the Syrian western seaboard, with a strong Maronite Christian presence and built as a “confessional” state. This means each religious group was given a constitutional position and a set of powers “The original allocations, determined in 1943 in an unwritten National Pact between Maronite Christians and Sunni Muslims at the end of the French mandate, gave the most power to a Maronite Christian president and a Sunni Muslim prime minister, with the relatively powerless position of speaker of parliament going to a Shi’i Muslim” (Lara Deeb; July 31, 2006—Middle East Report Online, <http://www.merip.org/mero/mero073106.html>). These arrangements broke down during the late 70s and 80s leading to a civil war. “The Lebanese civil war came to an end in 1990, after the signing of the Ta’if Agreement in 1989. The Ta’if Agreement reasserted a variation of the National Pact, allotting greater power to the prime minister and increasing the number of Muslim seats in government. Yet while the actual numerical strength of confessional groups in Lebanon is sharply contested, conservative estimates note that by the end of the civil war, Shi’i Muslims made up at least one third of the population, making them the largest confessional community. Other estimates are much higher” (Lara Deeb).

Lebanese resistance

The Israeli 1978 invasion of Lebanon is not the subject here. But it is important to note that Hezbollah was able to inflict high casualties during its guerrilla war against Israeli occupation forces, finally forcing them to withdraw from Lebanon. The issue here is not whether we agree with Hezbollah’s politics or its vision of an Islamic state. The key issue for us is in West Asia, where Israel is in occupation of Arab and Palestinian lands, how do we look at various forms of resistance? And in this light, Hezbollah is very much a part of the Lebanese national resistance against Israeli occupation and aggression.

The current invasion of Lebanon is the third one Israel has conducted. The first one was in 1978, when it invaded Southern Lebanon, killing thousands and displacing 250,000 people. In 1982, Israeli

forces invaded Lebanon again seeking to install Bashir Gemayel as its president and throwing out PLO. After Bashir Gemayel was killed, the Israeli army in collaboration with the Phalangist militia of Gemayel, massacred thousands in the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila. It is widely accepted that these massacres had the direct involvement of Ariel Sharon, the then Israeli defence minister. After this, Israel withdrew to Southern Lebanon, with the same arguments it is doing now: it needs a buffer zone for its security and continued its occupation for 18 long years. It is only after its casualties grew to more than 2,000 that it withdrew from Lebanon.

In 1996, in an attempt to crush the Lebanese resistance, Israel launched a similar 16-day blitz on Lebanon. This ended with the shelling of the UN compound in Kana and the death there of 106 civilians. An informal agreement—called the April Agreement—was drawn up in which both Israel and Hezbollah agreed not to attack civilian targets. This is important as it has been pointed out that Hezbollah's attack on an Israeli outpost, whatever its merits or demerits may be, does not violate this April agreement. Israel's so-called response in which it has attacked the infrastructure and civilian population of Lebanon does. As a matter of record, the UN monitoring body in Southern Lebanon has found Israel to be 10 times more guilty of violations across the border (or Blue Line in the current war terminology) than Hezbollah.

Hezbollah has fired a few Katyushas in the last six years and has had a few border skirmishes. Before the current war, the total casualty count from this has been one death. The large-scale rocket barrage on Northern Israel started only after Israel's aerial bombardment of Lebanon. Before this, it had largely respected the April agreement and played within these rules of the game. Israel has also fired and shelled across the border on numerous occasions. Therefore, to argue that Israel needs a special security zone free from Hezbollah while it has been the one that has attacked Lebanon thrice only shows the skewed nature of the current media discourse.

Rogue state

Israel has propounded the right to kill anyone and abduct anybody it considers a "terrorist." In 1992, it assassinated Hassan

Nasurallah's predecessor, Sayyid 'Abbas al-Musawi, along with his wife and 5-year-old son. In the view of the Israeli state and the Western media, any resistance to Israel is "terrorist" and therefore is a legitimate target; however it does not recognise any of its own actions, including the massacres in Shatila and Sabra earlier, and more recently in Jenin, as criminal. By definition, others are terrorists if they use violence; and by definition Israel's actions are always self-defence.

The question here is not to establish how Israel is a criminal state. The real question is why is such a state not considered a rogue or a pariah state? How can Israeli citizens support this continued occupation of Palestinian lands, rally behind what the whole world sees as "collective punishment" of civilian population? It is the power of myths that the Israeli state and the Western media have built that must be examined to understand this phenomenon.

For the first time Israel's media campaign has been less successful. Partly because it is no longer able to control the copies and images that reporters are filing from Lebanon. In the occupied territories, Israel controls the news flow completely: censorship laws allow only what it permits to flow to the rest of the world. And the western media is complicit with the Israeli state in this cover up of truth. The other factor is the Internet: it is no longer possible to hide the news. It appears all over the net, with blogs and other channels providing what the main news channels do not. And of course, there is Arab media, with Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya less likely to accept Israel's diktats.

Post ceasefire, Israel has declared a victory, as it believes it will get a UN military force to do what it could militarily not achieve. Whether any foreign force will do as Israel wants it to do is extremely doubtful. What is without doubt is that Israel failed in its military objectives. From the first day, its clear objective was the destruction of Hezbollah. That on the last day of the conflict, Hezbollah could fire more than 200 rockets shows that its immediate target of destruction of Hezbollah (or degrading Hezbollah's military strength severely) has failed. The second, though unannounced objective was that by inflicting collective punishment on the Lebanese population, it will sharpen the existing fault lines

in Lebanese society and isolate the Hezbollah. This has not only failed, but in the Lebanese mind, it is Israel who is identified as the enemy and Hezbollah as a part of the Lebanese nation resisting Israeli aggression. However much the Israeli government might try and claim victory, the fact remains that even in the Israeli media there are very few claims of victory.

Hezbollah's victory

In Hezbollah's and in most Arab views, by its resistance and retaining its ability to fight, Hezbollah has won. For Hezbollah, winning was never the issue; not being defeated was. This has come at a very heavy cost indeed. But nevertheless, the failure of the Israeli campaign to break the Hezbollah's resistance also means shattering the myth of the invincible Israeli army. The repercussions of this are going to be very deep in West Asia. For the first time, Israel expects now diplomacy to give it what its military could not: peace and security for northern Israel.

The tragedy for the world is that the US still continues its equation of all Islamic resistance in West Asia as equivalent to Al Qaeda. In this view, the Saudi zealots it armed in Afghanistan are no different than the resistance fighters in Gaza and Lebanon. It not only has been compliant to Israel's violation of international law in its continued occupation of Arab lands, it is now known to have been complicit in Israel's assault on Lebanon. Seymour Hersh in the *New Yorker* has ripped off the cover of Hezbollah's provocation. This was a campaign planned well in advance with full knowledge of the US. Ultimately, The US provided the international cover including finally bailing Israel out, when it became clear that more time and troops would still not achieve Israel's military objective. That this invasion has been planned long in advance was well known amongst the critics of the US. That it is now being echoed by US journalists of the stature of Hersh tells its own story. It is no longer possible to pretend that this costly war on Lebanon was fought for two soldiers, who still continue to be held by Hezbollah. The target was military destruction of Hezbollah, and as Hersh has pointed out, preparation of a similar campaign against Iran. The only problem is that if Israel, with its powerful

military could not achieve its objective against a country with only 4 million people and against an irregular army, what chance does US have in taking on a country with the strategic depth of Iran and a population of 70 million? But to a Bush administration, all this may still carry no conviction. The world will have to wait and see what lesson the neo-cons have learnt in Washington.

Israel has already given notice that it regards this war to be unfinished. That means it plans for a fourth invasion of Lebanon or has no plans to leave at all. It might still wait for an US attack on Iran to hit again at Hezbollah. The fragile ceasefire is at best a stepping-stone for other diplomatic initiatives. But whether this will happen or Israel and the US will try for the same policies that have failed in Iraq and now Lebanon remains to be seen. There is no cure for stupidity or insanity. Unfortunately for the world, the Bush policies show signs of both.

Reprinted from *People's Democracy* (New Delhi), 20 August 2006.

Iraqi Communist Party Assessment of the War: Interview with Salam Ali*

**John Foster, International Secretary,
Communist Party of Britain**

Q: The Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) Central Committee met recently for the first time since the parliamentary elections. What were the main issues it considered?

A: Five issues were paramount. There was sharp deterioration in the security situation together with the economic crisis now gripping the country. There was the urgent issue of how to end the foreign military presence, eradicate the consequences of occupation and restore the country's sovereignty and independence. There was the continuing problem of overcoming the legacy of the ousted dictatorial regime and the struggle over the character of the new Iraqi state.

Though separate, all these issues are intimately interlocked in the political situation in Iraq today and require careful and specific handling.

Q: How serious is the security situation ?

A: For ordinary people this is the main source of concern. Civilian deaths have sharply increased, including the killing in cold blood of many workers and those seeking employment. Particularly worrying is the growth in armed militias that are beginning to seize the powers of relevant bodies in the state. Many acts of assassination

and kidnapping have taken place without proper response by government. There has also been an escalation of terrorist operations against civilians, covering a bigger geographical area and selecting targets with greater accuracy with the aim of influencing the political process and intensifying sectarian polarisation. Nothing has been spared including places of worship!

Q: What does the ICP see as the solution ?

A: Our Party has always pointed out that the security issue should be tackled by adopting a multifaceted and integrated approach, including political, social and economic measures rather than resorting to direct military force alone. As part of this approach, the Iraqi government must develop its own military and security forces that are based on national unity—that is, forces which represent all Iraqis irrespective of their ideological and political affiliations, ethnic origins or religious beliefs.

Q: How bad is the economic crisis and how far has it brought mass resistance ?

A: There has been a dramatic deterioration. This is particularly so for public services and the supply of water, electricity and petrol products. Twenty per cent of the population is living in absolute poverty. Between 30 and 50 per cent of the labour force is unemployed, especially youth. Inflation has risen over 30 per cent.

There were big demonstrations across Iraq against the price increase of refined petrol products in December. There have also been demonstrations on pay by health workers and by the unemployed seeking work.

A big protest movement has been developing against the notorious Decree 8750 issued by the transitional government in August 2005. This enables the government to exercise detailed control over non-governmental organisations including trade unions. It includes the power to freeze their assets and to disband them. As an indication of the dangers to come, this month saw the arrests of striking dock workers in Basra.

The Central Committee sees this movement of protest and resistance as critical for the future and needing active support and development.

Q: How does this fit in with the Iraqi Party's opposition to occupation?

A: The foreign military presence constitutes a violation of national sovereignty and the government's capitulation to external economic pressures and the diktat of international financial institutions is one continuing facet of that violation.

The Party welcomed the Accord Conference convened in Cairo by the Arab League last November. This sought to bring together the differing political and social forces in Iraq and issued a call for a firm timetable to be set for the withdrawal of occupation forces. The Central Committee believes this represents the way forward. The ICP opposed, along with other political forces, the action last June of the transitional government, without the support of parliament, in calling on the UN to renew the mandate of the occupation force.

The Central Committee welcomes the reconvening of the Accord Conference planned for next month. It sees this as providing an avenue for the necessary compromises among Iraqi political groups required to push forward the movement for the restoration of sovereignty. The Party has already called on the government to work for the withdrawal of occupation forces from the cities and for it to create the material, political and security prerequisites for the ending of the foreign military presence.

Q: What are the internal political obstacles to the recovery of national sovereignty?

A: The biggest internal obstacle is the growth of sectarianism and sectarian conflict. This has four sources. It derives from the openly sectarian policies of the ousted dictatorship. It was consolidated by the policies of the occupiers who resorted to an ethnic categorisation of our society. It was further worsened by some political forces employing sectarian-ethnic polarisation as an alternative to political programmes in order to seize political power and secure positions in government. This was evident during the recent election campaign. Finally, terrorist forces have concentrated on exacerbating the resulting hostilities to the point of open conflict!

The attack on the holy shrine at Samarra brought large-scale intercommunal killing and forced relocation.

There remains, however, a level of popular commitment to an Iraqi national identity and the creation of an Iraq that is home to all Iraqis irrespective of ethnicity and religion. The ICP seeks to develop this commitment. It is a key to the recovery of national sovereignty.

Q: What was the approach of the ICP to the elections and the subsequent battles over the formation of a new government ?

A: The Central Committee spent some time assessing the options for the ICP in the elections: whether it should have fought independently, as part of a coalition of progressive democratic forces or within a broader democratic coalition. The decision to contest as part of a broad democratic coalition, along with other progressive forces, was taken after extensive polling of opinion at cadre level and in face of the intensification of sectarian politics. The Iraqi National List included a range of political parties, individuals and movements that were generally non-sectarian, liberal and democratic.

The elections were marked by widespread violence and malpractice. The outcome was, however, positive insofar as the level of participation was high and no single sectarian-based political group was able to dominate the new parliament. The Party from the beginning has argued for a government that incorporates all political forces and abandons the sectarian quota system for allocating government posts.

The government formed on 20 May emerged after lengthy negotiations. The idea of setting up a broadly based national unity government was eventually endorsed—though reluctantly by some forces. Initially there was an attempt to allocate posts purely along sectarian-ethnic lines and to exclude the broad democratic and liberal coalition, the National Iraqi List. This ranked fourth in the elections with 9 per cent of the vote and includes the Communist Party.

Eventually, the Iraqi National List was allocated five ministries including Justice, Communications and Human Rights. Raid Fahmi, a member of our Central Committee, became Minister

for Science and Technology. The leading government posts were still distributed on ethnic-sectarian lines to the mainly Shia Iraqi National Alliance, the Kurdistan Alliance and the mainly Sunni National Accord Front.

The Iraqi National List stated that its “participation in the government is based on its recognition of the importance of consolidating the principle of national unity and Iraq’s security, safety and stability” and called on the Prime Minister to honour previously agreed commitments. These include the need to remedy the “flagrant shortcoming in the proportion of women’s participation in ministerial posts”—only four women are ministers out of 37—and to disband the militias and integrate them within state institutions “as individuals rather than organisations.”

The newly-formed government therefore falls short of our Party’s aim for a national unity government. But its composition, which is no longer totally dominated by one single bloc, opens up the potential for greater say in the decision making process. There is a relatively better representation of the political spectrum and diversity in Iraqi society.

The ICP sees its continuing role as combating the damage caused by sectarianism and terrorism, consolidating national unity and democratic forces, strengthening the integrity of the Iraqi national security forces and preparing the way for the end of the occupation. At the same time it seeks to mobilise struggle for the restoration of basic services, for employment for the unemployed and to stop factory closures, sackings, short-time working and the erosion of living standards.

Combined with these struggles outside parliament, the ICP sees its role in parliament and the government as bringing together those forces that will advance national sovereignty, oppose externally imposed neo-liberal policies and defend the needs of working people.

The government has a four-year term and will have a significant impact on the way a new Iraqi state will emerge.

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*Salam Ali is a member of the Central Committee of the Iraqi Communist Party.

***NST* Conference/Study Tour in Vietnam, January 2006**

A conference on the theme “Consequences of the Changing World Economy for Class Relations, Ideology, and Culture,” cosponsored by *Nature, Society, and Thought* and the Ho Chi Minh National Political Academy was held in Hanoi 9–11 January 2006. The conference was embedded in a two-week study tour that included visits to Hanoi, Hue, Da Nang, and Ho Chi Minh City.

Tour itinerary provided meetings with representatives of the Vietnam General Confederation of Labor and the Vietnam Women’s Union, as well as visits to villages in rural areas, including a village inhabited by the Muong minority people. Also included was a tour of a Ford assembly plant and some smaller factories, craft centers, and historical/cultural sites. The deputy chair of the Ho Chi Minh City People’s Council met with the group during its visit to that city.

The tour participants thus had unusual opportunities to encounter many aspects of current Vietnamese life and learn about the transformation of economic, political, and cultural conditions in the country.

A description of the complexities of Vietnam’s multisector socialist-oriented economy based on an similar conference/tour held three years ago can be found in an earlier issue of the journal (vol. 15, no. 2 [2002]).

A visit to an international industrial export zone operated as a joint venture of Ho Chi Minh City and a Taiwanese firm illustrated some of this complexity. The zone is located on the Saigon River

on the periphery of Ho Chi Minh City. It contains only foreign-owned factories employing fifty thousand workers and produces goods exclusively for export. One might immediately question how such a zone could contribute to the economic development of Vietnam.

The zone does, indeed, play a significant role in the country's economy. First of all, fifty thousand workers support themselves and their families with the wages that they receive. The enterprises have to pay for the land that they lease. The workers in the zone acquire job skills that will be useful for future work elsewhere in the country. The enterprises in the zone require high-technology standards of service such as power and other utilities, communications, road and port facilities. Construction of this infrastructure is to a large extent financed by the payments that Ho Chi Minh City receives from the enterprises in the zone. This infrastructure necessarily extends somewhat beyond the geographical limits of the zone and will remain once the land is put to other purposes.

Thus even though Vietnam receives none of the products manufactured in the zone, the zone makes an important contribution to Vietnam's economic development.

A selection of papers presented at the conference is presented in this section of the journal. The papers by the Vietnamese scholars provide a valuable insight into their views of the progress and difficulties of Vietnam's path to socialism as its socialist-oriented market economy becomes integrated into the world economy.

Erwin Marquit

Globalization, Education, Work, and the Ideology of the “Self-Evident Natural Laws” of Capitalist Production

Ralph Barrett and Diane Meaghan

With the implementation of structural adjustment programs, economic restructuring, regional and bilateral trade agreements, including the North America Free Trade Agreement and the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas, rapid and profound changes have restructured Canada into a market-driven economy (Panich, 1994; Teeple 1995). Since the mid-1980s, federal and provincial governments have promoted a neoliberal development strategy that emphasizes an unrestricted market, rather than the state as regulatory of the economy and society. The integration of the Canadian state into an international market encouraged unfettered economic growth, decreased spending on social programs and deregulated state responsibilities, weakened national economic borders, and an increased foreign investment and the production of goods and services for export. By reducing the regulatory foundation and the funding framework (crucial components of a “social safety net” for health, social services, and education), both levels of government actively pursued the privatization of public services such as post-secondary education and effectively gave transnational corporations access to potentially valuable economic activity.

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Both the World Trade Organization and the World Bank treat education as they do other industries and increasingly advocate (by intellectual property rights and other means) that educational policy should be defined at the national and international levels (World Bank 1994; Jarzabkowski 2002). Downloading responsibility for services from both levels of government encouraged “private-public partnerships” to emerge in postsecondary educational institutions as a way to meet the needs within very limited budgets (Canadian Union of Public Employees 2005, 56). Globalization and market liberalization served to displace the concept of education as the societal provision of basic needs and human rights in favor of viewing education as just another commodity in the marketplace. Increasingly, educational structures were dismantled and replaced by new policies and procedures aimed at restructuring postsecondary education to follow a global trend of corporatization and to create a “market-responsive” sector. As a result, the delivery of quality educational services became more problematic, with the burden of adjustment shifted from the state to the individual in the form of increasing tuition fees and decreasing services. The literature points to the fact that a large segment of Canadian college faculty are employed part-time or have been replaced by technology, and they face higher work loads, mounting restrictions, increased stress, and reduced job satisfaction and morale (Buchbinder and Newson 1990; Fisher and Rubenson 1988; Currie and Newson 1998).

In volume one of *Capital*, Marx argues that “the advance of capitalist production develops a working class, which by education, tradition and habit looks upon the conditions of that mode of production as self-evident laws of Nature” (1996, 726). A habitual tradition that uses the language and concepts of economic markets for the purposes of defining and describing the purposes, methodologies, and course content of educational institutions has been a common practice in North American postsecondary educational institutions for several decades. Educational institutions are regarded primarily as sites for providing training in specific skills required for the occupations needed in the global marketplace. There has been a shift from knowledge, seen as inclusive of

culture and social relations, to information, with an emphasis on simply gaining access to information.

Accompanying this market rhetoric is the promotion of a “self-evident” belief in the declining market value of courses in philosophy, politics, history, literature, and languages. Students are encouraged to demand and select, especially in postsecondary institutions such as colleges and universities, vocationally relevant courses of study (such as accounting, computer, management, and business studies). Historically, both conservatives and radicals have vigorously criticized the overwhelming emphasis placed on vocational training and the subservience of educational institutions to perceived needs of the marketplace and corporate ideology. Benefits flow preferentially from such market-oriented policies that pay little attention to social, cultural, or environmental costs or their impact on educational communities and services. As a direct result of government policy intended to create an environment for international compliance that is driven by inequitable corporate-led structures, teaching and research that used to benefit the common good now benefit private interests and promote consumerism over citizenship.

Both Adam Smith (1723–1790), the alleged godfather of neoclassical economics, and Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937), a founder of the Communist Party of Italy, were for their own reasons appalled by the conditions of work in capitalist societies. Adam Smith, in *The Wealth of Nations*, written in 1776, introduced his concept of the division of labor as the key to increasing worker productivity. The traditional craft worker, according to Smith, spent too much time and effort performing a variety of simple repetitive physical motions or tasks. These tasks could be performed by anyone since they involved only ordinary manual dexterity. Accordingly, by determining the number of such motions—for example, repetitive physical motions involved in producing pins—assigning these tasks to individual specialized workers, and determining by experiment the logical sequence of tasks to maximize output, Smith helped establish the theoretical foundation for increasing profits through mass production. In practice, the resulting deskilling of work and workers increases productivity, justifies lower wages, and produces higher profits.

At the same time, Smith acknowledged that the psychological and social costs of this new division of labor are enormous and advocated publicly funded education to prevent the “drowsy stupidity” systematically produced in the industrial workplace:

In the progress of the division of labour, the employment of the far greater part of those who live by labour, that is, of the great body of the people, comes to be confined to a few very simple operations, frequently to one or two. But the understandings of the greater part of men are necessarily formed by their ordinary employments. The man, whose life is spent in performing a few simple operations, of which the effects too are, perhaps, always the same, or very nearly the same, has no occasion to exert his understanding, or to exercise his invention in finding out expedients for removing difficulties which never occur. He naturally loses, therefore, the habit of such exertion, and generally becomes as stupid and ignorant as it is possible for a human creature to become. The torpor of his mind, renders him, not only incapable of relishing or bearing a part in any rational conversation, but of conceiving any generous, noble or tender sentiment, and consequently performing any just judgment concerning many even of the ordinary duties of private life. Of the great and extensive interests of his country he is altogether incapable of judging; and unless very particular pains are taken to render him otherwise, he is equally incapable of defending his country in war.

The uniformity of his stationary life naturally corrupts the courage of his mind and makes him regard with abhorrence the irregular, uncertain and adventuresome life of a soldier. It corrupts even the activity of his body and renders him incapable of exerting his strength with vigor and perseverance in any other employment than that to which he has been bred. His dexterity at his own particular trade seems, in his manner, to be acquired at the expense of his intellect, social and martial virtues. But in every improved and civilized society this is the state into which the labouring

poor, that is, the majority of people must necessarily fall, unless government takes some pains to prevent it (Smith 1952, 340–41).

That government should take such pains was patently obvious to Smith (no neocon free marketer). It is apparent that “dumbing down” is certainly no merely contemporary phenomenon, and Smith did not endorse it. For him, publicly funded education, even for the masses, had “to do with the ideas of civic humanism and the extent to which modern ‘man’ could attain something approaching the classical concept of citizenship” (Skinner 1995, 87). Education is not simply for the dissemination of “skills, training and entrepreneurship to do business in the global economy,” and government must make funding available where “the profit motive is likely to prove inadequate” (Skinner 1995, 95).

The marketplace for Smith was not a magical solution for social problems, and more effective participation in the market was certainly not the only goal of education—especially higher education. Public works for the benefit of society, such as publicly funded education, were not to be left to the “invisible hand” that is said to direct production and consumption in the private individual quest for profit. In fact, Smith was opposed to the very institution of privately owned corporations, which allowed merchants and manufactures to dominate the economy to the detriment of society. Public works and institutions were not profitable for individual investors and were not intended to be. “The direct object of Smith’s attack was not government policy but private invested interests” that distorted public initiatives for their own gain (Lubacz 1995, 53). This may come as news to business leaders and corporate gurus who invoke the name of Adam Smith, but who refrain from reading what he actually wrote. Thus, those who argue for the supremacy of the free competitive market, those who advocate the supposedly cost-efficient privatization of public services, and those who would reduce education to vocational training and studies of entrepreneurship have made Adam Smith and *The Wealth of Nations* “part of the sales pitch” by twisting his words and warping his meaning (Lubacz 1995, 67). Karl Marx came closer to the mark

when he commented that “for preventing the complete deterioration of the great mass of the people by division of labour, A. Smith recommends education of the people by the State, but in prudently, and in homeopathic doses” (1996, 367–68). While radicals like Marx accept Smith’s analysis, they see it as limited and palliative; they do agree on the importance of formal publicly funded education (especially in the areas of the humanities and social sciences) for the development of a critical, informed, and responsible citizenry. Education, for Adam Smith, is not of economic interest but of broadly humane importance.

Antonio Gramsci argued against the reduction of education of the masses to skills training. Writing in *Avanti* in December 1916, he argued that

the proletariat needs a free school . . . not a school of slavery and mechanization. . . . Professional schools must not become incubators of little monsters, who are aridly educated for a job, without general ideas and a general culture, without spirit and with only a sharp eye and a strong hand. (Quoted in Welton 1982, 140)

Education primarily based on job skills allows the ruling class to manufacture conformity and consent among the masses. For Gramsci, any successful challenge to the power and ideology of the ruling capitalist class requires the working classes to become consciously aware of their own culture, history, and politics. This, he contends, requires knowledge of traditional culture, history, and politics and of their role in dominating the masses. The danger of fascism in Italy was its introduction of vocational training under the slogan of “child-centred progressiveness” for the working classes. This type of ahistorical, apolitical education effectively removed “the historical memory of the working class.” Even though couched in conservative values, the traditional Italian school system, through its emphasis on history, literature, and languages, encouraged disciplined study and critical analysis. “Fascists,” observed Gramsci, “found their allies in the schoolmasters who encouraged spontaneity and autodidacticism and not in those who functioned as agents of cultural transmission by requiring students to learn the ‘facts’ of history, geography or science” (Welton 1982, 149).

For Gramsci, a disciplined study of culture, history, and politics is necessary for the struggle of workers against capitalism, and schooling should be hard work requiring concentration, persistence, and self-control. The facile vocationalizing of mass education reinforces the inequalities of the social class system; in the alternative, Gramsci argued that the comprehensive education of the ruling classes should be extended to the children of the proletariat because academic work is relevant to understanding the real world of capitalist cultural, economic, and political exploitation. It is worthy of note in this regard that the Canadian Liberal provincial government is currently reorganizing “general education” in Ontario colleges, and the single area of study that is being deleted from the curriculum (as opposed to mere condensation and reduction) is critical study of “work and the economy,” arguably the most vital part of students’ nonvocational education. In its place are studies of the media and popular culture, which serve as educational filler and academic distraction from a critical analysis of the society in which the students will work and live. Similar to education under Mussolini, current student-centered educational practices are easily compatible with ruling-class cultural and ideological hegemony. Adam Smith’s informed citizen and Gramsci’s educated radical are not easily suppressed or impressed by the friction-free rhetoric of the advocates of vocationalism, entrepreneurship, and business studies directly related to the job market. On the other hand, the logic and practice of this approach seem to be firmly entrenched in postsecondary institutions in North America, especially in community colleges, junior colleges, and technical institutes.

The politically manufactured fiscal crisis in education is being used as well to create a conservative, corporatist system of postsecondary education. In order to maintain and extend access to education (despite massive increases in tuition fees), colleges and universities are being compelled to become more cost efficient, job-oriented, and committed to the corporate mentality of the “bottom line.” Corporate-college “partnerships” and significant fund-raising activities are encouraged to supplement public funds at the cost of surrendering public control. Adam Smith,

many forget, was not a professional economist but a professor of moral philosophy; his primary interest was not in producing propaganda for a rapacious economic elite, but in understanding how wealth was produced and distributed so that societies would learn not only how to produce more quantitatively but also how to distribute goods and services more equitably.

Adam Smith's commitment to the commonweal, however, has been studiously ignored by those who claim him as their intellectual patriarch. As a result, no matter what price is to be paid in social civility, "the campus," in Neimark's words, "is becoming virtually indistinguishable from the marketplace, and both universities (and colleges) and their faculties are becoming entrepreneurs." In addition, the "liberal arts are strikingly absent from this framework for public education" (1999, 24, 29). The devaluing of the humanities and social sciences as irrelevant to the careers of students is leading to the underdevelopment of critically thinking citizens who understand the role of political and economic power. It encourages only narrow vocational knowledge and "skill sets" and thus, the "drowsy stupidity" essential for corporate domination of postsecondary education.

While corporate capitalism speaks in the language of progressiveness, market relevance, and vocational education, it is a capitalist ideology of class relations as "self-evident laws" of economic and political exploitation that is being promoted. Depoliticized education in the guise of educational choice is no substitute for a painstaking and protracted education in the politics of economic exploitation. The ruling class has a vested interest in encouraging the ideology of the "self-evident natural laws" of free markets as history, economics, politics, and psychology in postsecondary educational institutions. Corporate capitalism clearly hopes that this indoctrination will produce a docile working class, especially among the graduates of colleges and universities in North America.

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Vietnam's Integration into the International Economy in the New Situation of Economic Cooperation in East Asia

Luu Dat Thuyet

Vietnam is an East Asian country that has made a large number of achievements in social and economic development during the twenty years of the policy of renovation. The environment in which this development is taking place is undergoing change, however. This change involves issues of movement toward the economic union of the area and the world. It is necessary to consider these changes in a timely way in order to adjust and amend the policy of international economic integration on our own initiative, thereby ensuring our national development.

Changes in economic relations in East Asia since the 1990s

First, after the 1997–1998 monetary financial crisis in Asia, the countries and territories in East Asia have, in general, adjusted their international economic policies to ensure their national interests and development.

Second, the Cold War terminated with the collapse of the USSR and the Eastern European socialist countries. The former international economic order headed by the two superpowers, the Soviet Union and the United States, no longer existed. A new

multipolar international economic order began to form to reflect national interests.

Third, globalization became an indispensable general trend, embracing the participation of numerous countries. Simultaneously, a tendency to establish and expand regional organizations arose. A large number of new cooperative relations among the countries within the region in East Asia have appeared.

Fourth, although there have been ups and downs, numerous East Asian countries, particularly China, have become formal members of the World Trade Organization. The Doha negotiations have had important effects on the international economic relations of East Asia in general and Vietnam in particular.

Opportunities, advantages, and challenges as well as difficulties for Vietnam

Opportunities and advantages

Vietnam has been integrated into the regional and international economies since 1991. Thus far, it has had commercial relations with 170 countries and territories, and has signed more than 60 bilateral trade agreements—its most important being with China in 1991, with the EU in 1995, and with the United States in 2000. Vietnam has established investment relations with about 70 countries and territories. Overall, Vietnam has in recent years achieved much success especially in socioeconomic development, and has a prospect of more rapid development in the coming years. These successes are shown clearly as follows:

GDP: The economy has grown rapidly at an increasing annual rate—6.98%, 7.08%, 7.34%, 7.79%, and 8.40%, respectively, in the five years from 2001 to 2005. Accordingly, it is estimated that Vietnam will maintain an average annual growth rate of 7.5–8% and will seek to exceed 8% in the following five years (from 2006 to 2010). Per capita GDP in 2010 will reach \$1,050–1,100.

Investment: Vietnam has attracted considerable foreign direct investment capital and has been a recipient of development aid. By August 2004, capital investment agreements from 71 countries and territories amount to an estimated \$48 billion, of which \$25.76 billion have already been made. Five of the

countries and territories that have made large capital investments (Taiwan, Singapore, Japan, Korea, and Hong Kong) are in East Asia. The operations of enterprises and the economy have been gradually brought into a competitive environment, improving the effect of production and trade in this new economic orientation.

Unemployment: The unemployment problem is being actively dealt with. During the five years from 2001 to 2005, an average of 1.0 to 1.2 million jobs per year were made available to the unemployed. To solve the unemployment problem in the coming five years, another 7.5 to 8 million jobs (1.5 million jobs per year) will be made available. Vietnam's remarkable progress in hunger elimination and poverty reduction has won recognition internationally.

The countries and territories of East Asia view Vietnam as an attractive partner and they desire to coordinate their activities with Vietnam to make East Asia flourishing and thriving.

East Asia is growing rapidly and is becoming one of the three big centers in the world, with 32% of the world population, 26% of goods turnover, and 21% of the GDP of the world (in the next 10 to 15 years, the GDP percentage will rise to 30%).

Three of the major economies of the world are in East Asia—China, Japan, and Korea. The economic growth rate of the entire region, including most of the countries, is increasing, although at different levels. The economic integration in the region is rather noteworthy, with many new initiatives, such as ASEAN1, ASEAN3, ASEAN-India, and so on.

Vietnam's integration into the regional economy helps speed up its growth and opens access to advantageous sources of capital, science, and technology, as well as brainpower and experience in both developmental strategies and management organization, both macroscopically on a national scale and microscopically at the enterprise and household level.

Integration into the regional economy makes possible breakthroughs in science and technology by way of inventions and experience in organizing and managing enterprises, thereby accelerating industrialization and modernization of Vietnam.

Integration into the regional economy brings closer relations between Vietnam and the countries and territories in East Asia.

The exchanges between the Vietnamese and people in other parts of the region are facilitated through economic cooperation, fostering mutual understanding and trust among them, and improving the cultural level of the people, and the self-confidence and self-assertiveness of the Vietnamese nation.

Challenges and difficulties

Apart from its advantages, East Asian regional economic integration also makes the gap between rich and poor and the division of social classes in Vietnam wider because a part of population lose their jobs and no longer have income, or their income decreases noticeably. As a result, social inequality tends to increase.

Human life and many fields of activities become less safe, giving rise to problems of national security, national independence, and national self-governing. Numerous areas in the economy, including finance and currency, are easily affected by external factors. Unforeseen mishaps as well as dangers may erupt suddenly.

Integration is taking place while the Vietnamese economy still has difficulties and the competitive power of enterprises in goods and services is still weak. As a result, Vietnam has not been considered as a full market economy, which is a disadvantage in international commercial disputes, creating difficulties for domestic production and having negative effects on the life and work of the workers.

International economic integration narrows in part the power, scope, and effectiveness of the Party's leadership and the State's managerial role (because of compulsory compliance with international regulations). This delicate matter needs to be dealt with cleverly in order to take advantage of external developmental forces, while simultaneously guaranteeing the independence and self-governance of the nation.

In short, the challenges and difficulties are how to integrate into the international economy effectively, when starting at a low level; to get more profits than losses; to take advantages of the positive side; and to limit the negative side in opening the door to international economic integration.

Experience in the regional and international economic integration of Vietnam

Vietnam has taken the initiative in international economic integration beginning in the 1990s and has gained some experience in regional and international economic integration. These experiences are:

1. Formation and implementation of overall strategies for international economic integration (goals, path, and strategy).

2. Stepping up the reform of the economy, especially the following three aspects: reform of institutions, reform of state-run enterprises, and reform of the financial and banking system.

3. Adjustment of the investment framework, change of the economic structure in a direction that will secure the benefits of competitive forces.

4. Development of human resources for the international economy.

5. Establishing which articles in the international economic, financial, and commercial regulations and terms can be applied to protect our interest during the process of the integration. These are:

(a) the right to make lists of exceptions for commodities and services in accordance with the regulations (forbidding weapons, explosives, drugs, and other products that are harmful to the national security, social life, and national culture).

(b) the right to have unscheduled methods of self-protection in special situations such as natural calamity or epidemic.

(c) the right to maintain regulations on food hygiene and safety and environmental protection—e.g., banning the import of products that are incompatible with the regulations. This right is highly flexible, so it is important and needs to be applied protectively.

(d) the right to object to a foreign partner's behavior that we consider improper and to bring this dispute before a suitable international law court for arbitration.

(e) the right to form or to participate in subregional, regional, and interregional organizations, to widen bilateral relations that are not against the global common

rules and are possible under separate rules on the inter-regional, subregional and bilateral levels. This right can bring a variety of benefits to us.

(f) the right to point out regulations that are unreasonable and to negotiate through multilateral negotiations the amending of current regulations or especially the introduction of regulations that are still lacking

Vietnam, as well as other developing countries, participates in globalization and international economic integration with the motto “initiative along the path.” This means that we are determined to participate in the process actively with careful consideration, calculation, and strategies, but not at any cost and not all at once, while respecting the common rules currently in force in accordance with our specific conditions and to hold fast to independence and self-governance.

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Revisiting Class in Yet Another Era of Globalization: A Dayak Example

Clare L. Boulanger

Globalization is not a new phenomenon. At base, the process involves the compromise of local autonomy by a universalizing power, and such events have occurred since the first state societies incorporated their tribal neighbors. In terms of truly globe-spanning globalization, Wallerstein pegs its start with the Eurocolonial thrust that began in the 1400s, when trade routes were detached from their established courses and reconnected to a European nexus (1974). Subsequent to this mercantile expansion, industrialism went so far as to detach human beings from their labor, so that the latter could be commodified (see Wolf 1982, 296–98). From the perspective of the market, labor was embodied not in people but in capital. Marx and Engels encapsulated this conceptual transformation in one pithy sentence: “In bourgeois society, capital is independent and has individuality, while the living person is dependent and has no individuality” (1976, 499).

Dependency forced everyone in modern society into economic complicity (Wolf 1982, 100), a state of affairs that has only been intensified through the latest incarnation of globalization. The number of people in the world who can convert their labor directly to subsistence has dwindled considerably, with the few holdouts scorned as regressive. Class struggle is thus moderated in part by the fact that there are no viable alternative spaces to which to repair. This obviously does not mean that today there

are no longer haves and have-nots, but it has become more difficult to pinpoint and act effectively on class interests as traditionally conceived. With productive processes having been divided infinitesimally and vested in all corners of the earth, ownership of productive means has become equally complex, traceable primarily by the habits of consumption that sufficient capital can sustain. Marxist theorists have long been frustrated by the fact that the person in the street assays class by consumption rather than production, but his or her “confusion” has always been understandable and is nowadays virtually unavoidable. Rather than continuing to dismiss this view merely as false consciousness, theorists should acknowledge that its persistent clarity in an ever more wide-ranging and convoluted political economy draw the analytical, and perhaps even the idealistic, eye.

Class in today’s world yields a relatively small number of people who are worth more than some countries, and a huge number of people who go hungry and tend to suffer from preventable diseases whose effects are exacerbated by poverty. The injustice of this is scarcely deniable, but how to account for the fact that even where class is merely a matter of blue-collar versus white-collar, the former nurtures a deep resentment of the latter? The horrors of material deprivation so extreme as to shorten life incline us toward the view that class is fundamentally about material things, but most of us who consider such questions come from societies where the accumulation of material things is prized. I suggest that we tug at our blinders a bit to try to catch sight of a larger conclusion: material deprivation may be the *consequence* rather than the cause of the human ability to regard one’s fellows as less than human.

Much of my field research as an anthropologist has been conducted in Malaysia, most recently in the Bornean state of Sarawak. Like the peninsular portion of Malaysia, Sarawak is multiethnic, but while a Malay/Chinese/Indian scheme predominates on the mainland, in Sarawak the primary ethnic groups are Malay, Chinese, and Dayak, with *Dayak* referring to non-Muslim indigenous peoples. Dayak is in turn made up of many smaller groups, but for our purposes I shall not delineate them. What

should be made known here, however, is that there are still a great many Dayaks today who hearken back to a hinterland existence, where rice farming and hunting provided for subsistence needs. Only relatively recently have Dayaks migrated *en masse* to the growing urban areas of Sarawak. My field project involved interviewing, over the course of three summers, 112 of these urban Dayaks, to explore what it means to be Dayak today.

As the previous sentence intimates, the research was trained on the issue of ethnicity, a prominent feature of Malaysian life. Experts on Malaysia have frequently opined that ethnicity overrides class as a means of identifying self and other (e.g., Esman 1972, Horowitz 1985, Nagata 1976, Zakaria Haji Ahmad 1982), and while this view has been challenged and qualified over the years (e.g., Sundaram 1988, Kessler 1978, Scott 1985), it remains the case that fieldwork in Malaysia generally takes ethnicity into account while it underplays class. Hence I thought nothing of including a question in my interview schedule designed to probe when and under what circumstances respondents had become aware of their own ethnicity and the ethnicity of others. I was struck, however, when many of my respondents described these allegedly ethnic encounters in terms of class. The following excerpts, each from a different interview, are typical:

[People from the state capital] always look down on us. . . . Especially the Chinese. They say, "Ah, you," you know? . . . [They look down on me], I believe, from the way I look, and I think they are more wealthy than I am.

It [my school] was a mission school . . . so the majority [of students] were Chinese. . . . Certain remarks . . . [were made] . . . because a lot of the natives [were] like, actually, from poor background, and you get certain kinds of remarks. . . . There's always this relationship between, "Oh, you're not doing well," [and] "Oh, you're slow." . . . When you're older, then you're aware of such remarks, and you feel so bad. They didn't say it to you, but they say it to your peers who are actually weaker. . . . That's not because they were stupid, but because of their poverty.

I went to secondary school. I went to town. . . . At that time, we were exposed to the outside world. We were very timid. We see that other people are better off than us. . . . We were ridiculed. . . . They challenged us, the Chinese. Our impression of those Chinese were very, very different. We always look very high on them; we thought that they are great.

I didn't like them [Chinese]. . . . I remember when I first went down [to town] with my father. . . . [My feet] were so muddy. And I went to school, and the Chinese kids were so clean, there. . . . And here we are, no underwear. . . . And . . . [feet] full of mud. And they [Chinese] looked at you as if they wanted to vomit on you. . . . And then you feel so inferior, you know?

Chinese is aggressive. . . . They have the confidence in themselves. Us, the other races, [at] that time, maybe we feel very—how is it? Inferior? . . . *Macam takut-takut, malu-malu* [afraid, shy]. . . . Because the Chinese, they have the money, then we think that we come from poor family.

The impression I have at that time was that I'm not much different from them [the Chinese], except that I'm poor. I don't have money. And this is the thing in me that drives me to work, or to be a businessman.

It is certainly the case that my Dayak research participants most often identified the Chinese as the ethnic "Other" who introduced them, through life experience, to ethnicity in general. However, it is also the case that the Chinese are consistently referred to as rich, while Dayaks are represented as poor. This tendency to conflate ethnicity and class, prevalent throughout Malaysia, is a product of Eurocolonial history, leading to what Nash has called a "folk" model of inequity. On the Malaysian mainland, that "Chinese are rich" is set against the idea that "Malays are poor" (Nash 1989, 41). Dayaks in Sarawak agree that "Chinese are rich," but they believe themselves to be poorer than Malays. In fact, within the category of *bumiputera*, or

native peoples, that includes both Malays and Dayaks, Dayaks frequently complain that they are “second-class” (a sentiment that emerges spontaneously in thirty-three of my interviews; see also, e.g., Bruton 1993, Jawan 1994).

While the above interview excerpts reflect a concern for material things, they also make clear that Dayaks are not mere schoolchildren clamoring for more toys. For many of my participants, poverty was not a dispassionate condition; it ate away at both one’s body and one’s soul. “Sometimes the children go to school,” one man told me, “[and] they look at their friends [who] wear nice shoes—Bok, Reebok, or whatever they wear. They [Dayak children], you know, they feel very self-conscious. . . . they don’t want to go to school [any more].” In the interview excerpt below, this connection between poverty and self-esteem is even more poignantly drawn:

Now, there’s always a feeling between the poor and the rich; if I’m too poor . . . , I feel that I’m useless, you know? Why [am I] so useless? could it be because of my parents? could it be because of my community? could it be because of my society? You know? The feelings between the rich and the poor . . . the way I look at it now, it’s always there.

If my participants recognized that there was more to class than material deprivation, they had little recourse but to pursue material gain in order to rectify their disadvantage, and for some this seemed satisfactory. “[Here] I am living in the middle of the city like this,” said one man, “living just like anybody else, and I can survive [here], like them [other ethnic groups]. If they have car, I have my car, and all that, you see.” Understandably, capitalist society encourages its members to believe that if a man has material parity with his fellows, he will achieve parity in other ways as well. But the quest to attain this is fraught with doubt: how is parity measured? How do I know when it is reached? Who will validate my achievement? What will I do if the rewards beyond material well-being are not as promised? It is difficult enough for anyone, in Malaysia as elsewhere, to answer such questions, but urban Dayaks are especially anxious in an environment where,

they fear, their countrymen do not acknowledge Dayaks as fully Malaysian, or even, at times, as fully human. “[Peninsular Malaysians say] that we [Dayaks] are still backward,” complained one participant. “Not only to say that, what they [say is] we are still like monkeys, living on the trees.”

The current version of globalization has certainly brought about change, but it has not altered the conditions that generate class feeling, and class action. While activists may appreciate such an observation, it is important that we develop deeper insights into what class is and how it motivates. Sennett and Cobb once wrote: “When men . . . expound a politics of working-class revolt based principally on material deprivation, they are, despite their best intentions, entering conservative enemy territory” (1972, 7). Fundamentally, class is about the related concepts of individual dignity and societal autonomy. Both are undermined by globalization, and hence both will continue to engender class action, though not always in the form that conventional theory, hampered by the idea that class is only about material wealth and poverty, might lead us to expect.

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Environmental Protection: A Focus on Sustainable Development

Hoang Ngoc Hoa

I

Sustainable development is a major condition for ensuring a prosperous and better life for all peoples and nations worldwide.

In the process of achieving that target, human beings create conditions that contradict the satisfaction of their own needs. Thus, in the 1960s and 1970s, people had to face great challenges that threatened sustainable development, among which are exhaustion of natural resources, overpopulation and a series of complicated social issues, and environmental pollution and changes in the world climate that weaken the ozone layers and result in more destructive levels of El Nino and La Nina.

Those challenges have produced enormous obstacles to meeting human needs. They threaten the existence and development of not only entire peoples, but also the entire international community. The international community, therefore, is exerting concerted efforts to surmount these threats, foremost among which is environmental protection in order to ensure a sustainable development for human life.

An international conference on the environment held in Stockholm in 1972 outlined forms of environmental pollution that were threatening human life.

In 1980, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources formulated a “World Conservation

Strategy,” with general targets such as achieving sustainable development with living natural resources.

Following that, the United Nations Environmental Program also demonstrated the concept of sustainable development with a broader content that included sustainable eco-environmental development, sustainable improvement of social issues, but fell short in dealing with some of these issues.

At an international conference on environment in 1987, the World Committee for Environment and Development of the United Nations issued a report, “Our Common Future.” In this report, sustainable development was defined for the first time in the following way: “Sustainable development is the development to satisfy the present generation without causing any harm to the possibility of satisfying the needs of future generations.”

Both the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002 demonstrated a consistent affirmation. Sustainable development is a process in which there is a close, appropriate, harmonious combination of three factors of development: social development, economic development, and environmental protection so as to better satisfy human needs without causing any harm to the possibility of satisfying future needs.

In order to gain sustainable economic development, it is necessary to invest effectively and maintain a high growth rate and stability for a long time. To have sustainable social development, it is necessary to tie economic development to implementation of social advancement, equality, and enhancement of cultural identity. In order to achieve sustainable environmental development, it is necessary to exploit natural resources economically, by protecting the environment and biological diversity.

The three factors are closely linked, but the integration of the three factors is a long, complicated process, involving contradictory processes and great challenges that call on the international community’s concerted efforts and consistent actions to achieve the desired targets. That is why in June 1992 the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro discussed and adopted Agenda 21 on global sustainable development. This is an international agreement for a worldwide

program of action for sustainable development under the idea consistently recognized at the Summit in 1987.

Agenda 21 includes 2500 detailed action proposals for decreasing uneconomical consumption and production, for poverty eradication, for water- and air-quality protection, for the promotion of sustainable agricultural development, and other measures.

Some of those proposals have been implemented since the beginning of the 1990s—for example, decreases in uneconomical consumption and production, hunger eradication and poverty elimination, implementation of “clean industrialization,” and development of ecological agriculture to protect the environment in accordance with the needs of sustainable development. Vietnam participated in the Summit and signed the commitment to follow Agenda 21 on global sustainable development.

After ten years of implementing Agenda 21, the World Summit for Sustainable Development (or Earth Summit) took place in September 2002 in Johannesburg with the following general targets:

Assessment of the results ten years after the Rio de Janeiro Conference.

Evaluation of the difficulties and obstacles encountered when implementing Agenda 21.

Lessons to be drawn and knowledge acquired after the Rio Conference as the basis for supplementing and improving the agenda.

Bringing new breath to the implementation of sustainable development.

The delegation of Vietnam led by Deputy Prime Minister Pham Gia Khiem participated in this Summit and presented a national evaluation of Vietnam’s fulfillment of its commitment to sustainable development from 1992 to 2002.

The Vietnam governmental delegation also presented to the world Vietnam’s sustainable development orientation for

the twenty-first century as embodied in the decree 153/2004/QĐTTg of 17 August 2004 by the prime minister.

Here are the aims and requirements of the sustainable development orientation in Vietnam in the twenty-first century:

Sustainable development must become a common strategic view for socioeconomic development.

Vietnam's sustainable development orientation is based on a general planning frame that includes goals, activities, and means for achieving sustainable development in the twenty-first century.

Vietnam's sustainable strategic development presents the will-power, spirit, and collective intellectual contributions by the entire people so that the entire society takes responsibility for building and implementing the action plans with this orientation.

II

Vietnam is a developing country with low income and poor infrastructure. Thus, the great significance of achieving the objectives of sustainable development is that the implementation of industrialization and modernization must assure an environment and ecology appropriate to the current conditions of life and future generations, and that we can correct in a timely way inappropriate exploitation of natural resources, wasteful practices, and serious environmental pollution.

Overcoming forest shrinkage and drought, repeated flooding, and their negative effects on the environment

Forest covers major mountainous highland areas and prevents accumulation of sand in coastal delta areas with a diversity of flora and fauna systems. The forest shrinkage rate in Vietnam is 200,000 hectares per year (of which 60,000 hectares are destroyed for agricultural use, 50,000 hectares by fire, 90,000 cut down for wood). The exploitation and clearing of forests for fieldwork by migrating people have increased sharply and are currently a serious issue. There are around 11,300 million

hectares of forest, of which 9.5 million are natural forest and 1.8 million are planted. In the single dry season of 2001/2002, some 2,559 hectares were lost in 256 forest fires.

The forest eco-environment is also being harmed by the capture of too many wild animals for profitable overseas sales. We are thus witnessing natural and deliberate forest destruction, flora and fauna damage, and the danger of rare species extinction. Hills and mountains are being seriously eroded as loss of vegetation damages the environment, by reduction of the ability of the soil to retain water, a consequence of which is that water descends more quickly to the lowlands and produces flooding. Moreover, the depletion of forests affects the function of trees in regulating the climate, so that droughts become more severe. As water resources become exhausted, the flow of water in the Red River (2004–2005) and of the Mekong River decreases. Prolonged droughts in the Central Highlands, Binh Thuan, and the South Central and the East Central regions have caused shortages of drinking water for both people and animals and agricultural production.

Environmental pollution in rural areas

The shortage of safe water, especially in remote rural areas in Vietnam has negatively affected the life and health of the population in these areas. The number of people inflicted with intestinal diseases has increased. The number of poor and hungry households remains high. Thus it is necessary to provide them with safe water from state resources and aid from the international community. This is a key basis of the current hunger eradication and poverty elimination programs in the rural areas. Projects for supplying safe water in remote rural regions in the mountainous northern provinces, coastal central areas, the Central Highlands and West Southern provinces need to be strengthened. It is necessary to have effective solutions to overcome excessive use of chemicals and insecticides in the production and processing of vegetables and fruits. This form of environmental pollution increases harmful chemicals in human food, damages the ecological environment, affecting land and water resources, threatening

extinction of animals, harming vegetation, and thereby affecting the ecological balance.

Air pollution

Many areas in Vietnam suffer from serious air pollution. Observations conducted by the Center for Urban and Industrial Zone Environmental Technology over a six-year period in Hanoi show that the concentration of sulfur dioxide and carbon dioxide has increased roughly by 10–17 percent, that of PM₁₀ dust (coarse particulate matter) approximately 4–20 percent, that of nitric oxide alone 40–60 percent each year. The concentration of PM₁₀ dust is 2.5 to 5 times the recommended limit. In Ho Chi Minh City, the concentration of carbon dioxide runs between 15 mg/m³ and 48 mg/m³. This is caused by industrial production, construction, transportation, and community activities. The large increase in the number of motorbikes and automobiles has led to a considerable increase in traffic congestion and air pollution.

Brick and tile production in Huong Canh in Vinh Phuc Province has caused serious air pollution in a large rural area. Similarly, in the peripheral rural regions of Uong Bi, Ninh Binh, Bim Son, and Cau Duoc (Hung Nguyen-Nghe An), coal, rock, and cement dust is causing grave air pollution. Other urban and rural regions are also suffering from various levels of air pollution.

Pollution in industrial zones and handicraft villages

The pollution in the industrial zones and handicraft villages of Vietnam is at alarming levels. We have recently been moving factories that can cause pollution away from the cities, but many remain in the heart of cities, belching harmful, dirty smoke and dust into the air and unprocessed liquid waste into rivers, lakes, and into the ground, which results in serious water pollution.

Handicraft villages in Vietnam are undergoing dramatic development. At present, 90 percent of the 4,139 handicraft villages are causing grave pollution by discharging waste directly into ponds and lakes. This has serious consequences for water resources, surface water, and soil. Workers are breathing coal smoke and sulfur fumes, and dealing directly with chemicals. Many suffer

from pneumonia, cancer, and eyesores. In some places, such as large-scale pig farms, soft noodle, pancake, and wine production establishments, waste is not being processed to undergo decomposition. As a result, strong odors persist and air and water pollution are at alarming levels.

Air pollution in the aftermath of war

Vast amounts of land and water in Vietnam are polluted and forests destroyed by the chemicals used by the United States in wartime in the south of Vietnam. The fact that land and water have been chemically polluted will have grave long-term social impact. Several generations of people from these areas have been victims of chemically caused birth defects and diseases such as cancer. Moreover, unexploded bombs and mines planted by the U.S. forces endanger the local population, claiming many lives in peacetime.

Since environmental pollution has really been threatening sustainable development, as indicated here, the Vietnamese Communist Party and state have been concerned about environmental protection. After signing the commitment to implement the Agenda 21 on global sustainable development at the beginning of 1993, Vietnam issued the Environmental Protection Law, creating a legal framework for the implementation of environmental protection methods. In June 1998, Directive No. 36CT/TW on environmental protection procedures was issued. In 2004, the prime minister promulgated Decree QD153 on sustainable development in Vietnam. Environmental sustainable development is one of the three focuses of our orientation for development in the twenty-first century. The Party has set itself the task of enforcing Resolution 41/NQ-TW on environmental protection in national industrialization and modernization.

The step-by-step implementation of these documents will be a great contribution to changes in environmental sustainable protection and development in Vietnam.

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The European Union in Crisis

Anthony Coughlan

The historical origins of the European integration project are in the 1920s and 1930s with Jean Monnet and others who conceived and pushed it for decades. Three factors gave it impetus after World War II.

The state-power factor

One basic formula for understanding the European Union (EU) project is offered by Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung: “Take five broken empires, add a sixth one later, and try to make one big neo-colonial empire out of it all” (1973, 16). If not the whole story, this is perhaps its most essential part.

The five broken empires—France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, and Holland—were defeated and occupied in World War II. After the war, they found themselves in a world dominated by the United States and Russia. Their ruling elites, especially their foreign ministries, accustomed to running empires, decided that if they could no longer be big powers in the world on their own, they should aim to be a big power collectively.

The sixth empire joining them later was Great Britain. Britain applied to join the then European Economic Community at the behest of the United States in the aftermath of the 1956 Suez crisis. Her ambition was either to divide France from Germany and prevent those two nations from together dominating Western Europe, or else to join them in a triumvirate. The

failure of both aspirations is probably the deepest root of British “euro-scepticism.”

The foundation myth of the EU is that it originated as a peace project to prevent wars between France and Germany. In fact, war was impossible between individual members of either of the two blocs during the Cold War. Washington and Moscow simply would not have permitted it. The atomic bomb has made such wars within Europe impractical anyway. Most wars are civil wars. The end of the Cold War in 1989 brought war back to Europe, in Yugoslavia and Chechnya, after forty-five years of armed peace.

The real historical model for the EU is the unification of Germany in the nineteenth century, which began with a customs union, then became a confederation of formally equal states, then a monetary union, and then a unified federal state with one constitution, army, and government representing it internationally vis-à-vis other states.

The economic factor

The rules of the European Union are set out in its various treaties and given formal constitutional status in the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe, whose ratification process is currently suspended. They make it illegal under European law for governments of member states to adopt any measure that would interfere with the free movement of goods, services, capital, and labor across the twenty-five-member Union.

These rules provide an optimal profit-maximizing environment for the EU-based transnational firms that have been the principal economic supporters of European integration since the 1950s. They substantially free private capital from national-state interference and from democratic control by national parliaments and governments in response to citizen concerns. They are naturally congenial to the EU-based transnational firms organized in such bodies as the EU Employers Federation, *Union des Industries de la Communauté européenne* (UNICE), and the European Round-Table of Industrialists.

These corporate organizations have been the principal economic advocates of the EU single market, the Eurocurrency, and EU

enlargement to include Eastern European countries; they have also been financial backers of the international European movement.

The personal-power factor

The process of EU integration transfers power from elected national parliaments and governments to a small number of politicians and bureaucrats who obtain in this way a huge accretion of personal power.

At the national level, ministers are part of the executive arm of government, responsible to their elected national parliaments and citizens. When a particular policy area is transferred to Brussels, national ministers are substantially freed from national political control and transmuted into supranational EU legislators, members of what is literally an oligarchy, a legislative committee of twenty-five persons on the EU Council of Ministers who make laws for 450 million people. The Council is irremovable as a body. Its individual members become ever more distanced from their national electorates, their willingly accepted personal task vis-à-vis their fellow ministers, with whom they interact on a first-name basis, being to deliver their peoples in support of further integration. National parliamentarians who aspire to become ministers, whether they are in government or opposition, go along with this.

This process is a gradual coup against political democracy. At the national level, those running the state itself become party to depriving their fellow citizens of the power to make their own laws and decide their own government. The nation-state is turned into an enemy of its own citizens. Simultaneously, at the civil-service level, senior national bureaucrats are substantially freed from public scrutiny as powers are transferred to the bureaucracy in Brussels with which they regularly interact. There EU laws are prepared for enactment by the Council of Ministers outside the ken of national parliaments or even the European Parliament, which can propose amendments to EU laws but cannot have those amendments adopted without the agreement of the EU Council and Commission.

Democracy and public accountability wilt or disappear. This process, which would be accelerated under the EU constitution,

is building inevitably to a major crisis of democracy across the European continent.

The Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe, which was rejected by French and Dutch voters in referendums in summer 2004, proposed to repeal the existing EC/EU treaties and establish a new European Union based on its own constitution rather than on treaties between sovereign states as hitherto.

The constitution sought to give the constitutional form of a supranational federation to the twenty-five, soon to be twenty-seven, countries of the EU. It would have given this new Union a political president, a foreign minister and diplomatic corps, and a public prosecutor. It would have given it power to sign treaties with other states in all its areas of competence. The only two powers of a state the EU would lack if the constitution came into force would be the power to impose taxes and to force its constituent member states to go to war against their will, although as it is, some may go to war on behalf of the EU as long as the others consent. The advocates of EU integration would like the EU to obtain these remaining state powers in time.

The EU's democratic problem

It is possible to turn the EU into a state, but it is not possible for that state to have a democratic basis and legitimacy. The reason is that democracy means rule by the “demos,” the people, through the representatives they elect and on whom they confer authority.

A European people does not exist except in the statistical sense, and one cannot be artificially created from above in the way the EU is attempting. The 450 million inhabitants of the EU are divided into many peoples, real national communities speaking their own languages, who desire to make their own laws, decide their own governments, and exercise self-determination as they have done for generations through representatives they elect and hold responsible.

It is impossible to democratize the EU by giving the European Parliament power to make laws instead of the twenty-five-person Council of Ministers, as some suggest. The democratic underpinning of a stable state is not just majority rule, but majority rule on the basis of a community, a people—normally a national

community—with sufficient mutual identification and solidarity among its members to induce minorities to obey the majority willingly, so giving majority rule its democratic authority.

The existence of such a real self-aware community is crucial for the legitimacy and stability of a state with its own tax and public-service system, from which some citizens are net gainers and others net losers—if that state is to endure. It is the absence of such a community at the European level, and the impossibility of creating one artificially, that cause the EU's crisis of authority and legitimacy.

The EU's "democratic deficit" problem is inherently insoluble without repatriating major powers from the supranational to the national level. The proposed EU constitution would have done just the opposite.

The current crisis of integration

Officially, the EU Member States are currently engaged in a "period of reflection" following the French and Dutch rejection of the constitution. It is unlikely that there will be any further plans for revising the treaties until after the French presidential election in 2007.

Meanwhile, Member States are deeply divided over the EU budget for the upcoming 2007–13 period. The ten relatively poor new members want maximum subsidies from Brussels, whereas the net contributing countries, in particular Britain, Germany, and Holland, are reluctant to pay up.

There is tension between those countries that want to enlarge the EU further by including Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, and others, and those that see such EU "widening" as inhibiting further "deepening,"—that is, further integration. Some see the solution to this problem as being the formation of an inner group around France and Germany that would integrate further, perhaps in such areas as taxation, using the EU institutions for that purpose, while leaving the rest to move at their own pace. But such a two-tier or three-tier EU would almost certainly generate new political tensions among Member States as well as popular hostility.

The future of the EU is intimately linked to the fate of the euro. A central aim of the supranational federation envisaged by the

proposed EU Constitution was to provide a political counterpart for a single European currency. What exists at present is twelve countries, twelve states, twelve governments, twelve budgets, and twelve tax policies—all using the same Eurocurrency. Yet without a single state behind it, the euro cannot survive in the long run. A state is needed to guarantee a currency's value. All states have their own currencies and all currencies belong to states.

Countries need maximum flexibility, not rigidity, in the modern world. The Eurocurrency has been a political project from the beginning, aimed at reconciling France to German reunification, but using economic means that are quite inappropriate for this purpose. The high unemployment rates in Germany and France are significantly due to the euro. The Eurocurrency imposes a one-size-fits-all interest-rate policy on quite different economies, and an inflexible exchange rate that prevents states restoring their competitiveness by changing their currency's value.

Italy is now seriously considering leaving the eurozone in order to restore its competitiveness by devaluing the lira. Otherwise it faces years of rising unemployment, since its industries cannot compete at the implicitly high exchange rate entailed by eurozone membership. The fall in the dollar and the rise in the euro as a consequence of the U.S. balance-of-payments deficit hits the competitiveness of the eurozone as a whole. Even though all twenty EU states are supposed to abolish their national currencies and adopt the euro, this is very unlikely to happen.

In time, the euro is likely to join history's many abandoned currencies. The growing problems associated with it illustrate the fundamental lack of realism of the EU integration project as a whole.

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The Role of *Real Socialism* in International Relations in the Twentieth and Early Twenty-First Centuries

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With the glorious victory of the Russian Revolution in October 1917, socialism was no longer a mere theory but a reality, and “the Russian October Revolution became a great revolution whose success helped bring about the transition from capitalism to socialism” (Communist Party of Vietnam 2001, 11). From a Communist perspective, the emergence of the USSR, the fruit of the Russian October Revolution, helped open new modern international relations.* Since 1917, *real socialism* has existed and developed in modern international relations in two forms: the *world socialist system* (prior to 1991) and the current *socialist countries* (from 1991 through the present). As a result, when evaluating socialism, we must study both the former system of international socialism and the reforms and innovations in socialist countries taking place now. This report will provide a brief overview of real socialism.

The historical role of the world socialist system

When the Russian Revolution of October 1917 ended successfully, the first socialist country—Soviet Russia—came into being. In 1922, the Soviet Union was established and began to lay the material and technical foundations for socialism through

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industrialization and agricultural collectivization. By 1941, the Soviet Union had become an economic and military power in the world in general and in Europe in particular. During the Second World War, the Soviet Union defeated fascist Germany in Europe and militarist Japan in Asia and helped liberate the Republic of Korea as well as several nations in Eastern Europe, creating the conditions for the construction of socialism in other countries.

After the Second World War, a wide range of nations in Europe, Asia, and Latin America embraced socialism. In September 1945 the Democratic Republic of Vietnam came into existence; in November 1947 the Communist Party won parliamentary elections in Poland; in December 1947 the People's Republic of Romania was established; in 1948 the Communist Party took power in Czechoslovakia; in October 1949 the German Democratic Republic was founded in eastern Germany; on 1 October 1949 the People's Republic of China came into being; and on 1 January 1959 the Cuban Revolution triumphed.

By the early 1960s, the world socialist system, led by the Soviet Union, consisted of the Soviet Union, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, Albania, Yugoslavia, Mongolia, China, North Korea, Vietnam, and Cuba.

From 1945 to 1991, the socialist countries made tremendous progress in postwar economic reconstruction and the building of socialism. During this period, the world socialist system developed dramatically, making itself the bastion of world peace and revolution.

By the 1970s, real socialism (or the world socialist system) was able to balance the economic and military power of world capitalism. Specifically, an equilibrium existed between the Warsaw Pact countries, led by the Soviet Union, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), led by the United States.

However, as a result of uncorrected shortcomings in the process of socialist construction from the late 1970s to the mid-1980s, the world socialist system fell into a grave crisis. In order to surmount this crisis, the socialist camp initiated reforms. Because of severe mistakes in the implementation of these

reforms, together with the “peaceful evolution” of imperialism, socialism collapsed in Eastern Europe and the USSR in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Thanks to judicious renovations, reforms, and opening-up, socialism gradually overcame crises and developed in China, Vietnam, Cuba, etc. After the socialist regimes fell in Eastern Europe and the USSR, the world socialist system ceased to exist. The Communist Party of Vietnam adopted the term *socialist countries* (Communist Party of Vietnam 2001, 11) to designate the five socialist countries in the world: China, Vietnam, Cuba, North Korea, and Laos.

Real socialism existed for over seventy years in the USSR and for many decades in Eastern Europe, Asia, and Latin America. During this time, the socialist countries made undeniable historical progress.

The success of the Russian Revolution in October 1917, and the victory of the socialist revolutions in Eastern Europe, Asia, and Latin America after the Second World War, brought about a radical change in the course of human development. It helped open a new era—a transitional period from capitalism to socialism. For the first time in human history, real socialism, which rested neither on exploitation nor oppression, was constructed, bringing freedom and power to the working classes in society.

The countries in the socialist world witnessed significant achievements in economic development. For instance, in 1917 the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Russia was estimated at approximately one-fifth of that of the USA. Later, at the height of its development, the Soviet Union’s GDP (\$2 trillion) was nearly two-thirds of the USA’s (\$3 trillion). The USSR led the world in thirty major industries, including military and space industries (*Theoretical Issues* 1998). It was also the very first country in the world to launch a manned spacecraft into space.

The triumph of the Russian October Revolution, the victory of the USSR over fascist Germany and militarist Japan in the Second World War, the success of China’s revolution, and the victory of Vietnam in its resistance against the French colonialists and American imperialists helped to create a turning point in social development in the twentieth century.

However, alongside the great historical achievements, the socialist countries made some major errors. The administrative system and political machinery were overlapping, excessively bureaucratic, and ineffective. There was no clear distinction between the functions, responsibilities, and operation of the Party, and those of the state and other bodies in the political system. Bureaucracy and officialism contributed to the weakening of the Party's leadership and the operation of the state. The workers' right to freedom and the people's participation in managing the state were limited and ineffective due to formalistic democracy, extreme bureaucracy, and corruption. The Communist Party became a domineering state machine; dominating and directly managing the state, it actually assumed the role of a state.

In their haste to construct a large-scale industry, the Communists in power invested disproportionately in heavy industry, neglecting light industry and agriculture. Consequently, the economy became unbalanced. Consumer goods and food supplies were scarce. Being idealistic, the Communist leaders wanted to abolish swiftly all private and capitalist economic sectors during the process of socialist reform and construction. State capitalism—a means for economic development in the transitional period to socialism initiated by Lenin in his New Economic Policy—was not effectively implemented. Standards for productivity, quality, and efficiency did not come from the workers, who consequently grew indifferent to product quality. As long as workers were guaranteed a salary regardless of their productivity, they lacked motivation to produce a quality product efficiently. Development of new technologies came slowly and thus technology became obsolete and was unable to catch up with the world's progress in science and technology.

The imposition of the Soviet model for constructing socialism on all socialist countries, regardless of their different conditions, was a serious error. When this model proved obsolete and inadequate, the socialist countries did not innovate their own methods for building socialism even when it became necessary to do so.

Finally, two other errors are worth noting: (1) armed forces were deployed to deal with the tensions between socialist countries and (2) socialist countries idolized individual leaders and accepted the ideas of powerful leaders as dogma.

Importantly, even though the socialist bloc no longer exists, its historical achievements nevertheless continue to have an influence today.

First, the world socialist system was a fundamental element in initiating a transition from capitalism to socialism and became the backbone of revolutionary forces in the twentieth century.

Second, the world socialist system helped bring into being a new type of international relations between countries in the world, emphasizing coexistence in peace and friendship, respecting each other's independence and sovereignty, and benefiting from mutual cooperation.

Third, the world socialist system proved itself the mainstay of national-liberation movements. It gave strong support to workers' movements and to the Communist movement in capitalist countries as well. It was also the backbone of peace and democratic movements in the world. Thanks to the world socialist system, a Third World War was prevented.

Reform, opening-up, and renovation in socialist countries and their role in modern international relations

Reform, opening-up, and renovation do not mean changing the colors of socialism or reversing its course. They mean rather, upholding socialism's achievements, "purifying" the system, correcting its mistakes, and simultaneously introducing new measures to construct and protect socialism, fulfilling the [Vietnam constitution's] objective of "prosperous people, strong country, and equitable, democratic and civilized society" with a socialist orientation. Such actions were indispensable, as can be seen in the following:

First, during the process of socialist construction, the socialist countries made some mistakes that needed correction.

Second, the initial achievements of reforming, opening-up, and renovation in China, Vietnam, and Cuba helped establish the necessity of broader renewal.

Third, everything—all phenomena, processes, and social regimes—must frequently change and adjust if they are to continue and develop.

The cause of renewal was introduced in all aspects of social life, especially in politics, economy, culture, security, national defense, and foreign affairs. Yet these reforms varied from country to country; there is no common model for all nations.

Renovation in China, Vietnam, Cuba, North Korea, and Laos has resulted in significant initial achievements. What follows is an assessment of socialist construction and preservation in five socialist countries during the period 1991–2005.

First, despite being confronted with many difficulties and challenges (with some countries being blockaded, embargoed, and attacked by imperialist enemies), the socialist countries surmounted the political crisis caused by the collapse of socialist countries in Eastern Europe and the USSR. These countries vigorously resisted this crisis, thereby being able to survive and develop. The conspiracy of the imperialists and reactionaries to abolish socialism in the late twentieth century failed. Generally speaking, the construction of socialism and the preservation of sovereignty in China, Vietnam, Cuba, and North Korea, and the development of people's democracy to achieve socialism in Laos are making good progress.

Cuba and North Korea today still have to muster their strength to deal with strict blockades and embargoes imposed by the USA and Western Europe. From a low starting point in both economic and social development, Laos has been making every attempt to establish a market economy to perfect the People's Democratic Regime and move toward socialism. The initial result to date has been positive.

The reforming and opening-up processes in China and renewal in Vietnam have brought about tremendous achievements, which in turn have had a crucial impact on the world.

Second, thanks to the lessons drawn from the successes and failures of socialism in Eastern Europe and the USSR, and the experiences gained when building up their own socialism, the Communist parties in the five remaining socialist countries are

making creative attempts, both theoretical and practical, to set up their own models for constructing socialism. It is to be hoped that they can learn from mistakes made by the former Soviet Union and, at the same time, discover a path to socialism that is appropriate for their specific conditions and the developments in the world.

One breakthrough in developing socialism (both in theory and practice) is that the leaders in socialist countries have utilized market economics and international economic integration in order to develop economically and to set up the material and technological foundations for socialism.

The Chinese refer to these measures as “socialist market economy”; the Vietnamese have adopted the term “socialist-oriented market economy” and the Laotians use “commodity production economy towards socialism.” In July 2002, North Korea started a renewal process towards a market economy, making breakthroughs in the areas of price, salary, currency, and distribution mechanisms. In September 2003, North Korea’s parliament decided to adopt the “Contract in Agriculture” (allocating land to farmers), eliminate subsidies, authorize industrial enterprises to control their own businesses, adjust the Investment Law in an attempt to attract foreign direct investment, and develop some special industrial and economic zones.

As for Cuba, in order for socialism to exist and develop, it is necessary that the state adopt market mechanisms, commodity-currency relations, and international economic integration. The report of the Politburo of the Communist Party of Cuba in the Fifth Plenum of the Party Central Committee in March 1996 reads:

We are reaching and we will reach socialism. However, in order for socialism to exist, we must make full use of such hard-to-control elements as commodity-currency relations and even some capitalist elements.

Third, the positions and strength of the socialist countries, which have been different from those in the 1990s, continue to grow. From 1991 to 2000, Vietnam’s GDP increased 1.96 times, while that of China increased 2.4 times. China’s GDP was measured at \$1.54 trillion in 2004. According to World Bank

statistics, the proportion of GDP of the five socialist countries (China, Vietnam, Cuba, North Korea, and Laos) has doubled in the past fifteen years (from 1.7 percent of the world GDP to 4.1 percent) (*Statistics Yearbook* 2002, 52; IMF 1998, 319; *International Financial Statistics* 2004, 278.)

It is thus possible to summarize the roles of socialist countries in international relations. The socialist countries continue to be the backbone of the transition from capitalism to socialism. They play a decisive role in attempts in the twenty-first century to reach a truly equitable and democratic world serving the welfare of all people—a world of peace, democracy, sustainable development, and socialism.

The socialist countries are striving to establish new international relations: peaceful coexistence and friendship, respect for each other's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and cooperation on the basis of equality in the context of globalization in the third millennium.

From the Cold War through the present time, the consolidation and development of socialism, with its initial great achievements, have been winning the trust of the working class as well as the revolutionary forces of socialism.

In short, on assessing real socialism, the resolution of the Ninth National Party Congress of the Vietnamese Communist Party affirms: "Based on the lessons drawn from past success and failure, from the aspiration and enlightenment of many nations, socialism has the conditions and the ability to make further progress. According to the law of historical development, human beings will undoubtedly ascend to socialism."

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NOTE

*International relations appeared together with the emergence of states in human history, and developed as primeval international relations, medieval international relations, early modern international relations, and modern international relations.

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Ideological Inclinations and Cultural Changes in a Globalized Europe: Effects on Greece

Alexandros Dagkas

Globalization, whose characteristics are determined by the nature of production relations, has been marked by a dramatic decline in the traditional values of European culture (Dagkas 2004). In the present phase of the growth of capitalism, determination of the features constituting the global framework of European society (class stratification, political and social forces, economic choices, superstructure) reveals the relation between the general and the particular and suggests interpretations for developments in the domains of ideology and culture within the member states of the European Union.

In Greece, the intervention of economic forces was not limited solely to the economic sphere, with the adoption and imposition of the neoliberal methods of the European Union, but extended to many areas of social and cultural life. The effects on the superstructure, in the domains of ideology and culture, with which this present paper is concerned, were caused by developments in the economic base and shaped a situation that is tending to alter radically the immemorial cultural roots of the people.

Globalization, ideology, and culture

Playing upon words, Barrows (2003) characterizes globalization as the “highest level of imperialism” and bears in mind

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the definition of imperialism as “highest stage of capitalism” (Lenin 1964, 238).

Concern about the uncontrolled changes that globalization may create is widespread, and global in scale (Stiglitz 2002, 3–22). In Europe, in a development that strengthens the trend toward reconstruction of the globe in the American image (Anderson, 2002), the guardians of the culture of the Enlightenment are benumbed; European culture is in crisis. The more technological development evolves and international capital dominates society, the more the level of progressive ideology retreats and consciousness perishes. The continuous restructuring of technology and production and the unchecked advance of mergers and acquisitions tend to overturn the old framework of culture, working conditions, disposition to participate in the organization of society, social claims, and aspirations.

Within a framework where private initiative constitutes the ideology of the European Union and competition has been taken to extremes, competitiveness has become the watchword. The citizen is called upon to make sacrifices beyond all perception and conception of reality as it has been experienced up to now. Faced with the question of “a market at the service of society or a society captive to the market,” the elites have made their choice. Exploration of this theme touches upon more general issues: relations of production and property relations, as well as on the intellectual communication between people and the culture that governs their relations. The values of the French Revolution are once again topical. But firmly planted together with liberty, equality, and fraternity are private property and hostile competition in the economic sphere. This brings us back to the question of the economic base, the question of the prevailing mode of production, which shapes the superstructure along with intellectual and emotional relations among people. In Europe, for example, education has not led to humanization of the people. One might have expected that Freinet with his *école du travail* [*education through work*] (1969, 20) and the other educators who introduced similar important systems would have contributed to the furtherance of a culture centered on people and not on

personal interest. That this did not happen shows that efforts on the level of the superstructure are futile if undertaken within the specific conditions created by the economic base.

Nor can traces of its once-celebrated successes be found in the rival mode of production of “existing socialism.” Then, seventy years of propaganda for the supremacy of a different social and cultural model had resulted in the creation of “Soviet man.” Now it is clear that that people, members of a “state of all the people,” had in no way rejected their sense of national identity. Nationalism, that “prison of the mind” (Kiel 1985, 19; Kolodziejczyk 2005), continued to persist, fragmented, residual, untraceable. But as in the *long duration* of history currents once untraceable nonetheless survived and returned to the surface when conditions were ripe and the conjuncture was favorable (Braudel 1958), so cultural identities retained emotions and feelings temporarily veiled but nonetheless enduring.

In any case, the new phase we have now entered presents the same problems that faced the people of the past, when the populations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries found themselves confronting the industrial revolution (Toti 1961). Lafargue’s “right to idleness,” the use of leisure, is once again highly topical. (In an attempt to highlight the inhuman working conditions of his age, Paul Lafargue, who was married to Marx’s daughter Laura, proposed as a demand not the right to work—in reality a right to misery—but the utopia of minimal labor [Lafargue 1880]).

Effects on Greece: An inversion

In the present phase of changes in the European economy, Greece, a small country (eleven million people) in which capitalism is well developed (its economy ranks twenty-eighth in the world on the basis of Gross National Product [OECD 2005]), has in recent years achieved high growth rates, above the Eurozone average. Greek capitalism is dynamic, but this does not mean that it wards off crises. Domestic groups are among the most powerful on the world market. Greek capital exports are increasing and Greek ship-owners dominate international shipping. The profitability of capital

was secured by the favorable conjuncture for investments in neighboring states after the collapse of “existing socialism.” Another serious advantage came with the fall in the cost of labor, brought about by the influx of refugees from wars in the region and the entry of economic migrants from Third World countries.

Developments in Europe have historically reached Greece with a certain delay. In relation to the European Enlightenment, to the values of the French Revolution of the eighteenth century and the socialist ideas of the nineteenth, the corresponding agitation occurred much later in Greece, the reason being the four hundred years of Ottoman rule. But this time-lag led to the survival, the perpetuation, of a progressive culture that had already disappeared from the West—if it had ever existed in certain places. Historically, even during the economic and social upheavals of the second half of the twentieth century, there were extensive strata of the population that retained unchanged their *cultural capital* (using the term in Bourdieu’s sense) (Bourdieu 1984, 55–58). We may cite here the people of the mountain villages, where solidarity was a tradition of their way of life. No matter how poor they were, hospitality toward strangers was a characteristic of their behavior.

The country’s gradual passage from the older stage of movement of capital to the contemporary stage of the globalized market economy raised a cultural reverberation that affected its social base—the low social strata. Social solidarity declined, typified by the change in behavior toward foreigners. Greece used to be a culturally closed country. The sudden demographic change, as waves of “strangers” poured into the country seeking work, created a cultural shock in places where formerly all the inhabitants recognized themselves in their environment. The xenophobia generated had no parallel in Western Europe, where contact with different cultures since the age of colonialism and imperialism had made people familiar with “strangers,” while state mechanisms had intervened, through education, to create a culture of tolerance of difference and acceptance of multiculturalism. In Greece, however, the shifting of broad strata of the population into economic activities connected with tourism brought about changes

in the traditional culture, which caused a distortion in the sense of hospitality. Today, the term “hospitality” means providing services to tourists, Greek and foreign, for payment. Water is no longer offered by the jugful, as it had been for centuries (the expression “give [someone] a drink of water” encoded the response of individuals to their social duty of solidarity), but sold by the bottle for prices judged exorbitant.

Greek resistance to inversion

The class struggle has moved beyond the sphere that gave rise to it—that of the economy—into the superstructure. By the end of the twentieth century, when the inversion of ideological inclinations in the European political, social, and cultural elites had become obvious, their common choice took them away from the values of the European Enlightenment (De Senarclens 2001, 20–45). In relation to Greece, the economic integration of Europe pushed forward the demand for an alignment that required the exercise of pressures for an institutional incorporation that at the same time would constitute a moral legitimation of the ideology of the market. This was further confirmed by the fact that, in the circumstances of developed capitalism, the increasing alienation of the individual is a constituent of the society that produces it, a term of the commercialization of education, culture, and sport. This same commercialization carries with it alien standards, imposes new habits. The laws of the Greek state, the educational system, art, and sport had to fall in line.

The peculiarity of the Greek case is that, while the political elites and, to a considerable degree, the intelligentsia arrayed themselves on the side of the choices and evolution of the European Union, a resistance to this inversion appeared at the social base. In times of crisis this resistance found specific expression and dynamic manifestation. One example was the 1999 bombing of Belgrade, when virtually all the forces of society, echoing the position and disposition of the base, ranged themselves against the external intervention in the Balkans.

Turning to developments in such a vital domain as education, we see that an extended crisis has loomed since 1999

and the Bologna Declaration. The meaning of the directives restructuring study programs and research is a response to the demand of the times, an increase in competitiveness, and that is harmonization of all intellectual endeavor to the demands of the market and its dedication to the achievement of the economic goal (Breton 2003, 21–33). This runs counter to the concept of an increase in leisure time, which is associated with the need to improve one's level of education and culture, so that today's youth can fulfill the contemporary duties of a citizen. The education proposed by the European Commission involves nothing more than technical training. This means that people experience technical training solely as biblical condemnation, which cannot be transformed into creative pleasure, an insight to necessity as an indispensable step towards freedom.

The more whatever is sound in the superstructure is corroded and negative elements multiply, the more qualitative differences will emerge. In historical research, a revisionist tendency in relation to the history of World War II is already apparent, which is turning against the forces of national resistance to the German Occupation 1941–1944 (Kalyvas 2000, 142–83). Its scope is still minimal, but the prediction is that within the near future it will have created a solid current, influencing Greek historiography.

In the framework of the ideology of consumerism and commercialization, there is today a concerted endeavor to sustain the educational level of the citizen body through the consumption of intellectual and cultural goods. Gigantic installations and productions devalue the intellectual and aesthetic elements and distance material and immaterial culture from real social needs and problems—one recent example being the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens. The environment has been socially molded in accordance with the unbridled rhythms of globalized labor; it has been subverted. Historically, places of communication created a corresponding culture of communication, which in its turn created the basis for a conscious approach to other levels, to politics, to social demands. Today, with investments in the commercialized and consumable goods labeled “education” and “culture,” such places tend to become simply an environment in which people merely cross paths.

We could cite a host of other developments, as well, that form part of the assault on traditional culture. This barrage in favor of commercialization and moral incorporation into it, which constitutes an inversion in relation to the national aspirations and goals of centuries, is meeting powerful resistance, forms of which are finding expression in progressive cultural movements. The ideological manifesto of resistance to cultural globalization includes the axiom that the development of popular culture is linked with an active attitude towards life. Greek society is resisting a system that offers it substitutes for the real needs of its members. It is defending itself against the inertia that tends to make its members mere spectators of their own lives. The Greek experience teaches that preservation of the cultural heritage, an element of the history and consciousness of the people, and promotion of aesthetic education and sport contribute to the forming of individuals with fully rounded personality and developed social awareness, and strengthens peoples' will to be part of a society characterized by solidarity, peace, and progress. If in the past the defense of those elements fell to the role of the nation-state, in today's circumstances the initiative lies with citizens.

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Cultural Diversity under Conditions of Globalization

Pham Duy Duc

A leading concern of the international community in connection with globalization is now the preservation and bringing into play of national cultural features. Economic globalization creates a huge market with a rapid exchange of goods involving different economies and continents operating under laws of value, supply and demand, and competition. Liberalization of global trade carries with it a tendency to subject the cultures of poor and developing countries, and of dependent ethnic minorities, to dependency as consumers of the dominant external cultures. This process has particularly severe consequences for ethnic minorities.

The Uruguay Round (1993) adopted a “cultural exception” policy designed to ensure a country’s ability to adjust its own cultural policies, including the right to support creative activities as well as their cultural industries for the preservation of diversified cultures. The concept of “cultural exception” was replaced with the concept of “cultural diversity,” which stressed the objective of protecting cultural diversity against the threat of unifying cultures. The assembly of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) adopted the Convention on Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expression on 20 October 2005. This action is a reflection of the concern of the

international community for maintaining cultural diversity and national cultures under conditions of globalization.

Cultural globalization and diversification

Globalization has become an objective trend that is both an opportunity and a challenge for every nation in the world. Globalization not only changes the connection between territory and national security (geopolitical challenges), territory and economics (geoeconomic challenges), but also the relationship between the territory and culture (geocultural challenges). The United States introduced its own global policy stemming from the Blum-Byrnes Agreement that accompanied the Marshall Plan (1946). The agreement effectively states that with its military and economic strength, and the influence of its viewpoints and culture, the United States is uniquely powerful in the world. Culture was regarded as a kind of power that combines with economic and military strength to enable a country to dominate the globe.

This domination is an issue of broad concern. Many people identify globalization as “Americanization” or “Westernization,” and thus consider it a threat to cultural diversity.

The concept of anti-imperialism in culture is quite appropriately associated with the protection of various national cultures. Such complete identification, however, is not quite correct, because globalization also disseminates democratic and even socialist thinking, as Lenin noted when discussing proletarian culture. Democratic and socialist thinking also actively stimulates new aspects of working-class struggle in several continents.

The boom in information technology has stimulated the spread of communications systems beyond geographical borders. Interactive relations among nations are at a much higher level than previously. Communications media, the key tools of globalization, have become the main factor for cultural diversification. The fact that cultures have been turned into cultural industries stimulates “cultural capitalism” to impose rules on the cultural market that resemble the rules for ordinary trading of goods. Cultural industries, with their increasing sales, are attracting investors for huge profit.

According to one commentator on PlanetAgora.org,

The remarkable thing is not petroleum in the pipes and digitalized data, but pictures, concepts, values, and ideas being transmitted worldwide continuously by radio waves and television. This is taking place in an unfair and imbalanced way among nations and areas. If nations only follow the rules of the market for the purpose of profit, they will ignore the weaker cultures.

If films and audiovisual works are based on the commercial regulations of the World Trade Organization, many creative activities will decline not only in Europe but in other regions as well. Cultures that are unable to gain a position in the global culture would be gradually turned into cultures dependent on the dominant culture. In cinema, for instance, Hollywood films occupy a dominant position: 74 percent of the films shown at the cinemas in the European Union are U.S. films. The percentage is even higher in the developing countries. Of course, apart from U.S. films, these countries are also subject to the pressure of films and audiovisual media from surrounding countries.

Therefore, preservation and development of cultural diversity may be equated with the preservation of the human cultural ecology and the diversity of humanity's spiritual life. If natural ecology is the necessary condition for human existence, human cultural ecology is the sufficient condition for the uninterrupted development of human beings.

Such cultural diversity need not mean the protection of extreme isolationism. Preservation of national cultural characteristics should not serve the maintenance of isolation, conservatism, or stagnancy under conditions of extreme nationalism. Nor should it imply the conflict between "natives" and "outsiders" under a new fascism, but rather respect for global general values, controlled open-door policies, and protection of the rights of individuals or institutions in a self-controlled and unrestricted manner. The cultural rights of individuals and institutions in the course of international economic integration would thus be defended.

Globalization has, therefore, put culture in the center of discussions on social and intellectual aspects of economic development. The international community recognizes that mutual recognition of respect for cultural diversity expressed through tolerance, dialogue, and cooperation is one of the best guarantees for international peace and security. Although globalization in the period of the scientific/technological revolution, and particularly in connection with the development of information technology, has brought many challenges to cultural diversity, it also creates favorable conditions for dialogue among cultures.

Cultural diversity has gradually become generally recognized as the common heritage of human beings. Culture consists of characteristics in spirit, knowledge, and sentiment, as well as in the material conditions of a society or a group of societies. Culture means not only literature and art, but also lifestyles, value systems, traditions, and beliefs. Every people, every nation, has its own culture, existing in space and time. Cultural diversity is reflected in the distinguishable multicultures of groups of people and societies. As a basis for cultural exchange, reform, and creativity, cultural diversity is necessary to human beings just as biological diversity is necessary in nature.

Cultural diversity also plays a role as the momentum for sustainable development. Cultural diversity increases alternatives for everyone, and is at the core of development. The matter is not only economic growth, but the means to achieve knowledge, emotion, morality, and spirit against the background of cultural tolerance. Cultural tolerance is respect, sharing, and mutual understanding. Cultural tolerance is to seek similarities for dealing with differences and to minimize the deepening of differences for breaking down similarities.

According to V.E Davidovich,

the global culture is being shaping in a difficult way and is repleat with contradiction. The East . . . is groaning, actually screaming against "cultural colonialism," cultural invasion," control by the western films and fashion, against the attack of English language, especially its style and way of speaking. But the East also penetrates into the West. The

phenomenon of “the Orient” in the West is diversified. The Orient’s penetration is reflected in the Eastern religions of Buddhism, networks of tea and wine shops, success of the Eastern cuisine, the Eastern fashion, propagation of the Taoism’s theories, Ramakrishna. . . . In reality, the cultures have infiltrated into each other and mixed together, which sounds like the first draft of background for the global cultural space. (2002, 449)

Nevertheless, the global cultural space is not marked just by differences but the process of unity and contradiction, diversity and complexity, light and darkness, positive and passive, progress and backwardness. In the process of globalization, the cultures are increasing the interconnection, exchange, and contact thanks to modern communication media. More than five hundred satellites circle the earth for disseminating information by radio waves over all the continents, developing a uniform band for transmitting information. About three hundred international conferences and workshops take place annually, increasing by 7 to 8 percent each year. According to UNESCO, the number of publications is increasing by 15 to 20 percent per year. The capacity of communication channels (telephones, fax, etc.) is measured by the information unit—bits/second—and is rising tenfold every seven years. The number of books published in the world doubles every fifteen years.

The global cultural space is thus continuously being expanded. Concerns arise, however, about the fact that the specific cultural characteristics of clans, ethnic groups, and different peoples will go in the wrong direction and be plunged into the majority’s culture. The competing demands of the global generality and the characters and specifications of national sovereignty in building the global culture constitute a complicated and pressing matter.

Cultural diversity, acceptance and respect of differences, is the right direction leading to global cultural unity, eliminating monotonousness and boringness or compliance dependent on classes and cultural colonialism. Roadmaps for global cultural unity and diversity may be various. We may agree on the idea that global cultural unity may exist without accepting a unique

centralized power under the light of centralism. The basis of the roadmaps should be ideas and balance of benefit, consensus and cooperation, respect cultural diversity and multiple sources of cultures under common agreements. The core issue is to ensure preservation and to bring into play sovereignty and national cultural features. It will be dangerous if sovereignty and cultural features are not respected, lost even in an independent nation. This will make the nation dependent and a victim of a new cultural colonialism.

Of course, concepts such as “mutual dependence” and “interaction and reliance” are not less important than “independence” and “reliance.” In the light of globalization, all the cultures exchange with each other, develop, receive, give, self-reform, self-adapt for their existence and development. Cultural exchanges are now recognized as the momentum of development.

Although the international community acknowledges the importance of global cultural unity and diversity during the globalization process, occasional attempts still arise to threaten the use of military strength or economic power to impose cultural colonialism. Efforts to fight against these attempts are naturally undertaken. The International Convention on Preservation and Development of Cultural Diversity adopted by the international community is the first legal basis for the current cultural diversification.

Globalization and preservation of Vietnam's national features

Vietnam is a nation of fifty-four ethnic groups living together. The goal for promoting culture in Vietnam culture is an advanced culture rich in national features. The political program for national construction in the transitional period to socialism in Vietnam confirms this advanced culture rich in national features as one of the six characteristics reflecting the nature of the socialist regime toward which Vietnam is striving. The general direction for building up Vietnamese culture is to promote patriotism and a tradition of great national unity, independence, self-reliance in constructing and defending the fatherland. This direction aims to improve Vietnamese culture, and build it up to be advanced

and rich in national features, to adopt the human being's cultural quintessence, to help the culture penetrate all life and social activities, to contribute to raising the awareness of people, to develop science and technology, and to build up spiritual life for the policy of reform. The target is a prosperous nation and people, an equal and democratic civilized society, moving steadily towards socialism (Vietnamese Communist Party 1998, 54).

The core content of an advanced and patriotic culture rich in national features is the ideal of independence and socialism following Marxism, Ho Chi Minh's ideas with the objective "for all people, for happiness and diversified, free and comprehensive development of people in harmonized relations between individuals and communities, between society and nature." The advance is shown both in the content and the form that appears in the media. The advanced nature of the culture is based on scientific and revolutionary thinking to renovate the former society and to build a new social regime. The thinking is Marxism and Ho Chi Minh's ideas. The culture is also a human and democratic one that constitutes the background for the social spirit and the driving force of socioeconomic development. The advanced feature must absorb the national characteristics.

The national characteristics of Vietnam, as viewed by the Vietnam Communist Party, consist of sustainable values, the quintessence of ethnic groups that have been consolidated through thousands of years of constructing and defending the country. The national cultural features are patriotism; self-reliance; solidarity; community awareness linking individuals, families, villages, and fatherland; humanism; tolerance; respect for emotion; morality; diligence; creativeness in working; tender behavior; and a simple living style.

The national cultural features also reflect various facets (Vietnam Communist Party 1998, 55–56). Vietnam's patriotism is the true patriotism, which derives from the ideas of national independence and territorial sovereignty, duties, responsibility, and obligations of citizens in the cause of constructing and defending the country. It is different from the nationalism of one big country and extreme nationalism. Under the direction of the Vietnam

Communist Party, traditional patriotism has reached a new height, combining with the spiritual strength of the age, particularly Marxism and Ho Chi Minh's ideas. The ideal of independence and socialism are thus the core values of the culture.

Patriotism is Vietnam's leading value, affecting other values. In the process of exchanging with the outside, the Vietnamese people never discriminate against other cultures, but remain open, adopting outside cultural values in a selective manner for enhancing the internal force. There are many great religions in the world entering Vietnam's culture, such as Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, Hinduism, and both Catholic and Protestant Christianity. In order to exist, religions obviously must adapt to the national characteristics, and orient themselves toward constructing and defending the nation. The religious spirit of "respect the God, love the country," and "good life and good religion" are the basis of social and religious unity and of national solidarity for the construction and defense of the country.

In a recent document, the Vietnam Communist Party states clearly: "Preservation of the national characteristics needs to combine with international exchanges, selective adoption. Preservation of the national features should be combined with anti-backwardness in custom and old practices" (Vietnamese Communist Party 1998, 56–57). Thus, the national characteristics are not fixed in a model but are historical, self-reforming, and self-adapting for existence and development, especially in the current conditions of globalization.

An important viewpoint of the Vietnam Communist Party in directing the building of an advanced culture rich in national features is that Vietnam's culture is the unified and diversified culture of Vietnam's ethnic groups. Vietnam has more than fifty ethnic groups living together with their own values and cultural characteristics. These values and features supplement each other, enrich Vietnam's culture, and consolidate national unity, forming the background for sustainable equality and cultural diversity of these ethnic groups. During the recent years of reform, the Party and government in Vietnam have specially highlighted the task of preservation of and bringing into play traditional values as well as

developing new values in culture, literature, and the arts of ethnic minorities. It is necessary to conserve and develop languages and written records, to study the achievements of the ethnic minorities in culture and art, and to train intellectuals from these groups.

Programs of socioeconomic development in the mountainous and ethnic areas should be implemented to eliminate poverty, stabilize and improve people's lives, wipe out illiteracy, raise intellectual standards, and abolish unsound customs. Ethnic minorities need to be helped with building a civilized lifestyle, and the information networks in these areas should be broadened. At present, Vietnam radio reaches over 90 percent of ethnic and mountainous areas, television reaches 85 percent. Television and radio stations broadcast in Hmong, Thai, Bana, Ede, K'ho, Xodang, and Khomer languages, for example. The Vietnamese television program VTV5 has been broadcast in thirteen ethnic languages. The state has established schools at the central, provincial, and district levels to satisfy the requirements for raising the intellectual levels of the ethnic minorities and training in occupational skills. Significant achievements have been made for the preservation and restoration of cultural heritages in material and intangible forms in the ethnic areas. Many villages of Thai and Muong minorities in the West Northern areas and ethnic people in the Highland have set up local performance teams. The Central Highland gong has been recognized as "an intangible oral masterpiece of humanity" by UNESCO. The tradition of national solidarity and mutual assistance for progress together has contributed to unity and solidarity, to political stability, and to socioeconomic development. The special cultural features of each ethnic minority never fade but are conserved and promoted for the diversified culture of Vietnam.

Vietnam is a nation of many peoples and religions. Most great religions exist in Vietnam. In carrying out the Ho Chi Minh's ideology of national and religious solidarity, the government and Communist Party have introduced policies to ensure respect for freedom of religion and nonreligion, and for the normal activities of religions on the basis of respect for laws, fighting against any violation of freedom of religion and nonreligion of people. The Communist Party and state encourage the ideas of equality,

humanity, and inclination to helpfulness, and to conduct propaganda and education to cope with superstition, and to struggle against the use of religion for harmful political ends.

The policy of preservation and developing the national culture has flourished in the current conditions of globalization in Vietnam. A series of material and intangible cultural works have been restored and revitalized, and many cultural heritages have been recognized as the world's cultural heritages by UNESCO such as the ancient capital of Hue, ancient streets of Hoi An, My Son holy land, the natural heritage of Ha Long Bay, Phong Nha-Ke Bang historical site. With regard to intangible culture, music and culture of gongs in the Highland have been recognized by the international community. Vietnam will further propose that UNESCO recognize famous historical places such as Hoang Thanh, Thang Long, Hanoi, Hoa, and Lu ancient capital (Ninh Binh). Various kinds of traditional arts such as traditional operetta, classical drama, folk and popular performance by ethnic minorities have been encouraged. The state has stimulated and supported the production of handicrafts, which preserves values, habits, customs, and healthy living styles of families and communities. In world competition, Vietnam focuses on increasing film and video production, on developing producers' capacities and stimulating artists' and intellectuals' creativity, and on creating favorable conditions for new cultural and literature values. Cultural exchange activities in the international context have been extended. Vietnam has established international cooperation with more than 160 countries, territories, and international organizations. At the same time, Vietnam has been fighting against social evils that arise in the course of globalization.

The policy of cultural diversification has been proposed and implemented early in light of directions by the state and the Communist Party in building and developing new culture. On the basis of patriotism and national solidarity in the national democratic revolution, peoples and religions in Vietnam have made great accomplishments that have significance in national development during the reform period. The valuable lesson is the stabilization of society and politics, the struggle against attempts to use

ethnic and religious matters to promote disorder, to gain unity and to mobilize the people's strength for creating a prosperous people and wealthy country, an egalitarian society, democracy, and civilization, and steady movement towards socialism.

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Book Reviews

A Defence of History and Class Consciousness: Tailism and the Dialectic. By Georg Lukács, translated by Esther Leslie, introduction by John Rees, postface by Slavoj Žižek. London, New York: Verso. Cloth 2000, 182 pages, \$23; paper 2002, 160 pages, \$16.

Lukács's lost manuscript comes to one hundred pages (45–149) of text nestled amidst the commentary of others. The structure of the manuscript is as follows:

- I) Problems of Class Consciousness:
 - 1. Subjectivism.
 - 2. Imputation.
 - 3. The peasantry as class.
- II) Dialectic of Nature:
 - 1. Exchange of matter with nature.
 - 2. Simple and higher categories of the dialectic.
 - 3. Once again: exchange of matter with nature.
 - 4. For us and for itself.

The text is Lukács's defense of his seminal work *History and Class Consciousness* (1923) against his principal intellectual attackers in the Comintern, Abram Deborin and Laszlo Rudas. Lukács argues that his book is a philosophical expression of Bolshevism and characterizes Deborin as a Menshevik and Rudas as a tailist. Lukács convincingly argues that these two, operating with an implicit Kantianism and uncritically importing a limited natural-scientific perspective into Marxist theory, are trapped in a subject-object dualism they cannot overcome and have completely missed the boat on the nature of dialectical consciousness and revolutionary praxis.

In part I, Lukács demonstrates that Deborin and Rudas are caught within a dualism of subject and object and therefore are incapable of addressing the nature of class consciousness, revolutionary praxis (as opposed to fatalism and spontaneity), and the Bolshevik party as the vehicle for the mediation of the objective and subjective dimensions of class struggle (see esp. 56, 63, 65, 67, 72, 75, 76, 79). Lukács argues at length for his conception of “imputed class consciousness”—that is, from the standpoint of the totality of the working-class situation and its interests rather than from that of immediacy. Mediation in contradistinction to immediacy is a central concept for Lukács. Also of note is the natural-scientific perspective of Lukács’s opponents, the notion of “laws of history” on the objective side, and subjectivity and consciousness across the great divide.

Part II is of special importance. Lukács’s criticisms of Engels’s dialectics of nature and his remarks about the “contemplative” nature of scientific experiment have always been controversial, but here we see that the real issue for Lukács is the misbegotten transposition of a dialectic of nature to social theory (in this case on the part of Rudas and Deborin), effecting a fundamental distortion of Marxism. Lukács harbors no animus against the notion of a dialectic of nature per se, but he offers an interesting if obscure argument that such a bare-bones dialectic cannot even do justice to the dialectics of scientific practice, let alone account for the social determination of scientific practice.

In section I, Lukács counterposes historical materialism to the old materialism that Marx and Engels criticized. Key here is the notion of mediation, opposed to the naive positing of immediacy (95). The relationship to nature is socially mediated, not immediate (96). (Intermixed here is the argument that social being determines social consciousness; see also 100.) Rudas, imprisoned in Kantianism, cannot overcome his dualism, by which people and society fall on the subjective side of the dividing line and nature on the objective (100ff). Rudas’s notion of objective reality is too parsimonious. Of course, society arose from nature, nature and its laws existed prior to society, and dialectic must have existed in nature in order for dialectic to exist in society. However, without

the mediation provided by new social dialectical forms, neither knowledge of nature nor of society would be possible (102). The dialectical understanding of knowledge is part of the objective process of social development. Knowledge of nature, however restricted, is a basic condition of survival, and goes hand in hand with the “exchange of matter between society and nature,” which corresponds to the economic development of society (103).

Section 2 is rather cryptic, but it merits close scrutiny, for it gets to the heart of Lukács’s argument about science. While objective dialectical interconnections may exist, they may or may not show up as dialectical thought, depending on the historical development of society. Deborin, citing Hegel, objects to Lukács’s “neglect of the simple categories of the dialectic in favour of the higher ones.” But even if Hegel supports Deborin’s view, just the opposite is the case for Marx: the lower form can only be understood from the vantage point of the higher. (Human anatomy is key to ape’s anatomy; the advance from the abstract to the concrete is the way of thought, not of reality.) Thus Lukács is not interested in “transformation of quantity into quality, etc., but rather interaction of subject and object, unity of theory and praxis, alteration of the categories as effect of the change of material (reality underlying the categories).”

In section 3, Lukács emphasizes the double determination of the exchange of matter with nature (out of which science is eventually born)—that is, interaction with nature—and the economic structure of society. (Remember that, for Lukács, the relationship to nature is always socially mediated.) How could modern natural science be understood differently from anything else? Well, the capitalist organization of knowledge and technology is something new in history, and it is this organization that is requisite for capitalism to exist (113–14). Modern natural sciences are a product of capitalist development, but, contra relativism, this makes them no less objective (115). But is scientific knowledge conditioned by capitalism in some way other than being produced by it? Must objective cognition always be dialectical? Lukács’s response is hard to decipher (116).

Anyway, the specific problem is that historical knowledge depends on social self-criticism. The transition from precapitalist forms of society to capitalism must be fundamentally different

from the transformation of capitalism to socialism. If we cannot demonstrate the historical genesis of our cognition, then we have not matured objectively (not only subjectively) enough to be able to grasp this aspect of objective dialectic. Natural sciences do not lack elements of historical cognition, but historical and dialectical knowledge first comes into its own only with Marx. Perhaps these questions are not central to the concerns of these sciences now (although Lukács makes a cryptic prior reference to a crisis in the sciences). We cannot answer the question as “to what extent all knowledge of nature can ever be transformed into historical knowledge,” (i.e., whether there are transhistorical invariances), because our knowledge (objective situation) has not matured to be able to answer it. Objective knowledge will advance in its usual impartial way. Natural scientists do not have to be aware of this problem at all in order to create objective knowledge. However, they cannot understand in a dialectical manner contradictions that arise and cannot come to a unified historical theoretical perspective (118). This material is very difficult to bring to a clear focus, but I believe the effort may be important for us today.

Section 4 begins with Lukács’s argument against one of Engels’s well-known statements: the claim that experiment and industry put an end to Kant’s mysterious thing-in-itself. While Engels may be positioned to draw such a philosophical conclusion from experiments, we know that experimenters do not necessarily do so themselves, nor are they immune from philosophical “crotchets” like “agnosticism” (see 136). Experimenters are not inherently primed to take their objective knowledge to the level of philosophical generalization, beyond the “contemplative attitude.” Entrapment within immediacy intensifies if experiment is used as a “category of knowledge of society and history,” for the methodological precision of experiment gets lost, and the contemplative attitude comes to the fore: i.e., on the one hand, political intervention is an “experiment,” which we can, on the other hand, observe from outside and take a wait-and-see attitude. This kind of thinking is exemplified in Deborin’s writings. (Lukács invokes Marx’s theses on Feuerbach here.) But Lukács would not, in attempting to transcend the framework of the “experimenter,”

recommend such nonsense as a proletarian physics or chemistry (125–27).

Revolutionary praxis involves consciousness of the social and historical preconditions of human activity. Experimenters do not have such consciousness of the basis of their activity (although some lucky exceptions may exist), although they have a correct grasp of some aspect of objective reality, as do all workers. The dialectic of capitalist labor and technology may be objectively at work, but this does not imply subjective dialectical consciousness of these processes (129–30). “The dialectical transformation of the in-itself into a for-us always requires more than an immediate transposition into forms of consciousness.”

The ensuing argument involves a contrast between industry and revolutionary praxis. This is all to show where Rudas and Deborin essentially go wrong. Rudas shows up his tail-ending in implicitly positing an identity of capitalist and communist society. Rudas and Deborin are incapable of distinguishing revolutionary praxis from what they take to be praxis in general. Rudas “does not want to leave his noble scientific post as ‘observer’ of the law-bound course of history, where he can ‘anticipate’ revolutionary developments” (135).

In sum, Lukács’s overarching goal is to characterize the nature of revolutionary praxis in contradistinction to the type of Marxism purveyed by his attackers. His conception of dialectic is worth pursuing. His actual views of natural science are still very difficult to pin down. The point in attacking the “contemplative attitude” is not so much to downgrade natural experimental science as to delegitimize it as the prototype of dialectical consciousness and revolutionary praxis.

Lukács’s manuscript was not only utterly lost to history until recently, but these ideas of 1925–26 went nowhere. Critical theory has never succeeded in penetrating the theoretical structure of the natural sciences, and mainstream philosophy of science is abysmally ignorant of critical theory. Mainstream sociology of science is shot through with social constructivism, skepticism, relativism, and irrationalism. Lukács offers a Hegelian-Marxist perspective that explicitly repudiates relativism (104, 115).

What Lukács could not accomplish under highly constricting circumstances, we have failed to undertake under more advanced conditions. The ideas presented here are arcane, but their implications merit the effort of teasing out. Thus the publication of this hitherto unknown text may prove (in more ways than one) to be a crucial missing link in intellectual history.

Ralph Dumain
Washington, DC

The Life of Ho Chi Minh: A Review Essay

Jeffrey R. Kerr-Ritchie

Ho Chi Minh: A Life. By William J. Duiker. New York: Hyperion, 2001. 697 pages, paper \$16.95

Biographer William Duiker once served in Taiwan and South Vietnam as a junior officer in the U.S. State Department. He taught in the history department at Penn State University, specializing in modern Vietnam and China with a secondary interest in world history. Professor Emeritus since 1997, he has written widely on Asian history, including at least eight books on Vietnam.

This ninth book emerged from the young official's fascination with Ho Chi Minh while serving at the U.S. Embassy in Saigon during the mid-1960s. Duiker was impressed by the better discipline and motivation of the Viet Cong compared to the armed forces of the government of South Vietnam, and believed the answer had something to do with Ho, the "master motivator and strategist" (ix). One of the reasons for the delay in writing the biography was the lack of available source materials. Availability has improved over the last few decades with the opening up of new archival materials in Russia, China, and France. Indeed, one of the strengths of this new biography is the author's careful employment of these new sources to tackle his subject's controversial life. (Good biographies of Ho in English include Halberstam 1971, Lacouture 1968, and Nguyen Khac Huyen 1971).

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The following biographical sketch draws from several Web sources as well as the Duiker biography. Nguyen Sinh Cung was born on 19 May 1890 in Hoang Tru village. His father, Nguyen Sinh Sac, was a Confucian scholar who earned the prestigious *pho bang* degree. His mother, Hoang Thi Loan, came from a family of teachers and farmers. He had two siblings: a brother, Nguyen Tat Dat, who became a geomancer and herbalist; and a sister, Bach Lien, who clerked for the French military. Nguyen Sinh Cung grew up in Kiem Lien village and spent his first decade in the Nam Dan district in Nghe An province. As was traditional in Vietnamese society, his father renamed him Nguyen Tat Thanh (“he who will succeed”) at age eleven (23).

After a series of both frustrating and uplifting educational experiences at the local level, Ho enrolled in the Dong Ba upper-level elementary school in the old imperial city of Hue. Part of the French-Vietnamese educational system in which classes were taught in Vietnamese, French, and Chinese, the school was also the place where Pham Van Dong and Vo Nguyen Giap, future comrades of Ho, received their early schooling. Ho’s political baptism occurred at Hue when he served as a translator for local peasants in their demands against the French authorities. For his efforts, Ho was dismissed from the academy (37). While Duiker is right to suggest that the protest and dismissal were of political significance in Ho’s life, we should beware of clear-cut political baptisms. After all, political consciousness can also be a slow-burning fuse.

Ho headed south to Gia Dinh (Saigon), and during the summer of 1911 embarked on the steamship *Admiral Latouche-Treville* to the French port of Marseilles. He worked as a dishwasher, kitchen-helper, and coal stoker during the month-long voyage. Upon arrival, the twenty-one year old wrote a letter to the president of the French Republic requesting enrollment in the Colonial School, but was denied access. Ho stayed at sea for the next several months, apparently visiting several countries and colonies throughout Africa and Asia. (This peripatetic period is not well documented.)

He even spent some time on the eastern seaboard of the United States, visiting New York City. According to Duiker, Ho attended meetings of the Universal Negro Improvement Association,

Marcus Garvey's radical Black nationalist organization. This appears unlikely, however, because Ho left the United States in 1913, and UNIA was not founded until 1914 in Jamaica; Garvey did not emigrate to the United States until 1916.

Ho spent the wartime years in Great Britain, where he worked as a pastry chef in major hotels in central London. At one point, he trained under legendary French master chef Escoffier at the Carlton Hotel in Westminster; what is now New Zealand House bears a commemorative plaque. Sometime in late 1917, Ho relocated to Paris, where he seems to have lived out of his suitcase and pursued a series of jobs including food vendor, language teacher, sign maker, and film developer. This was a period of tremendous social upheaval in Europe following the devastation of World War I, the Bolshevik Revolution, peace-making at Versailles, and the establishment of Paris as the global center for national self-determination. Ho helped form a new organization, the *Association des Patriotes Annamites* (Group of Vietnamese Patriots), consisting of Vietnamese living in France. Its eight-point petition, *Revendications du Peuple Annamite*, called for political autonomy and traditional democratic freedoms drawing from Woodrow Wilson's principles of national self-determination issued at Versailles. The author was listed as Nguyen Ai Quoc (Nyugen the Patriot). The petition was ignored, driving Ho into radical politics. Ho regularly attended meetings of the French Socialist Party and the General Confederation of Labor, and in 1921 he joined the French Communist Party.

The previous year, Ho had read Lenin's "Theses on the National and Colonial Questions," calling for a tactical alliance between Communist parties and nationalist movements in colonized regions. Ho later recounted its impact: "Though sitting alone in my room, I shouted aloud as if addressing large crowds: Dear martyrs, compatriots! This is what we need, this is the path to our liberation" (64). In my view, Duiker could have spent more time examining these theses because of their unquestionable impact upon Ho's political ideology.

Over the next several years, Ho studied revolutionary tactics in Moscow. He served as a member of the Communist International

(Comintern) in Guangzhou (Canton) in southern China from 1925 to 1927. While in East Asia, Ho helped organize the Communist Party of Indochina, the forerunner of the Dang Cong San Vietnam (Communist Party of Vietnam, VCP). He spent the 1930s mainly in Moscow and China. After an absence of thirty years, Ho returned to Vietnam in 1941 to lead the independence movement (Viet Minh) against Japanese colonial occupation. It was during this period that Ho adopted the name Ho Chí Minh, a Sino-Vietnamese name meaning “he who enlightens.”

On 2 September 1945, Ho read the Declaration of Independence from a temporary platform in Place Puginier (later Ba Dinh Square) in Hanoi. Interestingly enough, Ho began his speech by quoting “All men are created equal” from the American Declaration of Independence.

An initial agreement with the French soon turned into a military confrontation that remained unsettled until the defeat of the French army at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. This victory was based upon Ho’s prescient strategic understanding of the price of victory: “If we have to fight, we will fight. You will kill ten of our men and we will kill one of yours. In the end, it will be you who will tire of it” (Harrison 1982, 114).

This announcement proved accurate against the French and later the Americans. (Something similar is also currently working itself out in Iraq.) As a result of the Geneva peace settlement, Vietnam was divided at the seventeenth parallel, and Ho became president of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). Elections scheduled for 1956 to reunite the country never materialized because of a boycott by South Vietnam supported by the United States, which feared another Communist state in Asia.

The VCP pursued major land reform during this period. Following Mao’s program in China, radical elements in the Party were strongly encouraged to collectivize agriculture. In 1954, Ho promised a program of land redistribution through “land to the tiller.” It had two objectives: an economic goal to transfer “excess” land from elite wealthy villagers to majority poor villagers who would turn it into productive usage; and a political goal to destroy the power of the landlord class in the countryside. Over the next two years, a land-reform program was launched involving “speak

bitterness” sessions, local tribunals, landlord evictions, indiscriminate violence, and executions. The end result of the program was the redistribution of over two million acres (800,000 hectares) to over two million farm families, or well over half of all agricultural workers in the DRV. The landed class’s power was broken to be replaced by poor and middle-level peasant leadership. The cost in human life, however, was high. Estimates of those who died in the process range from 3,000 to 15,000, excluding the countless numbers who suffered through harassment, persecution, humiliation, and torture (Harrison 1982, 114).

Ho also used land reform to consolidate his government. He helped organize the National Liberation Front to wean South Vietnam from American influence and eventually for reunification with North Vietnam. Between 1955 and 1965, Ho effectively became a figurehead, playing a largely ceremonial role in the nation’s affairs (553). His modern counterpart is Nelson Mandela, who assumed ceremonial office after his contribution to the overthrow of the racist apartheid system of South Africa. During the late 1960s, Ho’s health declined, and on 3 September 1969, he died of a heart attack at the age of 79. The Party Central Committee launched an appeal to turn sorrow into action: “He has struggled stubbornly against imperialism, devoted all his life for national liberation, freedom, socialism, and communism.” In seven days, some 200,000 people came to pay their last respects. More than 22,000 messages and letters of condolence flooded in from 121 countries (Ho Chi Minh, Communist Party of Vietnam, Web page). Ho’s embalmed body was displayed in a granite mausoleum at Ba Dinh Square in Hanoi modeled after Lenin’s tomb in Moscow. This near-deification, although similar to that accorded other Communist leaders, violated Ho’s last wishes, which were that he be cremated and his ashes buried in urns on hilltops in the three main regions of Vietnam (North, Central and South). Ho wrote: “Not only is cremation good from the point of view of hygiene, but it also saves farmland” (http://en.wikipedia.org/Ho_Chi_Minh).

Ho Chi Minh led a fascinating life and has been the subject of intense debate. Many questions are addressed in a balanced fashion by this recent biography. Why did the eighteen-year-old Ho leave for

France? According to Ho's later reminiscences and hagiographers, he left to "save his country" (45). While skeptical of such an explanation, Duiker is persuaded that Ho was patriotic, opposed the colonial regime's rule, and recognized the importance of working at the heart of French colonial power. Certainly other anticolonial activists were similarly motivated; 1930s London was visited by anticolonialists George Padmore, C. L. R. James, Harold Moody, and Ras Makonnen from the English colonies in the Caribbean; as well as Nnamdi Azikiwi, Kwame Nkrumah, P. K. I. Seme, and Jomo Kenyatta from English colonies in Africa. London represented the pulsating heart of the British Empire (Kerr-Ritchie 2006a, 1:108). Who was responsible for writing the famous document "*Revendications du Peuple Annamite*"? Was it only the work of Ho, or the product of collective efforts by Vietnamese activists in Paris? The French authorities were confused because they had never heard the signer's name before. In his later reminiscences, Ho claimed to be the author. According to Duiker, however, the actual authorship is less important than the fact that Ho was mainly responsible for its publication, and that the name of the author (Nguyen Ai Quoc, one of Ho's many pseudonyms) was to become renowned throughout Vietnam (59).

Did the establishment of an independent Vietnamese government in August 1945 constitute either a revolution or a *coup d'état*? In subsequent years, official historians have portrayed this moment as evidence of the brilliance of the leadership of the VCP, especially its strategy of combining political and military struggle to seize power. More recently, Western scholars have argued that the planning was quite limited and that independence was largely the consequence of a spontaneous uprising. The author concludes that the August revolution was an extraordinary achievement largely due to the Party leadership's ability to "grasp the opportunity" at the close of the Pacific war (344).

How are we to evaluate the role of Ho Chi Minh in the land-reform program? Some argue that somewhere between 150,000 and 200,000 peasants became victims of this campaign—many not landlords, but either family members of landlords, independent peasants, local officials, or veterans of the French wars. According to the online encyclopedia Wikipedia, "many of his [Ho's]

detractors hold him responsible for the event in question” (http://en.wikipedia.org/Ho_Chi_Minh). In contrast, Duiker estimates a much lower body count of 3,000 to 5,000. Moreover, the author maintains that Truong Chinh, general secretary of the Party, was largely responsible for land-reform policies. Although Ho “had not been directly involved in planning or implementing the land-reform campaign,” writes Duiker, his reputation was still marred by the excesses of his colleagues (485).

An alternative explanation, of course, concerning peasants and the state, is rooted in the leftist intellectual tradition. Marx’s analysis of relations between Napoleon III and the French peasantry after the 1848 revolution is pertinent. “The political influence of the small-holding peasants, therefore,” he wrote, “finds its final expression in the executive power subordinating society to itself” (1979, 188). One of the most contentious questions concerns the nature of Ho’s political ideology and whether he was a nationalist or a communist. In 1960, Ho wrote an article in which he discussed the attraction of Marxism as a means to solving the national question. Also, while Lenin proposed national liberation as a purely tactical means to an eventual communist revolution in the colonies, Ho often seemed to embrace national independence as the defining objective, with social revolution being an afterthought. He once declared: “It was patriotism, not communism, that inspired me.” On the other hand, it is hard to deny Ho’s commitment to global revolution in the name of social justice for five decades of his life from the 1920s onward. (This explains all those condolences from 121 countries after his death). Duiker concludes that Ho reconciled his patriotism and internationalism through the notion of “federation.” Drawing upon Lenin, Ho subscribed to the notion of a “period of transition between national independence and the final stages of communism” (124). While original, this interpretation seems somewhat forced. Surely Ho’s brilliance was his ability to move between nationalism and international communism the way many other political leaders, intellectuals, and ideologues have done over the years in pursuit of national self-determination and their peoples’ liberation.

The critical question of this biography, of course, is how to evaluate Ho Chi Minh. To his detractors, Ho was an opportunist

who seized power, created an authoritarian government, and invaded South Vietnam, resulting in over a million deaths. In the author's own words: "Uncle Ho's compatriots indeed paid a high price for his determination to realize his dream" (540). To his supporters, Ho is viewed positively as a committed nationalist and Vietnamese Communist, who fought for a united Vietnamese state. To the VCP, he is a god-like figure beyond reproach. According to Duiker, however, Ho was the "chief strategist" and the "most inspiring symbol" of the Vietnamese revolution (576). This supports the author's original purpose for writing this biography. Moreover, the author concludes that Ho was an "event-making man" through whom emerged the two important modern forces of national liberation and social justice (577).

While it is refreshing to read a serious work about a nationalist and Communist leader that steers between the rock of cold war prejudice and the whirlpool of Communist Party romance, nonetheless it is striking the extent to which all these evaluations share the Great Man view of history. The author's preoccupation with political and ideological issues comes at the expense of social questions, especially those pertaining to the rural masses. According to the index, only 21 of nearly 700 pages deal with the question of land, and this focus is mainly on land as an official policy of "class warfare" during the early 1950s. We learn little about what the rural masses did or thought either during this period or indeed throughout the eight tumultuous decades of Ho's life. This seems somewhat wanting, especially given Ho's lifelong commitment to peasant revolution. This is the major weakness in an otherwise splendid biography that is thoroughly documented and eminently readable.

Moreover, this reviewer would have preferred more on the avuncular figure of "Uncle Ho" (Bac Ho) as the international symbol of anticolonial liberation and consistent opponent of Western capitalist democracies. Between 1945 and 1965, European colonialism was overthrown in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. At the same time, the Vietnamese people were consolidating their independence in the north as well as struggling against Western puppet regimes in the south. The latter

stages of this struggle are powerfully portrayed in one large hall at the War Remnants Museum in Ho Chi Minh City. It depicts support for the Vietnamese revolution from all over the world, including that of many newly independent states. The point is that important international dimensions and connections between anticolonial struggles in the postwar decades are insufficiently explored in this biography.

One response Duiker does not make to Ho's detractors but which this reviewer thinks is necessary concerns the price of progress or social change. A large and growing historical literature condemns the loss of life as a consequence of anticolonial liberation struggles. One response is Mao's blunt remark that "revolution is not a dinner party." A more accurate historical response traces the bloody road to modernity paved by the Western powers. I will quote just three sources. In his *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* written in 1542, Spanish bishop of Chiapas Bartolomé de las Casas wrote: "During the 12 years [1518–1530], the Spanish killed more than four million men, women, and children with swords and lances, and by burning people alive" (Casas 1998, 39).

In chapter thirty-one of the first volume of *Capital*, Marx writes: "The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production" (Marx 1996, 739). Fast forward 150 years to Robin Blackburn's *Making of New World Slavery* explaining the path to modernity: "Captive Africans and their descendants [9 to 13 million] paid with their blood and sweat and incarceration for the phenomenal expansion of human possibilities in the Atlantic world" (Blackburn 1997, 23).

The propagandists of the Western way should not forget that their pastoral path of advance has been much longer and as deadly, if not more deadly, than recent attempts to come to terms with it.

Someone once said that the nature of a revolution largely determines what it subsequently becomes. What are the implications of

the Vietnamese revolution for the future? First, the sort of discipline and motivation that originally impressed William Duiker continue to characterize Party politics in Vietnam. This is a top-down revolution in which the Party determines the political and economic policies to be followed by the people. This was readily apparent to this reviewer and other members of conference tours during meetings at the Ho Chi Minh National Political Academy in Hanoi and the People's Committee in Ho Chi Minh City in 2003 and 2006.

Then there is the problem of the personality cult. Ho Chi Minh's express wish was that he not be sanctified. In contrast, the Party has deified him. He is often referred to as Uncle Ho at schools and universities, while his face appears on the dong currency, and his image is featured prominently in many public spaces. This cult is appallingly apparent in Ho's mummification at the Mausoleum in Ba Dinh Square in Hanoi. On my last visit in January 2006, there were long lines of visitors, many of whom were Western tourists. There is something incongruous about the avuncular becoming the godly. In my view, Ho would be much more useful to the Vietnamese people once he is taken off his pedestal and seen in his weaknesses as well as his strengths. The same can be said for the founding fathers of America, or even Martin Luther King. Moreover, many young people admire Ho, but also feel a limited attachment to the past of which he is a symbol. This is largely due, I believe, to the official policy that alienates them.

The official attitude toward the peasantry in the past continues to characterize policies in the present. In March 1978, the Party announced a policy of collectivization of agriculture resulting in alienating much of the peasantry in the south. (568). Although there has been an important subsequent shift from collectivization to public usufruct, or family farming rights, it should not be forgotten that the state has also pursued controversial policies of transplanting people. One example was the relocation of people of the *Vinh* ethnic majority into the Central Highlands populated by minorities in order to cultivate coffee as a cash crop. The result was rural unrest, the destruction of coffee farms, and social protest against threats to a traditional way of life (Kerr-Ritchie 2006b).

Then there is the problem of the urban bourgeoisie. They haunt the pages of this biography but are rarely systematically investigated. The French colonial power tolerated them. The Americans supported anyone who would help resist the success of the Viet Cong. It is unclear how different the current policy is toward these merchants of capital. They are being encouraged to make profits, especially in Ho Chi Minh City. (I recall a conversation with a young American bar-owner married to a Vietnamese woman for whom Saigon [his term] offered far greater opportunities for free enterprise than anything back in the United States.) But only two outcomes are possible. One is that the best entrepreneurs will flee Vietnam because they feel fettered by the state's policies. Or, they may discover their political power, pose a threat to state power, and suffer the fate of their erstwhile country cousins.

It is twenty years since the Party switched to "Doi Moi" or its policy of renovation. The balance sheet is mixed. On the one hand, the gross domestic product per capita has jumped threefold, while infant mortality rates have dropped substantially. On the other hand, there are growing income differences between urban proletarians and the rural masses, together with environmental degradation and the increasing alienation of Vietnamese youth. Does this mean that the battle against colonialism has been won, but that a successful war against capitalism is less certain? Or can these policies be seen in terms of the practical and master strategy pursued by Ho Chi Minh?

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ABSTRACTS

Erich Hahn, “Lukács on Socialist Democracy”—During the period of “existing socialism” in Europe, the views of Lukács on socialist democracy did not receive adequate study in Marxist-Leninist philosophy. The author, long associated with the Marxist-Leninist philosophical outlook, takes a fresh look at Lukács and notes that Lukács’s theoretical critique of the deformations of existing socialism was a socialist criticism quite distinct from bourgeois criticism. Relevant to this critique was Lukács’s recommendation for a fundamental alternative to the dualism of thinking and being.

Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada, “Opening Speech at the International Conference, ‘The Work of Karl Marx and the Challenges of the Twenty-First Century’”—In this article, Ricardo Alarcón, president of Cuba’s National Assembly, stresses the need to overcome the bankrupt dogmatic traditions of “existing socialism,” while valuing its positive achievements. Alarcón stresses the need for new Marxist strategies to deal with the new global problems confronting humanity in the twenty-first century. He points out that no theory exists on a world scale that can serve as a guide for transformation in the direction of socialism. Such a guide must necessarily include forging a unity among the exploited peoples of the First and Third Worlds.

NST Conference/Study Tour in Vietnam, January 2006. A selection of papers from the Conference “Consequences of the Changing World Economy for Class Relations, Ideology, and Culture,” Hanoi, 9–11 January 2006, is presented in a special section of this issue of *Nature, Society, and Thought*. The conference was held in conjunction with a two-week study tour of Vietnam cosponsored with the Ho Chi Minh National Political Academy. Additional papers will be presented in the next issue of the journal.

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ABREGES

Erich Hahn, « Lukács et la démocratie socialiste » — Pendant la période du “socialisme existant” en Europe les vues de Lukács sur la démocratie socialiste n’ont pas fait l’objet d’études adéquates dans le cadre de la philosophie marxiste-léniniste. L’auteur, associé depuis longtemps à la perspective marxiste-léniniste, nous propose une nouvelle approche de Lukács et constate que la critique théorique de Lukács sur les déformations du socialisme existant était d’une nature socialiste très distincte de la critique bourgeoise. Les recommandations de Lukács en faveur d’une alternative fondamentale au dualisme de la pensée et de l’être sont en rapport direct avec cette critique.

Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada, « Discours d’ouverture à la conférence internationale, «L’oeuvre de Karl Marx et les défis du XXI^{ème} siècle » — Dans cet article Ricardo Alarcón, président de l’Assemblée Nationale de Cuba, souligne le besoin de surmonter les traditions dogmatiques échouées du « Socialisme existant », tout en tenant compte de ses réussites. Alarcón insiste sur le besoin de nouvelles stratégies marxistes pour faire face aux nouveaux problèmes mondialisés auxquels est confrontée l’humanité au XXI^{ème} siècle. Il signale qu’aucune théorie n’existe au niveau mondial qui puisse servir de guide pour une transformation en direction du socialisme. Un tel mode d’emploi devra impérativement inclure la création d’une unité entre les masses exploitées des pays du Nord et celles des pays sous-développés.

Conférence NST/Voyage d’étude au Vietnam en janvier 2006 — Une sélection de discours tenus à la conférence « Conséquences des changements dans l’économie mondiale pour les relations de classes, l’idéologie et la culture », qui a eu lieu à Hanoi du 9 au 11 janvier 2006, est présentée dans une section spéciale de ce numéro de *Nature, Society, and Thought*. La conférence fut organisée conjointement avec un voyage d’étude sur le Vietnam co-parrainé par l’Académie Politique Nationale Ho Chi Minh. Des essais supplémentaires seront présentés dans le prochain numéro de notre revue.