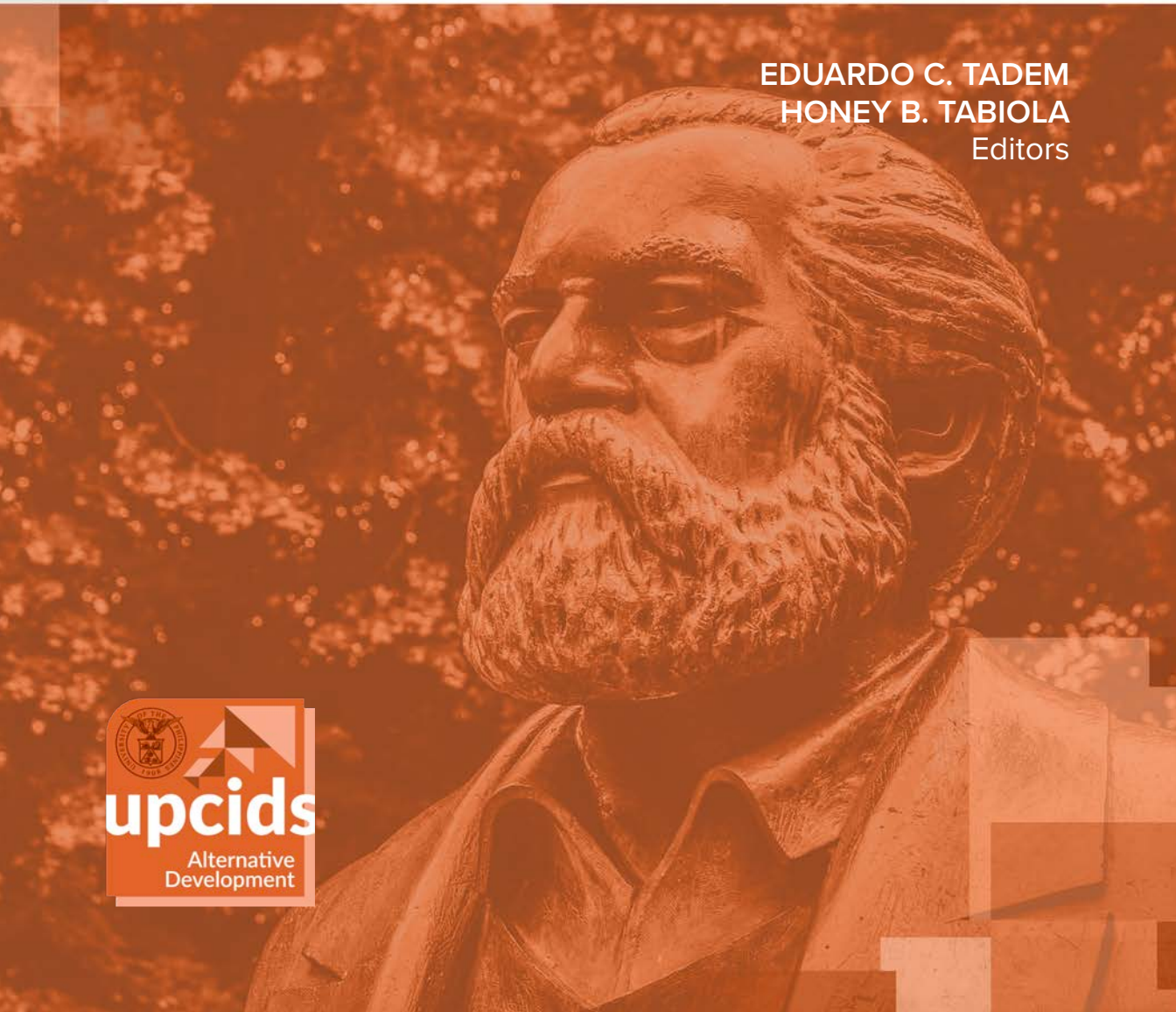
UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
PUBLIC POLICY MONOGRAPH SERIES • 2020-04

Critical Thought in Troubled Times

Encounters with Marx

Published in Commemoration of the
200th Birth Anniversary of Karl Marx (1818–2018)

VOLUME 2



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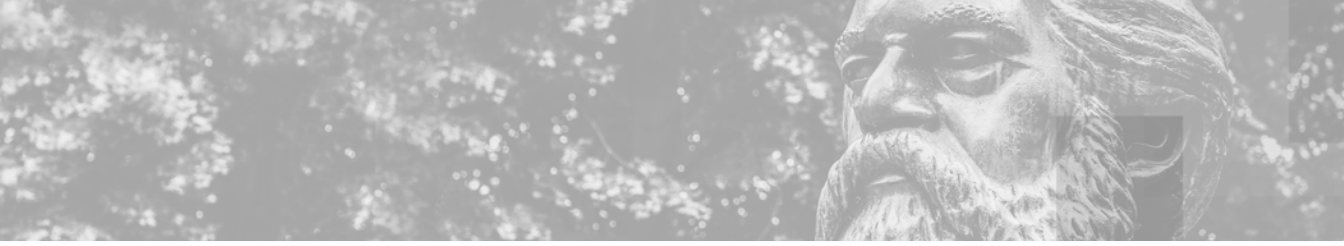

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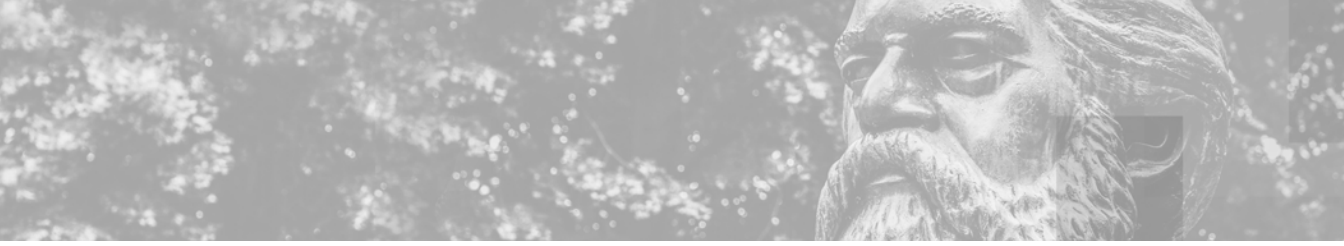

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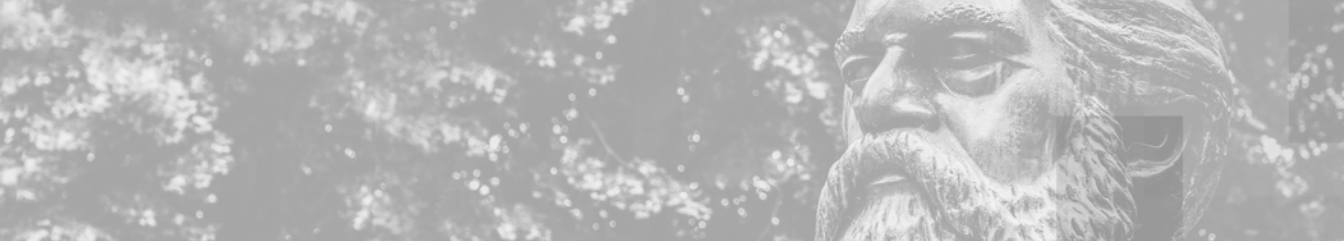

INTRODUCTION
Struggles and Wishes of Our Dark Times

HONEY B. TABIOLA

We live in troubled and troubling times.

While we marvel at massive technological progress, record-high global wealth, and high economic growth rates, we are also witnessing the phenomena of democratic erosions, authoritarian populisms, new forms of conflicts, trade wars, an overtaxed environment, volatile national and global economies, and the COVID-19 pandemic. At the center of this vertigo of multiple crises is the seeming unravelling of some of the promises of modernity: boundless possibilities for the individual, prominence of pure technological development, the belief in science and reason as keys to the mastery of ourselves, and the idea of historical progress.

Challenging our understanding of both our past and possible futures, the coordinates of our time are marked by severe systemic crises. In the economic sphere, Thomas Piketty (2014) argues that long-term extreme wealth and resulting income inequalities in various industrial societies threaten to generate social discontent and undermine democratic and meritocratic values. The neoliberal assault led to the defunding of public housing, healthcare, education, mass transportation, and access to other essential services, forcing workers to long and gruelling hours of poorly-paid work, leaving little time for other worthwhile pursuits and for providing care and emotional support to members of their families. Meanwhile, socialist feminists argue that wealth and income inequalities in the realm of production often occlude the deeper crisis of the gendered work of social reproduction. This view foregrounds the so-called "crisis of care," not only manifested in depleted energies and the lack of time for the "creation and strengthening of social bonds" within the family (Fraser 2016), but also in the withdrawal of public support for the various social infrastructures that

need to be in place for the working population to reproduce labor power and enable them to return to work the next morning (Bhattacharya 2017).

In the political sphere, these gaping inequalities and the crisis of care have been exploited by right-wing authoritarian populists to fuel polarization and ignite the fire of hatred against scapegoats such as Jews, Muslims, immigrants, socialists, or the media. In many liberal democracies, social discontent has taken an antidemocratic hard-right turn. The right-wing backlash characterized by plutocracy, racial supremacy, affectively charged and politicized masses, indifference to truth, and extreme social disinhibition are the Frankenstein of neoliberalism (Brown 2019), owing to its attack on democratic institutions, its antagonism to the state's responsibility to protect its citizens from the excesses and failures of the market, and its promotion of narrow and thin conceptions of freedom. In the ecological sphere, for decades, the climate alarm has been sounded to move away from fossil fuels and to put the spotlight on warming oceans, melting ice, startling loss and even extinction of wildlife, and the pollution of ecosystems which undermine the very foundations of economies, food systems, lives, and livelihoods of countries and communities (Klein 2019).

Climate change leading to habitat loss, various unsustainable agricultural practices (including raising tens of millions of animals in close quarters), and illegal wildlife trade bring animals closer to human populations which increases pathogen spillover (Bernstein 2020). As of this writing, the world languishes in the COVID-19 pandemic, the "first integrated ecosystems crash" closely intertwining the economic, microbiological, and ecological dynamics, rendering them indistinguishable (Cooper 2020). The pandemic has crashed markets; ceased businesses; devastated jobs and savings; disrupted homes, farms, and schools; and collapsed healthcare systems—simultaneously revealing the fragile interconnections of the economy, ecology, and social life and the fault lines of capitalist societies marked by class, race, gender, ethnicity, indigeniety, age, and ability.

Whether experienced as dramatic (as in a pandemic) or as slow-moving (as in the violence of everyday life), crises are inherent in capitalism with its impulse to amass profit and squeeze value out of everything. Capitalism tends to cannibalize the very conditions that make it possible: the workers, social caring capacities of families and communities, democratic public power, and the natural environment (Fraser and Jaeggi 2018). Put another way, the fragility of the system is reflected in its social contradictions that inevitably lead to cycles of overlapping crises.

Crises normally tempt ordinary citizens to suspend critical thinking, give in to the expedient and to the convenient, and isolate themselves into the narrow comforts of a bounded nation, home, family, or self. Our perilous political present generates despair and melancholia which till the ground for submission to plain-talking strongmen, prejudiced demagogues, and elitist technocrats. Little wonder, it is the right-wing

populists who often thrive in the current conjuncture by tapping into citizens' resentment and political disaffection with the unfulfilled promises of the liberal order.

Still, these desperate times call for a radical rethinking and reformatting of previously held ideas and strategies for responding to crises and bringing about a better world for humanity. It is therefore the intention of this second collection of lectures from the Marx Bicentennial Lectures Series to forge a creative refusal to succumb to these dark times by insisting on the urgency of critical thought and the potency of progressive political aims. Following Karl Marx's understanding of critical thought which is the "self-clarification of the struggles and wishes of the age" (1843, cited in Fraser and Jaeggi 2018, 11), the contributions not only present critical diagnoses of the various crises of our time but also spirit a future of alternative trajectories.

Part I of this volume, "Marx and Economics," contains the inaugural lecture of Emmanuel de Dios, which demonstrates the foundational importance of the work of Karl Marx in the discipline of economics. de Dios traces the intellectual debts of New Institutional Economics (NIE) to Marx's insights.[1] Upon careful reading and mapping, de Dios finds that Marx anticipated major concepts of NIE theory, particularly the theory of the firm and wage relations. Marx's historical approach, the account goes, suggests that the spread of capitalist wage relations was a consequence of specific developments in property relations and industrial technology.

In particular, de Dios reveals that Marx's classic point on worker dispossession, forcible expropriation, and the consequent impossibility of independent production as necessary conditions for the workers' dependence on the capitalist for subsistence anticipated and complemented subsequent theoretical work in NIE. From this view, the workers' poverty and dependence induce them to enter the wage contract, thereby increasing the likelihood of their participation in the labor market. Further, de Dios maintains that there is also a remarkable convergence on the insights of Marx and NIE theorists: *within the firm* as a production arrangement, transaction costs can be overcome by new technology (as suggested by Marx) and that these transaction costs would not prevent the adoption of new technology (as suggested by Ronald Coase). In a sense, Marx provided the blueprint for some of the key categories of NIE which continue to animate research on the relationship and the immanent tension among technology, production organization, and property distribution within the context of a private-ownership economy.

[1] New Institutional Economics (NIE) is a framework for economic analysis that recognizes the development and role of legal, political, social and economic institutions in economic behavior and performance (Joskow 2004). It draws from contributions from history, law, psychology, anthropology, sociology, religion, and related disciplines to uncover and understand the impact of institutions on policy formation, implementation, and economic performance.

Part II, "Marx and Revolution," features chapters which deploy the fecund thinking of Marx and post-Marxists in helping to explain some of the complex conundrums of our times. The chapters respond to the crisis of social imagination plaguing the intellectual left, thereby expanding the scope for political action and organizing.

Rene Ofreneo's contribution takes off where de Dios' paper ends: the inherent contradiction between perfecting technology and the accumulation of private wealth in a capitalist society and Marx's ideas towards fundamentally overcoming it. In his chapter, Ofreneo is a social and historical cartographer who outlines the various strands of socialist thinking and practice and charts the contributions of select revolutionaries in visioning an alternative future. He argues that Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels laid the groundwork for building a socialist order, particularly their basic ideas on the pivotal role of class struggle culminating in a socialist revolution and a set of radical reform agenda embedded in *The Communist Manifesto* (1948). In Ofreneo's telling, however, Marx and Engels did not have a ready-made formula for the transition of the old capitalist order to a socialist system, so it became the task of the succeeding socialist revolutionaries to navigate this conundrum.

Through various painstaking excursions to the works and praxis of various socialists, Ofreneo describes these revolutionaries' difficult task in seeking to open the terrain of the socialist vision. Robert Owen, the father of British socialism, contributed in the realm of worker organizing, workers' welfare, and cooperativism. Vladimir Lenin, the Russian leader of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, took the task of theorizing and establishing a socialist order by formulating transition measures in a largely semi-agrarian country with a weak capitalist economy. Against the foregoing internal crisis within Russia and within its Communist Party, Rosa Luxemburg issued prophetic warnings on the calamitous consequences of the subversion of the democratic culture within the working-class socialist party. Amongst the constellation of these major thinkers, Ofreneo also featured Isabelo de los Reyes and his work in the propagation of socialist ideas in the Philippines, particularly to the nascent Philippine labor movement. For Ofreneo, the complex issue of socialist transition has not been fully fleshed out as revealed by the socialist experiments of the past and the "socialist-oriented" countries in the present, but there are valuable lessons from these experiences that political parties, trade unions, cooperatives, and civil society organizations can draw upon towards building the socialism of the 21st century.

In the next chapter, Rosalinda Pineda-Ofreneo attends to another crisis that is often neglected by the traditional left and the so-called "actually existing socialist societies" of the 20th century. Pineda-Ofreneo rescues Marx from criticisms of being productivist in sidestepping nature from his analytical vision. She claims that the disruption by capitalist exploitation of the organic, long-lasting metabolic interaction between humanity and the natural world has always been central to Marx's critique. In

her account, one inherent contradiction of capitalism is this metabolic or ecological rift which exhausts the original sources of all wealth: the earth and the worker. For her, this proposition has been a well-spring of insights for later Marxists towards elaborating a higher mode of collective life such as eco-socialism.

Towards clarifying the contours of such higher mode of life, Pineda-Ofreneo makes the case for ecofeminism which affirms the Marxist critique but also insists on the intricate link of the exploitation of the workers and the natural world with the degradation of women. According to her view, the overcoming and transformation of these shared oppressions require building an ecofeminist socialist order which is animated by the principles of self-sufficiency and sustainable livelihood; environmental preservation and conservation; clean and renewable energy; peace and disarmament; recognition of traditional knowledge and technology; upholding reproductive rights; and recognizing, reducing, and redistributing unpaid carework, among others. Pineda-Ofreneo echoes the call to action for a global mass mobilization composed of diverse alliances across genders, races, classes, indigenous peoples, and various environmental movements to advance the structural transformation of capitalism and the thriving of ecosystems.

Continuing the work of carving out a path out of today's political crisis, Eduardo Gonzalez focused his analytical vision on the rise and rule of populist leaders and political parties. Gonzalez performs a housecleaning on the problematic and polarizing concept of populism by critically reviewing the literature. And in so doing, he clarifies what are at stake—social and economic justice, political representation, and the death of democracy.

He finds that populism is propelled by a cycle of systemic corruption and social inequality. According to this view, the elites enrich themselves with public money and redesign the system to perpetuate their rule and their interests. As a result, ordinary citizens experience the economic and political system as rigged and unresponsive to their needs and aspirations, thus electing populist leaders who style themselves as their savior. The people's discontent and disaffection with the system is also fueled by neoliberalism which is the hegemonic form of capitalism characterized by privatization of public industries, deregulation of capital and labor, and the rolling back of social welfare policies. In Gonzalez's account, neoliberal policies do not have a political party; they are embraced by the ruling center right and left political parties of most liberal democracies who are persuaded that there is no alternative to neoliberalism.

Deploying the post-Marxian lens of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, Gonzalez describes populists as candidates who skillfully articulate the diverse demands of "the people" welded into one collective vision and against the political establishment. For right-wing populists, the political establishment is the elite and the nefarious and

nebulous "other"—the immigrants or the drug addicts, etc. From this formulation, echoing the insights of Laclau and Mouffe, Gonzalez believes that left-wing populists can also seize the citizens' widespread discontent by sharply pivoting away from the center, dissociating themselves from the consensus on neoliberalism, and offering an alternative that does not alienate and exclude any oppressed group. The political terrain is much more complex, the stakes much higher. For Gonzalez, it is high time the left reclaim the political space and imagination by constructing its own "people" and offering a vision that the electorate can believe in.

Part III shifts the focus towards "Marx and Religion." Both contributions demonstrate how the insights of Marx and the ideas inspired by him are malleable enough to navigate the terrain of certain religious and political contexts. Both chapters also show that, despite secularism, religion remains a formidable force in social and political change.

Like Gonzalez, Yusuf Roque Morales also takes up the politics of meaning and identity formation but approaches it from a different set of problematics, namely Islam and Marxism. Morales highlights, to use his words, the "progressive and revolutionary flavor" of Islam owing to its inclination and orientation to examining modes of dominant power and to offering alternative pathways to social change. In his contribution, he claims that two Islamic reformers discussed Islam in a way that proximate to Marxism in order to interpret political events and economic systems and guide the process of transformation within their respective countries.

Morales shows how Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and Ali Shariati carefully navigated the complex terrain of fighting "westoxification" and reworking Marxism within their unwelcoming societies in order to give voice to their people's yearning for revolutionary transformation. In light of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the erasure of culture of Turkish Muslims brought about by imposed Western secularization, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi developed a discourse to reinterpret a new worldview for Turkish peoples. As such, Nursi's project emphasized the development of a philosophical, sociocultural, and political approach to understanding issues confronting Turkey. Meanwhile, Ali Shariati appropriated the language of Shia Islam and created Red Shi'ism to develop a practice of interpretation which is revolutionary, anti-systemic, and anti-capitalist. In the process, he Persianized core Marxist categories to avoid incurring the ire of the ruling clerical class. Both Islamic thinkers understood the power of ideas and language to name societal transformations and inaugurate imaginaries towards more just socioeconomic and political systems.

The final chapter in this volume contemplates the same need for a progressive interpretation of Islam in the service of structural transformation, examining a case that is close to home: the synergy of the left-wing National Democratic Front (NDF)

and the Moro peoples' struggle. Eliseo "Jun" Mercado, OMI, has a unique perspective on the matter as he had been an active participant in the evolution of NDF initiatives in Mindanao to reach out to the Moro people. In what he calls a "disclosure," Mercado uncovers important points of contact and eventual convergence between the two forces by outlining historical events that led to their coming together: the First Quarter Storm, the two parallel wars that each engaged separately in the early 1970s, the displacement of radical students from Manila to Mindanao, among others. The two forces found themselves fighting side by side towards a similar goal which is ending national oppression and against a common enemy—the then dictator Ferdinand Marcos as supported by the U.S. government.

In Mercado's account, the convergence gave birth to the Moro Committee and other initiatives that sought to integrate the Moro peoples' struggle into the NDF's promotion of a national consciousness and a national movement. Foremost of these initiatives was a series of studies which advances a progressive interpretation of Islam to enable mobilizations under Marxist and Leninist perspectives in a united front. The tactical alliance had been embattled with crises time and again, offering some sobering lessons for any attempts at forging political alliances today. In his assessment, the dialogue between the NDF and the Moro peoples in the past had been fruitful. At present, the challenge lies in exploring political openings that rekindle, deepen, and consolidate these past efforts towards seeking common grounds.

The six lectures gathered in this volume demonstrate that left critique in the Philippines is alive and well. The work suggests that left progressive thinking in the country is expansive and felicitously free of a univocal approach. While they diverge in their ends and objects of study, in the disciplines they employ and in their prescriptions, what unites these lectures is a critical intellectual orientation that yearns to shed light on our dark times by offering explanatory paradigms and reinvigorating political imaginaries and possibilities.

Consider Emmanuel de Dios' effort to wrestle with the complexities of NIE and Marx's texts to explain the theory of the firm and wage relations in order to dodge the constraining orthodoxies of neoclassical economics. Or take the shared commitment of Rene Ofreneo, Rosalinda Pineda-Ofreneo, and Eduardo Gonzalez to overcoming sectarianism by affirming all social struggles and building broad alliances for a more potent left vision and strategy. Rene Ofreneo suggests that the working class has to simultaneously fight for and uphold labor and social protection and democratic practices and institutions. Rosalinda Pineda-Ofreneo sutures the often separate struggles for the well-being and dignity of the working class, the natural world, and women. Compare this with Eduardo Gonzalez's provocation that building a progressive historic bloc for the left requires constructing "the people" to mobilize the workers, women, youth, people of color, LGBTQI, peripheral subjects, and immigrants. And finally, Roque

Morales demonstrates the potency of blending Islam and Marxism through language and interpretation to apprehend socioeconomic and political transformations in Muslim societies while Eliseo "Jun" Mercado, OMI, shows the possibility of combining the struggle of the revolutionary working class and religious minorities in the fight for economic redistribution and social recognition.

In the future society envisioned by critically-oriented and freshly-hatched left progressive thought, there is no room for sacred dogmas and narrow sectarianism. The banisters that used to guide our collective lives have been steadily attenuated and fiercely contested: hollowed-out liberal democracy, small governments, free markets, "free gifts" of nature and women's labor, and the figure of the rational, self-interested man. And their attenuation expands the site of critique and limned possibilities. Enabled by the critical scaffolding of Marx's legacy and armed with political courage, the engaged scholars in this collection break open the doors of interventionist critical thought as if the wolves were not there.

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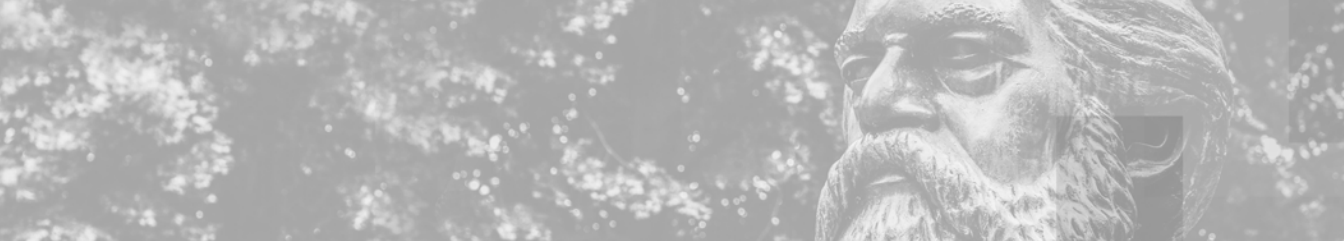
Part One

Marx and Economics



What the New Institutional Economics Owes Marx

EMMANUEL S. DE DIOS*

Abstract

The bicentennial of Marx's birth (2018) and the earlier sesquicentennial of *Capital*'s publication (2017) are opportunities to examine aspects of new institutional economics and incentive theory with an affinity to or origin in concepts first put forward by Marx. A major idea pertains to industrial organization and the theory of the firm. We compare Marxian and new-institutional insights and conversely attempt to interpret some of Marx's ideas from a new-institutional viewpoint.

Introduction

The deep influence exerted by the new institutional economics (NIE) on the course of mainstream

* Please address all correspondence to esdedios@econ.upd.edu.ph.

economic theory is beyond doubt. This is evident even at the most superficial level in the Nobel Memorial Prize recognition given to Ronald Coase, Douglass North, Oliver Williamson, and Elinor Ostrom,[1] whose efforts have transformed entire fields of economic theory, most especially industrial organization, economic history, and development economics.

It is remarkable—and still insufficiently appreciated—however how many of NIE's fundamental insights were anticipated in a major way in the work of Karl Marx. Not less remarkable (and paradoxical) is how mainstream economists' appreciation of Marxian economics for most of the 20th century neglected these institutional aspects with attention focused instead on the abstract-formal (and ultimately sterile) aspects of Marx's work, as exemplified by the arcana of the "transformation problem."[2] The question may certainly be raised whether the late-20th century rediscovery of some of Marx's fundamental institutional insights[3] does not qualify as a species of what Myrdal called "unnecessary originality," or at least interrupted development. The following discusses one aspect of Marx's work that anticipates a prominent theme in NIE, namely the nature of the firm and the evolution of institutions.

Markets versus firms

Adam Smith's pin-factory in the *Wealth of Nations* remains the iconic example of how the division of labor serves as the most important factor in raising labor productivity and ultimately per-capita income. Smith ([1776] 1976, 15) points out, however, that this example from a "trifling" manufacture serves only as a vivid illustration to facilitate observation. In more general terms, he asserts the very same principle is at work "[i]n every other art and manufacture" and uses this to explain the specialization of trades and occupations:

> The separation of different trades and employments from one another, seems to have taken place, in consequence of this advantage. This separation too is generally carried furthest in those countries which enjoy the highest degree of industry and

[1] Coase, North, and Williamson with Ostrom received the Nobel Memorial Prize in economics in the years 1991, 1993, and 2009, respectively. Of these four, it is North who openly acknowledged a Marxian orientation early in his career. Bylund (2014) has suggested that Coase's 1937 essay was influenced by the "socialist planning" debate of the 1940s, in which Abba P. Lerner, a classmate, played a major part.

[2] Pasinetti (1979) and Morishima (1978) provide some of the most rigorous and comprehensive examples of this strand of scholarship.

[3] Seventy years separate the publication of Marx's *Capital* and Coase's article on the nature of the firm. A further three or four decades more would pass before Coase's own article would find fuller appreciation. (See, e.g., the assessment by Coase (1988b).)

> improvement; what is the work of one man in a rude state of society, being generally that of several in an improved one. In every improved society, the farmer is generally nothing but a farmer; the manufacturer, nothing but manufacturer. The labor too which is necessary to produce any one complete manufacture, is almost always divided among a great number of hands. How many different trades are employed in each branch of the linen and woolen manufactures, from the growers of the flax and the wool, to the bleachers and smoothers of the linen, or to the dyers and dressers of the cloth! (Smith [1776] 1976, 15–16)

Smith thus adduces the same principle (i.e., higher productivity due to specialization) to explain both the distribution of tasks in his pin factory and the differentiation of trades and the allocation of people among various specialty occupations, distinguishing only between "trifling" and "great" manufactures.

Marx was the first to note and criticize Smith's conflation of what (in Marx's terms) was the "division of labor in society," on the one hand, and on the other, the "division of labor within manufacture," i.e., within a capitalist firm or workshop:

> [I]n spite of the numerous analogies and links connecting them, division of labor in the interior of a society, and that in the interior of a workshop, differ not only in degree, but also in kind. The analogy appears most indisputable where there is an invisible bond uniting the various branches of trade. For instance the cattle-breeder produces hides, the tanner makes the hides into leather, and the shoemaker, the leather into boots. Here the thing produced by each of them is but a step towards the final form, which is the product of all their labors combined. There are, besides, all the various industries that supply the cattle-breeder, the tanner, and the shoemaker with the means of production. Now it is quite possible to imagine, with Adam Smith, that the difference between the above social division of labor, and the division in manufacture, is merely subjective, exists merely for the observer, who, in a manufacture, can see with one glance, all the numerous operations being performed on one spot, while in the instance given above, the spreading out of the work over great areas, and the great number of people employed in each branch of labor, obscure the connexion. (Marx [1867] 1965, 246)

Marx notes the difference in the nature of the coordination that governs each:

> [W]hat is it that forms the bond between the independent labors of the cattle-breeder, the tanner, and the shoemaker? It is the fact

> that their respective products are commodities. What, on the other hand, characterises division of labor in manufactures? The fact that the detail labourer produces no commodities. It is only the common product of all the detail labourers that becomes a commodity. Division of labor in society is brought about by the purchase and sale of the products of different branches of industry, while the connexion between the detail operations in a workshop, is due to the sale of the labor-power of several workmen to one capitalist, who applies it as combined labor-power. The division of labor in the workshop implies concentration of the means of production in the hands of one capitalist; the division of labor in society implies their dispersion among many independent producers of commodities… *Division of labor within the workshop implies the undisputed authority of the capitalist over men, that are but parts of a mechanism that belongs to him. The division of labor within the society brings into contact independent commodity-producers, who acknowledge no other authority but that of competition, of the coercion exerted by the pressure of their mutual interests*… (Marx [1867] 1965, 247; emphasis supplied)

In short—and this is a point Marx repeats elsewhere with more or less elegant variation—it is *markets and prices* that allocate resources among more or less autonomous producers in the social division of labor; on the other hand, the division of labor within a firm is governed by the capitalist employer's *authority*.

The distinction between markets and firms—i.e., between exchange and authority—was central to Marx's analysis of capitalism. In the sphere of market exchange where goods produced by independent producers are traded at competitive prices, Marx contended no systematic profits could arise—a sphere he sardonically described as one where "alone rule Freedom, Equality, Property, and Bentham" (Marx [1867] 1965, 123). In particular, Marx characterized the contract for the sale of labor[4] itself as an exchange of equivalents, where the capitalist paid the worker a wage exactly equal to the going or competitive price for labor (which in classical economics was always the subsistence wage). Since in principle again no profits could arise from such an exchange of equivalents, it was ultimately within the firm, where the capital-owner directed the worker's activity, where profit ("surplus value") was produced:

> [T]he laborer works under the control of the capitalist to whom his labor belongs; the capitalist taking good care that the work is done

[4] "Labor-power" in Marx's terminology.

> in a proper manner, and that the means of production are used with intelligence, so that there is no unnecessary waste of raw material, and no wear and tear of the implements beyond what is necessarily caused by the work. (ibid., 131)

This insight into the market-versus-firm dichotomy coincides remarkably with Coase's observations seventy years later:

> [I]n economic theory we find that the allocation of factors of production between different uses is determined by the price mechanism. The price of factor A becomes higher in X than in Y. As a result, A moves from Y to X until the difference between the prices in X and Y, except in so far as it compensates for other differential advantages, disappears. Yet in the real world, we find that there are many areas where this does not apply. *If a workman moves from department Y to department X, he does not go because of a change in relative prices, but because he is ordered to do so* (Coase 1937, 387–88; emphasis supplied)
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> ...
>
> Outside the firm, price movements direct production, which is co-ordinated through a series of exchange transactions on the market. Within a firm, these market transactions are eliminated and in place of the complicated market structure with exchange transactions is substituted the entrepreneur-co-ordinator who directs production. (ibid., 388)
>
> ...
>
> It can, I think, be assumed that the distinguishing mark of the firm is *the supersession of the price mechanism*. (ibid., 389; emphasis supplied)

Coase described the authority relation in the employment contract[5] as one:

> ... whereby the factor, for a certain remuneration (which may be fixed or fluctuating), agrees to obey the directions of an entrepreneur

[5] Simon (1954, 294) gives a more structured definition, i.e., the contract is one where the worker agrees for a consideration to allow the employer to select a specific action (in a set of possible tasks contained in an "area of acceptance") for him to perform. Despite the similarity in the questions asked, Simon did not refer to Coase's earlier article.

> *within certain limits*. The essence of the contract is that it should only state the limits to the powers of the entrepreneur. Within these limits, he can therefore direct the other factors of production. (ibid., 391; original emphasis)

Coase, as is well known, saw the advantage of the firm over markets in the former's ability to evade or save on transactions costs[6]—which at the time he originally termed "marketing costs" or the "costs of using the price mechanism." He specifically refers to the costs entailed by price discovery ("discovering what the relevant prices are" [ibid., 390]) and the trouble of writing several or a series of contracts ("the costs of negotiating and concluding a separate contract for each exchange transaction").[7] In his later article on social cost, Coase (1960) elaborates on these costs as follows:

> In order to carry out a market transaction it is necessary to discover who it is that one wishes to deal with, to inform people that one wishes to deal and on what terms, to conduct negotiations leading up to a bargain, to draw up the contract, to undertake the inspection needed to make sure that the terms of the contract are being observed, and so on. These operations are often extremely costly, sufficiently costly at any rate to prevent many transactions that would be carried out in a world in which the pricing system worked without cost. (Coase 1960, 16)

By contrast,

> A factor of production (or the owner thereof) does not have to make a series of contracts with the factors with whom he is co-operating within the firm, as would be necessary, of course, if this cooperation were as a direct result of the working of the price mechanism. For this series of contracts is substituted one. (Coase 1937, 391)

Coase also notes how uncertainty makes it infeasible or undesirable for entrepreneurs to enter into long-term sales or service-contracts committing them to

[6] Allen (1999) attributes the first use of the specific term "transaction costs" to Demsetz (1964), who defines it as "the cost of exchanging ownership titles."

[7] Coase did not then explicitly mention costs associated with post-contractual issues, such as the enforcement costs or the resort to adjudication when market contracts are not fulfilled or are imperfectly executed. His account of the origins of his 1937 article (Coase 1988a, 13) makes it clear however that he also considered the avoidance of the "hold-up" problem in the case of asset-specificity as one of the forces for internalizing market transactions.

highly specific actions. Preserving entrepreneurial discretion and flexibility of action in an uncertain environment is another factor favoring the authority implicit in the employment contract over market transactions.

Decades later, Williamson (1971, 113) reinforced Coase's argument by citing the advantages of authority (fiat) in the firm especially when disputes or disagreements arise over the assessment of contracted performance:

> Perhaps the most distinctive advantage of the firm, however, is the wider variety and greater sensitivity of control instruments that are available for enforcing intrafirm in comparison with interfirm activities. Not only does the firm have the constitutional authority and low-cost access to the requisite data which permit it to perform more precise own-performance evaluations (of both a contemporaneous and ex post variety) than can a buyer, but its reward and penalty instruments (which include selective use of employment, promotion, remuneration, and internal resource allocation processes) are more refined. Especially relevant in this connection is that, when conflicts develop, the firm possesses a comparatively efficient conflict resolution machinery. To illustrate, fiat is frequently a more efficient way to settle minor conflicts (say differences of interpretation) than is haggling or litigation. Interorganizational conflict can be settled by fiat only rarely, if at all. For one thing, it would require the parties to agree on an impartial arbitrator, which agreement itself may be costly to secure. It would also require that rules of evidence and procedure be established. If, moreover, the occasion for such interorganizational settlements were to be common, the form of organization converges in effect to vertical integration, with the arbiter becoming a manager in fact if not in name. By contrast, intraorganizational settlements by fiat are common.

This is not the place to discuss all the subsequent developments of Coase's basic insight of transaction-cost differentials between firms and markets. (The reader is pointed instead to the survey by Allen (1999) or the volume on incentives by Laffont and Martimort (2002).) It is important, however, to refer to the particular elaboration of the problem by Cheung (1969), Williamson (1971), Newbery and Stiglitz (1977), and Holmstrom (1979) among others, who examined the problem of costs associated with the employment relationship itself. This literature effectively balanced out Coase's earlier one-sided analysis, which identified only the costs of market transactions but neglected the costs associated with the employment relation. Mitigating the problem of opportunism or moral hazard in the wage relation, for example, may entail costly monitoring of the worker's actions. More generally, such costs involve resolving the question of whether the compensation scheme is sufficient to induce the worker to enter

the contract (i.e., the participation constraint), and second, of whether the worker is sufficiently motivated to perform the work required by the employer (i.e., the incentive constraint).[8]

Especially relevant to our interest is how such extensions of Coase's insight led to an examination of other arrangements between proprietors and workers aside from the wage relationship. In particular, beginning with Cheung (1969), the literature focused on efficiency conditions for the persistence of share-tenancy or sharecropping in agriculture—an iconic representation of pre-capitalist (i.e., feudal) forms of employment in history as well as in some of today's developing economies. This represents a bridge to Marx's own concern (i.e., his "materialist conception of history")[9] to explain how capitalist property relations came to supplant earlier relations, particularly those in medieval and early capitalist Europe.

Differences in method and starting point

Despite their common observation of the distinction between authority and markets under capitalism, Marx and Coase differed in their methodological approach and starting points. Coase in his article posited no linear or progressive development and supposed that various contractual forms—e.g., spot transactions, contracted prices, and employment relations—were equally eligible in principle and at any point in time, to be selected by each entrepreneur based on the characteristics of actual exchange that give rise to specific transaction costs. Adopting the "marginal principle," Coase imagined the process of firm-formation, expansion, or contraction as a timeless one where the entrepreneur perennially confronts a succession of make-or-buy decisions for every relevant transaction, comparing the cost of contracting it out to outside parties versus internalising it within the firm.

Marx in contrast proceeded from the historical view that the spread of production under capitalist authority was a consequence of specific developments in industrial

[8] Using a simple version of Holmstrom (1979), the employer's gross profit before labor costs can be written as a function $G(x)$ of output x. Let $s(x)$ be the employee's compensation and the worker's utility be $H(s(x), a)$, where a is the worker's action or effort affecting output $x(a)$, with $H_1 > 0$ and $H_2 < 0$. The employer then maximizes $G(x) - s(x)$ by selecting the function $s^*(.)$ and the optimal action a^* such that given $s^*(.)$, (i) the worker's utility does not fall below her reservation level H^0 and (ii) her maximization of H results in her selecting a^* given the chosen function $s^*(.)$. Conditions (i) and (ii) are the participation constraint and incentive-compatibility constraints, respectively. In particular, a wage relationship sets $s(x) = w$, a constant, while a share-tenancy contract involves $s(x) = hx$, $0 < h < 1$. A leasehold or rental contract is represented by setting the employer's income to a fixed L and letting $s(x) = G(x) - L$.

[9] As outlined broadly in Marx ([1859] 1977).

technology and property relations (i.e., "the forces of production" shaping the "relations of production") (Marx [1859] 1977). For him, the ultimate basis of the rise of the wage-relation stemmed from the historically specific fact that the capitalist owned the means of production (i.e., equipment and inputs) while the worker owned nothing but his capacity for labor, rendering the latter dependent on the former's direction. Whence comes the famous Marxian aphorism:[10]

> *[C]apital is not a thing, but rather a definite social production relation,* belonging to a definite historical formation of society, which is manifested in a thing and lends this thing a specific social character....It is the means of production monopolised by a certain section of society, confronting living labor-power as products and working conditions rendered independent of this very labor-power, which are personified through this antithesis in capital. (Marx 1894, 590; emphasis supplied)

Marx's eschatological view of history made him less sensitive to the possibility that there might be obstacles to the spread of the wage-relation stemming from problems or costs associated with that relationship itself. In his lifetime Marx never seriously confronted the problem of the long-term persistence of pre-capitalist relations and their coexistence with capitalist forms. Especially in their earlier years (see, e.g. in the *Communist Manifesto*) he and Engels tended to assume that capitalism would sooner or later diffuse throughout the world and that the bourgeoisie would "create a world after its own image." The issue of "uneven development" especially in underdeveloped countries and colonies, however, would preoccupy later Marxist writers and political leaders from Luxemburg to Lenin to Mao.[11]

Subsequent institutional and mainstream developments however have contributed some unexpected insight into the issue. Newbery and Stiglitz's (1977) well-known result, for example, shows that with imperfect information about how output is related to effort, there is little reason for sharecropping to exist—versus straightforward wage or fixed-lease contracts or some combination of the two—if not for considerations of risk-sharing between asset-owner and farmer and the costs of monitoring labor. From a Marxian perspective, this result can be interpreted as suggesting that

[10] Marx also employed this phrase in volume 1 of *Capital* (Marx [1867] 1965, 545).

[11] In the Philippines until around the 1980s, an intense theoretical and political debate ensued among Marxist scholars and activists over whether observed agricultural relations (including regular and seasonal wage-work, the activities of trader-lenders, and so on) constituted sufficient indications of a "capitalist mode of production"—a question thought to influence the strategy and tactics of the political revolution itself. A flavour of the debate is provided in Ferrer (1984). Abinales (2000), from a critical viewpoint, discusses the political context and stakes involved.

sharecropping will persist and dominate the wage-relationship where the labor process is technologically still largely controlled by the worker's autonomous actions and therefore opaque to the landowner's monitoring efforts. (More on this below.) The tenant-farmer's share in output then serves as an efficiency wage[12] motivating an effort level that favors higher output (see, e.g., Laffont and Martimort (2002, 175–76)).

The worker's motivation under the wage-relation however was an issue Marx discussed only in the starkest negative terms, i.e., by idealizing the worker's actions when working in her own behalf—say as an independent craftsman or farmer—and contrasting it unfavorably with the "alienation"[13] experienced when she enters into a wage contract and works for the capitalist. Marx never regarded the question of the degree of the worker's compliance and performance under a wage contract as a major issue. This contrasts with the subsequent new-institutional literature (see, e.g., Williamson (1971) and Williamson, Wachter, and Harris (1975)) which posits moral hazard (a.k.a. shirking or opportunism) as a central problem that both plagues and underpins the wage-relation.

Marx's historical approach however may have justified his inattention to the problem of moral hazard, which he tended to subsume under what he considered the overriding historical fact that favored the spread of capitalist wage relations— namely, the dispossession of the worker and her dependence on the capitalist for subsistence. The classic historical example of this process was the eviction of the peasantry from the land in England in the 15th–16th centuries to make way for "sheep-walks" under the stimulus of the rising Flemish wool industry (Marx [1867] 1965, 510). It was this "surplus" agricultural population which then migrated to the towns and formed a nascent proletariat. Weber ([1927] 2003, 164) concedes the narrow point, calling England "the classical land of peasant eviction" and determining that "[t]he labor force thus thrown on the market made possible the development first of the domestic small master system and later of the industrial or factory system." The subsistence-level conditions of workers in the towns are implicit in the poor laws enacted during the period. Sombart ([1916] 1987, 792ff), on the other hand, adduced what he considered to be more significant secular factors in the rise of the proletariat, including a significant

[12] Since efficiency wages typically favor the agent or laborer, the above may appear to fly in the face of the reality of poverty among many sharecroppers. Even in theory, however, the agent may be reduced to her reservation level of utility through the combination of the share with a fixed fee. Real share contracts, for example, can sometimes involve the farmer making shared contributions to costs.

[13] That is, the alienation (*Entfremdung*) in the sense of: (i) not being able to appropriate the product of one's own labor; (ii) not being in control of one's own actions; and (iii) having to convert purposeful activity from being the distinctive end of human existence into a mere means. See, e.g., Marx [1844] 1959, XXIII–XXIV.

rise in population, the immiserization of independent farmers, business ruin among crafts producers, market stagnation, the abolition of serfdom, wars, and onerous taxes (e.g., in France).[14]

Regardless of actual historical events and processes, the point remains that Marx conceptually regarded the worker's poverty and dependence—the unavailability of the means or option of independent production—as a sufficient condition for her to enter the wage contract and to perform according to the employer's orders. A natural experiment for this hypothesis was the colonies—specifically America, where by contrast labor was in perennial short supply owing to "[t]his constant transformation of the wage-laborers into independent producers, who work for themselves instead of for capital, and enrich themselves instead of the capitalist gentry" (Marx [1867] 1965, 545):

> It is otherwise in the colonies. There the capitalist regime everywhere comes into collision with the resistance of the producer, who, as owner of his own conditions of labor, employs that labor to enrich himself, instead of the capitalist. (Marx [1867] 1965, 543)

> [T]he development of the social productive power of labor, co-operation, division of labor, use of machinery on a large scale, &c., are impossible without the expropriation of the laborers, and the corresponding transformation of their means of production into capital. (ibid.)

In short, where the possibility of self-employment was open owing to the availability of land, the wage relation encountered difficulty in establishing itself, thus indirectly supporting Marx's point that worker-dispossession was a necessary condition for the establishment of the wage relation. Parenthetically, it is somewhat surprising that armed with this insight, Marx failed to advance the corollary—ultimately associated with Domar (1970)—that a natural means of relieving this labor shortage, given the high ratio of free land to free labor, was to devise artificial social institutions that tied labor to the soil. Hence the emergence and persistence of slavery and other forms of bonded labor.

Nonetheless, it is significant that Marx's historical argument does not run afoul of what subsequent theory has suggested. A standard result in the theory of incentives is that when effort is verifiable and shirking can be punished, the optimal payoff scheme

[14] Sombart regarded Marx's construed explanation of immiserization as being due to forcible expropriation (e.g., the enclosure movement and the suppression of monasteries) as too England-centric and not borne out by statistics in terms of the scale of their occurrence.

involves a constant payment to the worker regardless of the state of nature,[15] that is, a fixed wage that represents the minimum compensation for the worker's disutility. "Indeed, *only the agent's participation constraint matters for the principal*, because the agent can be forced to exert a positive level of effort" (Laffont and Martimort 2002, 151; emphasis supplied). Marx's emphasis on the worker's expropriation and the lack of options for independent production is therefore not misplaced: it is effectively an argument that such a participation constraint is most likely to be met. The remaining condition necessary for the simple wage-argument to hold—i.e., that effort should be observable or monitoring costs low—was a phenomenon Marx also believed to be evident in historical developments, as seen in the standardization and simplification of work, the use of what would later be known as Fordist-Taylorist methods, and the employment of machinery. This forms the subject of the next section.

Monitoring costs: "formal subsumption" of labor

Partly arising from the difference in approach (i.e., historical versus axiomatic), a second main difference between Marx's and Coase's explanation for the firm's existence is that the latter treats "transactions costs" as *parametric*, whereas Marx considered them *endogenous* to the entrepreneur's decision. The parametric nature of Coase's treatment is to be seen in his adoption of the Marshallian metaphor of "substitution at the margin" to explain the entrepreneur's make or buy decision:

> At the margin, the costs of organising within the firm will be equal either to the costs of organising in another firm or the costs involved in leaving the transaction to be "organised" by the price mechanism. Business men will be constantly experimenting, controlling more or less, and in this way, equilibrium will be maintained. (Coase 1937, 404)

Here, the picture presented is that of an entrepreneur on the margin of deciding on something as trivial as whether to contract out, say, the firm's plumbing needs or to hire an in-house plumber. At the other extreme, it could also involve a decision as significant as whether an automobile company should contract out its body works to another company or to buy it and integrate it into its own operations.[16] It is significant that Coase's entrepreneur-coordinator really worries only about contracting costs.

[15] That is, high effort raises the likelihood of high output (though the output is still uncertain).

[16] Coase (1988a, 13) was intrigued by the question whether and why General Motors should have bought the Fisher Body company.

The scenario evoked by Coase is approximated by historical examples of what Marx in his early drafts of *Capital* (i.e., Marx ([1861–1863] 1993) and Marx ([1864] 1993)) called the "formal subsumption" of labor under capital. This refers to the situation where it is simply the relation of ownership—which, as we saw underpins the relationship of authority—that changes:

> Historically, in fact, at the start of its formation, we see capital take under its control (subsume under itself) not only the labor process in general but the specific actual labor processes as it finds them available in the existing technology, and in the form in which they have developed on the basis of non-capitalist relations of production. It finds in existence the actual production process—the particular mode of production—and at the beginning it only subsumes it *formally*, without making any changes in its specific technological character. (Marx [1861–1863] 1993, 92–93; original emphasis)
>
> This formal subsumption of the labor process, the assumption of control over it by capital, consists in the worker's subjection as worker to the supervision and therefore to the command of capital or the capitalist. (ibid., 92)
>
> When the peasant who previously produced independently for himself becomes a day laborer working for a farmer; when the hierarchical structure valid for the mode of production of the guild type disappears, to be replaced by the simple antithesis between the capitalist and the handicraftsman who is set to work for him as a wage laborer; when the man who was previously a slaveholder employs his former slaves as wage laborers, etc., production processes with a different social determination are thereby converted into the production process of capital. (Marx [1864] 1993, 470)

The key point for Marx was that in instances of formal subsumption, apart from a greater intensity and continuity of work and a larger scale of output, nothing substantially changes in the purely technological aspects of the worker's production activity compared to when she was an autonomous craftworker or independent farmer:

> The *labor process*, seen from the *technological point of view*, continues exactly as it did before, except that now it is a labor process subordinated to capital. Nevertheless, there develops within the production process itself, as previously demonstrated, 1) an *economic* relation of domination and subordination, in that the consumption of labor capacity is done by the capitalist, and is therefore supervised and directed by him; and 2) a great continuity

> and intensity of labor and a greater economy in the employment of the conditions of labor, in that every effort is made to ensure that the product only represents socially necessary labor time (or rather, less than that). (ibid., 473; original emphasis)

The transition to wage work is suggested by the development of the domestic industry (the "putting-out" or *Verlag* system) of the 16th–17th centuries, in which formerly independent craft producers (notably in linen textiles and small iron products), became employed by merchants who at first supplied them with the equipment and raw materials for production and carried off their products for further processing and ultimate sale. This was a transitional form to the extent that the merchant *Verleger* or "putters-out" generally did not directly employ the craft workers (whose products were still formally bought from them) but effectively subsumed the latter's productive activity by controlling their supply of inputs and marketing. In certain instances, such merchant-factors ultimately came to employ spinners, weavers, etc. under wage arrangements.[17] Other instances of this transition to wage-employment included the morphing of guild masters into capitalists and of journeymen and apprentices into wage workers, or the transformation of formerly independent peasants into wage-workers for richer farmers.[18]

Marx's description of the formal subsumption of labor underscored his contention that in such cases, workers still exercised a greater or lesser control over their conditions of work. Relative to the workers' earlier situation, formal subsumption entails at most a change in the purpose, appropriation, scale, and regularity of the workers' activity, a change however that Marx regarded as superficial or at best incipient. The cases described however essentially correspond to a condition where effort is difficult to verify. From the viewpoint of modern incentive theory therefore—and Marx would only have agreed—the optimality of a fixed-wage contract in such conditions would have been difficult to establish.

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[17] Marx did not consider the putting-out system per se as a case of formal subsumption because it did not principally involve the sale of labor power. He regarded it instead a pre-industrial form of capitalism, i.e., merchant capital. Sombart ([1916] 1987a, 819ff), on the other hand, considered the putting-out system one of the two "roots" of the modern labor contract. A useful enumeration of how stages in the *Verlagssytem* approached wage employment is provided by Weber ([1927] 2003, 159–60), namely: (1) a de facto buying monopoly by the merchant (factor) vis-à-vis the craft worker; (2) provision of the raw material to the craft worker by the factor; (3) control of the production process; (4) provision of the tools to the worker; and finally though not frequently (5) integration of several stages of production and payment of wages to the worker.

[18] The parallel is obvious between this and the "trader-lender" phenomenon or "credit-output interlinkage" observed in Philippine agriculture. See, for example, Fabella (1993), Esguerra and Fabella (1991), and Floro and Yotopoulos (1991). Consistent with Marx's insight, such arrangements are found to be means of enforcing labor contracts where, for various reasons, information on the quality of agents and their production behavior is imperfect.

Technology and "real subsumption"

Marx did not regard capitalist relations as coming into their own until the "real subsumption" of the labor process was completed. While formal subsumption still allowed the direct producer some degree of autonomy over effort or left the conditions of production unchanged, real subsumption involved the direct intervention of the capitalist-entrepreneur in materially altering the production process, i.e., significantly changing the technology and organisation of productive activity from that which previously existed.

> In the case of the real subsumption of labor under capital, all the *changes* in the labor process itself, analysed by us previously, actually take effect. *Labor's social powers of production* are developed, and with labor on a large scale the application of science and machinery to direct production takes place. On the one hand, the *capitalist mode of production*, which now takes shape as a mode of production sui generis, changes the shape of material production. On the other hand, this alteration of production's material shape forms the basis for the development of the capital-relation, which in its adequate shape therefore corresponds to a specific level of development of the productive powers of labor. (ibid., 478; original emphasis)

Again using historical examples and his observation of developments, Marx argues that the real subsumption of labor—i.e., the "specifically capitalist mode of production"—first occurs with the emergence of manufacture and subsequently with the use of modern machinery. "Manufacture," in Marx's narrow use of the term, refers to work in conditions where workers are assembled, supervised, and disciplined to perform certain tasks but without the use of mechanical power. Its principal features are the workshop division of labor and the detail laborer—the same type of worker found in Smith's pin factory—whose actions are reduced to more or less repetitive motions reminiscent of those of a machine:

> …[A] laborer who all his life performs one and the same simple operation, converts his whole body into the *automatic specialized implement of that operation.* (Marx [1867] 1965, 238)

> The collective laborer, formed by the combination of a number of detail laborers, is *the machinery specially characteristic of the manufacturing period*. (ibid., 243)

> The habit of doing only one thing converts him [i.e., the detail laborer] into *a never failing instrument*, while his connexion with the whole

> mechanism compels him *to work with the regularity of the parts of a machine*. (ibid., 243)
>
> [M]anufacture thoroughly revolutionizes it [i.e., the mode of working by the individual – E.S.D.] and seizes labor-power by its very roots. It converts the laborer into a crippled monstrosity, by *forcing his detail dexterity* as the expense of a world of productive capabilities and instincts … (ibid., 249–50; all emphases supplied)

Marx's language shows that he regarded the organization of the work process in manufacture, particularly the workshop division of labor, as being highly controlled and monitored, with the worker almost akin to an automaton in her actions.

Marx viewed the manufacturing workshop as resolving some though not all the problems of control over the work process.[19] A further development is the rise of the "factory" proper[20] here, the internal division of labor found in manufacture is superseded by the division of tasks among a system of machines driven by an inanimate power source (e.g., steam, petroleum, or electricity). The laborer's role then becomes merely auxiliary to that of the machine and reduced to that of "machine actuation, workfeeding, patrolling, and inspecting" (Braverman 1975, 217). It is the introduction of machinery then that completes the undermining of the worker's autonomy and control over the labor process:

> In the first place, in the form of machinery, *the implements of labor become automatic, things moving and working independent of the workman*. They are thenceforth an industrial *perpetuum mobile*, that would go on producing forever, did it not meet with certain natural obstructions in the weak bodies and the strong wills of its human attendants. The automaton, as capital, and because it is capital, is endowed, in the person of the capitalist, with intelligence and will; it is therefore animated by the longing to reduce to a minimum the resistance offered by that repellent yet elastic natural barrier, man. (Marx [1867] 1965, 276; emphasis supplied)

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[19] "Since handicraft skill is the foundation of manufacture, and since the mechanism of manufacture as a whole possesses no framework, apart from the laborers themselves, capital is constantly compelled to wrestle with the insubordination of the workmen. … Hence throughout the whole manufacturing period there runs the complaint of want of discipline among the workmen" (Marx [1867] 1969, 251).

[20] Weber ([1927] 2003, 162) discounts Marx's distinction between "manufactory" and "factory" (the difference lying only in the latter's use of mechanical power), calling it "casuistical and of doubtful value." The more important common element underlying both for Weber was the presence of and accounting for any form of fixed capital. On the other hand, Sombart ([1927] 1987b, 767ff) found the differentiation relevant even in the period of "late" capitalism.

> The separation of the intellectual powers of production from the manual labor, and the conversion of those powers into the might of capital over labor, is, as we have already shown, finally completed by modern industry erected on the foundation of machinery. *The special skill of each individual insignificant factory operative vanishes as an infinitesimal quantity before the science, the gigantic physical forces, and the mass of labor that are embodied in the factory mechanism and, together with that mechanism*, constitute the power of the "master."
>
> ...
>
> The technical *subordination of the workman to the uniform motion of the instruments of labor,* and the peculiar composition of the body of workpeople, consisting as it does of individuals of both sexes and of all ages, *give rise to a barrack discipline*, which is elaborated into a complete system in the factory, and which fully develops the before mentioned labor of overlooking, thereby dividing the workpeople into operatives and overlookers, into private soldiers and sergeants of an industrial army. (Marx [1867] 1965, 286; emphasis supplied)

The common element in both manufacture and machine industry, therefore, is the worker's loss of autonomy in the work process since the production process has now been technologically transformed by the capitalist. In manufacture, the change involved was the organization of work according to a minute division of labor, the simplification of the worker's actions ("deskilling"), and the introduction of a supervisory hierarchy. In machine industry, it was the replacement of human skill and subjective judgement by automatic machine action. Both cases minimize the problem of moral hazard because effort is observable or monitoring costs are low.

Parenthetically, even as we refer to Marx's historical *approach*, we need not fully accept the historical *accuracy* of his account. In particular, Marx purports to document a progressive erosion of worker autonomy in the seemingly inexorable succession from independent craftsman, to contractor under the putting-out system, to detail worker in manufacturing, and finally to the mere attendant under machine industry. Sombart ([1916] 1987a, 731) however calls this one of Marx's "most serious and disastrous errors," since this supposed succession of stages was selective and one-sidedly based on the spinning and weaving industries alone. In fact, Marx's "manufacture" and "machine industry" co-existed in Europe throughout the 16th to the 18th centuries. Moreover the time-and-motion studies of F. Taylor breathed new life into detail labor, and Marx did not live to witness how the epitome of 20th-century mass production, the moving assembly line pioneered by H. Ford (1916), was a hybrid of machine industry (i.e., an

externally powered conveyor dictating the pace of production) and manufacture by detail workers (i.e., performing the required assembly).[21]

Historical details aside, however, when considered from the perspective of incentives theory, both the division of labor in the firm and machine industry are technological innovations that produce the same result: lower monitoring costs that make the laborer's effort easier to verify. Together with the easy fulfillment of the participation constraint discussed earlier, the fixed-wage relationship then becomes the dominant solution as both as specified by orthodox theory and the historical conditions Marx described.

Broader implications

Marx's description of the technological changes involved in the transition to a wage-relationship points up an apparent difference in emphasis between his view and Coase's. The rationale for the firm, according to Coase is to avoid the "cost of using the price mechanism" (i.e., the costs of information or discovery, of contracting, and of enforcement). Stated in this manner, Coase is notably silent about whether the technology employed outside the firm remains the same or has changed after market transactions have been internalized.

From Marx's historical perspective, therefore, it would seem as if Coase assumes that the firm merely takes over the pre-existing technology, say, employing weavers as wage-workers rather than buying their previously independently produced output. As argued previously, however, such a condition cannot provide a stable foundation for the wage relationship: real labor subsumption entails resolving the monitoring problem through a technological change (i.e., workplace division of labor or the employment of machinery) that makes effort transparent—which yields a superior productivity[22] that then establishes the superiority of the wage relation over market transactions.

But part of this apparent divergence is simply due to a difference in reference point. The new-institutional insistence that technological reasons play little or no role is actually based on an atemporal thought-experiment about the difficulty of deploying a new technology using market mechanisms. Williamson, Wachter, and Harris (1975,

[21] Braverman's work (1975) is still one of the best accounts of the development of Taylor's "scientific management" and its subsequent influence.

[22] Our reading—that Marx conceded superior productivity under the wage relation—obviously contradicts Marglin's (1974) argument that changes in the work process such as the minute division of labor were introduced only to perpetuate capitalist authority and justify the capitalist's appropriation of a share of output. Indeed, one can argue that Marx, like Smith, assumed that such within-firm technological changes yielded economies of scale.

255), for example, imagine how division of labor in Smith's pin factory might be reproduced by contract:

> In principle, each of these activities could be performed by an independent specialist and work passed from station to station by contract. Autonomous contracting would be facilitated, moreover, by introducing buffer inventories at each station, since coordination requirements and hence contractual complexity would thereby be reduced. Each worker could then proceed at his own pace, subject only to the condition that he maintain his buffer inventory at some minimum level. A series of independent entrepreneurs rather than a group of employees, each subject to an authority relation, could thus perform the tasks in question. ... *Transactions costs militate against such an organization of tasks, however.* (emphasis supplied)

Therefore, while Marx asks the question: "What conditions will allow hitherto independent craftsmen to become wage workers?" (Answer: division of labor); Coase and Williamson ask the question: "What prevents the division of labor from being adopted among independent craftsmen?" (Answer: transactions costs). Marx describes how new technology allows transactions costs to be overcome via the firm; Coase shows how transactions costs prevent new technology from being adopted, except within the firm. Marx proceeds from historical order and example, Coase and Williamson argue from a hypothetical possibility. The conceptual relationships are the same, but the result emphasized by one forms the premise of the other.

These considerations regarding the theory of the firm ramify into the larger issue of the relationship between technology, production organization, and property distribution that form the basis of Marx's theory of history. We shall not dwell on this general issue at length but rather only attempt a sketch as illustrated by the theory of the firm. (For a treatment of the broader issues, the reader is referred to North's (1986) essay on Marx and the critique by Milonakis and Fine (2007).)

An implication of the NIE theory of the firm is that the adoption of some technologies will be better suited to some types of organization owing to the lower transactions costs they entail (e.g., division of labor being easily implemented in a firm but not among independent craftsmen). In Marx's world, however, transactions costs are associated with certain distributions of property rights. If, for example, weavers owned their own implements of production or possessed tacit knowledge or skills otherwise unavailable to the entrepreneur-coordinator, then contracting costs for the division of labor would obviously be higher. In such conditions, depending on relative scarcities, pressures may could build up for a different set of property relations—with correspondingly different transaction costs—that might better accommodate that productivity-enhancing technology.

This relationship between property rights, transactions costs, and production technology was stated most clearly by Douglass North, the new-institutionalist who had the greatest familiarity with Marxian theory:[23]

> …[A]s Marx clearly recognized, there are transactions costs; and indeed *they can prevent a society from being able to efficiently capture the gains from specialization and division of labor, that is the gains from the productive forces*. The costs of transacting are all those costs associated with capturing the gains from trade: the costs of negotiating and enforcing contracts and agreements of all types; the costs associated with devising efficient instruments that enable one to capture the gains from specialization, including market organization, banking, finance, insurance, wholesale and resale trade, etc. *Transaction costs form a very large part of the total costs of production in any society, particularly in societies that are specialized. Ultimately, they are a function of the efficiency of a property-rights structure, since it is the property-rights structure that defines the relations of production, which in turn are reflected in the costs of transacting.* (North 1986, 60–61; emphasis supplied)

> To overcome [the constraints to the second industrial revolution – E.S.D.] *entails the creation of institutions that so structure the rules and their enforcement as to alter the pay-offs to induce cooperative solutions*…. Karl Marx long ago pointed out that the tension between the organizational imperatives of a technology and the existing property rights was a fundamental source of conflict and change. (North 1993, 22; emphasis supplied)

North in the foregoing has effectively translated Marx's materialist conception of history into NIE terms: technology ("productive forces"), such as cooperation, the division of labor, or industrial machinery, can be mapped onto various possible production arrangements ("relations of production"), such as authority within a firm versus service- or price-contracting, for each of which corresponding transactions costs can be determined. Transactions costs, however, are conditioned by the underlying property-rights system and distribution of property (e.g., disperse absolute ownership of and access to implements among workers versus concentrated capital ownership). The continuing importance of property-rights systems in a modern context for industrial organization may be appreciated, for example, in the question of what can or cannot be owned as intellectual property[24] (and for how long).

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[23] North freely acknowledged being a "semi-Marxist" in his early days (North 2009).

[24] One treatment of the consequences from a Marxian viewpoint is given by Pagano (2014).

For both Marx and NIE, there exists the possibility that the current property system results in relative transactions costs that favor production arrangements which cannot accommodate superior technology and are therefore suboptimal in a sense. (See Appendix for a brief sketch.) From this of course follows Marx's well-known assertion (which North did not share) that ineluctable forces would emerge to radically overhaul the existing property rights-structure, particularly that of capitalism. North, in contrast, believed that markets and the private-ownership economy under capitalism, though not perfect, were flexible enough to accommodate the emergence of ever-more progressive technological innovations.

Envoi

Despite dissimilar starting points, terminology, and eschatologies, what becomes evident upon a careful reading and mapping is a remarkable similarity in the issues studied and a correspondence of concepts between Marxian and new-institutional economics. This correspondence holds from the microcosm of the analysis of the firm and the wage-relation to the extensions of those concepts to the theory of history and of development. It is in that sense that, to quote North finally (1981, 63), "It is worth making sense of Marx."

Acknowledgments

This essay is offered to Raul Fabella, friend and co-worker.

Appendix

The following is a sketch to represent the usefulness of NIE concepts in clarifying parts of the familiar Marxian conception of history.[25]

Let *h* and *H* be two *technologies* respectively representing low and high labor productivity: *H*, for example, may represent the workshop division of labor, while *h* may represent artisanal production, where a worker finishes a product from start to finish. Then also suppose there are two *productive arrangements* ("relations of production"), say, individual output-contracting (*A*) and the wage-relation (*W*). It is important that either technology may in principle be employed with either *A* or *W*. The pair (*H, W*) is

[26] I hesitate to call this part original. I recall a manuscript by a colleague, R.D. Ferrer in the late 1980s that undertook a project of reconciling Marxism and NIE drawing on transactions cost concepts, among others. That manuscript was unfortunately never published and is now lost, so I have no opportunity to check how much of the above is another case "unnecessary originality,"

obvious; (*H, A*) on the other hand might involve, say, paying workers an output-rate for that part of the product they produced. (As Williamson, Wachter, and Harris (1975) suggest, creating buffer stocks for each stage would still allow division of labor with workers being paid independently.)

Property-rights systems, on the other hand, are complexes of rules referring to the types of resources that can be owned, how they may be owned (e.g., fee simple, usufruct, etc.), and by whom. To simplify, denote by *Q* a property-rights system involving disperse individual ownership of means of production, while *P* denotes a system of high concentration of ownership of capital ("capitalism" for short). Certain transactions costs *c*(.), are peculiar to the use of technologies under certain labor arrangements and property-rights systems, i.e., c:$\{W, A\} \times \{h, H\} \times \{Q, P\} \rightarrow \Re^{+}$.

Marx's assertion may be reinterpreted as saying that for any property system, say *Q*, some mechanism exists for society to find a pairing of technology and production arrangements (x^0, y^0) that minimizes transaction costs, i.e., $C(Q) = \min\{(c(x, y| Q), x \in \{h, H\}, y \in \{W, A\}\}$. Using our particular example, $C(Q) = c(h, A| Q)$, which implies that independent artisanal production predominates when property is diffuse. Similarly, under a capitalist property rights system *P*, one might assert that $C(P) = c(H, W| P)$, implying that division of labor under wage relations is likely to be the most practised and observed. The thought-experiment by Williamson, Wachter, and Harris (1975) is essentially a sub-statement demonstrating that $c(H, W| P) < c(H, A| P)$, a fact already implied by the "min"-operator. But note each such comparison is made within the same property-rights system, or what Williamson (2000) calls "governance play," "Level 3," or "second-order economizing."

More contentious are questions at Williamson's Level 2 (or "first-order economizing"), which in our convention deals with comparisons of *P* and *Q*. An example of this is what, if anything, should occur if an available superior technology like *H* is dominated under the existing property-rights system *Q* but better accommodated under *P*. That is, say, $C(Q) = c(h, A| Q) < c(H, A| Q)$, but $C(P) = c(H, W| P) < c(H, A| P)$. Is one allowed to compare and say, for example, $C(P) < C(Q)$? Marx and Engels famously pointed to the possibility that "at a certain stage," the property rights in *Q* would come to represent "fetters" to the productive forces *H* and would need to be "burst asunder" and replaced by *P*. But exactly why, when, or how is not exactly clear.

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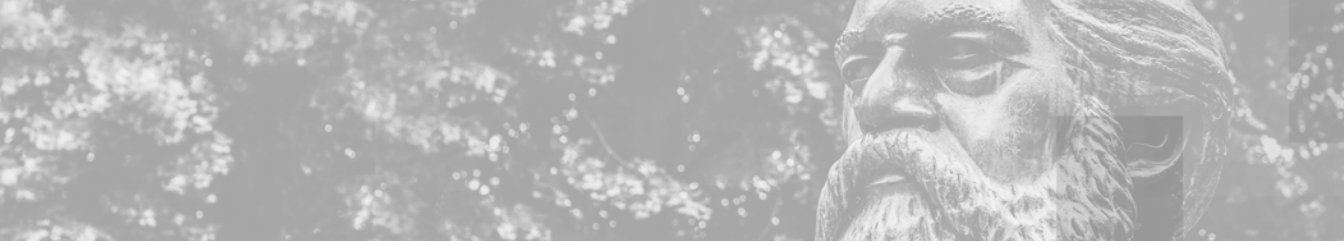
Part Two

Marx and Revolution



Imagining the Socialist Future: Ideas of Karl Marx, Robert Owen, Vladimir Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, and Present-day Socialists[1]

RENE E. OFRENEO

Abstract

Karl Marx had no equal in rigor by the way he deconstructed the workings of the capitalist system, an unequal system which he envisioned is bound to be replaced by a socialist order. The problem is that he did not leave behind a detailed blueprint of how a socialist society shall function, for example, on how the governance structure and other societal arrangements

[1] This is an edited version of the public lecture delivered at the UP School of Labor and Industrial Relations (UP SOLAIR) on May 6, 2019 as part of the Marx Bicentennial Lecture Series. The lecture series was co-sponsored by the Program on Alternative Development of the UP Center for Integrative Development Studies, UP SOLAIR, and HomeNet Philippines.

under socialism would look like. What was clear to him is that a socialist restructuring of the old capitalist order comes after a successful Socialist Revolution led by the organized working class. This, in fact, is what sets him apart from the earlier socialist visionaries who imagined the formation of alternative egalitarian communities and yet failed to appreciate the leading role of the organized working class in the revolutionary overhauling of the capitalist system. He called these visionaries "utopian." Nonetheless, it cannot be denied that the early socialist visionaries contributed ideas in the shaping not only of the Marxist theory but also of the growth of the socialist movement in the 19th and 20th centuries.

This paper outlines key ideas of Karl Marx and of select socialist thinkers—Robert Owen, Isabelo de los Reyes, Vladimir Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, and present-day socialists—in visioning the socialist future. Robert Owen, an industrial reformer turned cooperative and trade union advocate, was a major influence in shaping the works of Karl Marx and his followers. Isabelo de los Reyes, an anti-clerical campaigner, introduced to the nascent Philippine labor movement the idea of "class struggle" for a "classless society," an idea he got from socialist-oriented Spanish rebel-prisoners during de los Reyes' incarceration in Barcelona, Spain. Vladimir Lenin, the Russian leader of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, had to grapple with the task of establishing a socialist order in a country with weak capitalist foundations. Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin's contemporary and leader of the German socialist movement, had a short crucial debate with Lenin on how socialist democracy should be nurtured in the socialist system that the Bolsheviks were trying to build. The article ends by posing some questions on the socialist movement in today's globalized capitalist order.

Introduction

Three decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the consequent disintegration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR), socialism is once again a popular topic in political and economic circles of many countries, including the ultra-capitalist United States of America. But what is the Marxist socialist vision?

The author answers the above question by fleshing out key ideas of Karl Marx on socialism and socialist revolution. This chapter also amplifies the contributions of select socialist thinkers in the socialist visioning processes in Europe, Philippines, and other parts of the world.

However, this chapter does *not* seek to give an exhaustive summation of the contributions of other Marxists and scholars on the socialist visioning debates, from

the time of Karl Marx up to the present. As a labor and industrial relations student, the author selected the following socialist visionaries not only because of their advocacy for strong labor organizations as the base for the socialist transformation of society, but also because their ideas remain relevant to the present-day workers' movement in the Philippines and in other parts of the world:

- Robert Owen, who pushed for the legislation of labor standards and who articulated the need for organizing workers through a cooperative run by them;
- Isabelo de los Reyes, who introduced the socialist idea and the demand for basic workers' rights in what was then an agrarian and colonial Philippine economy;
- Vladimir Lenin, who raised the slogan "All power to the Soviets" dominated by the war-weary workers and peasants during the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 and who had to formulate difficult transition measures preparatory to a higher stage of socialist development; and
- Rosa Luxemburg, who issued a timely warning to Lenin on the critical importance of inner democracy in the Bolshevik Party, the absence of which would subvert socialist construction.

In the concluding part, the author tries to explain the collapse of the "socialist system" in Eastern Europe and China in the 1980s and 1990s. He blames this partly on the poor visioning on socialism by the political parties in power in these countries, specifically in their failure to nurture and consolidate a socialist order. Such failure, however, does not negate the continuing relevance of socialist thinking and vision. The multi-sided crises and miseries inflicted on humanity and the planet by an exploitative and unequal economic system mean a continuing search of the people, the working people in particular, for an alternative social order, one that is just, inclusive, and sustainable.

On the structure and flow of the paper, the author apologizes for the jarring and somewhat confusing effect on the readers of an article that "jumps" from one topic to another, from one socialist thinker to the other, and from Europe to the Philippines and back, and so on. This is unavoidable given the primary objectives of this short paper, which are to provide:

- a general overview of the Marxist socialist vision;
- a summary of the contributions of Robert Owen, an industrialist turned ardent labor rights advocate, in the socialist visioning process;

- an account on how the socialist idea was brought to the Philippines by Isabelo de los Reyes in 1902;
- an explanation on the difficult theorizing work done by Vladimir Lenin regarding socialist transition in a weak capitalist economy; and
- the prophetic warning by Rosa Luxemburg on the disastrous consequences of the subversion of the democratic culture within the working-class socialist party.

However, the paper tries to relate all the foregoing to the original socialist vision advanced by Karl Marx and the debates among his followers on how to interpret and advance this vision. The debates have continued, and the interest on socialism has not waned despite setbacks in socialist construction in Eastern Europe and China. Socialism remains on the agenda for those seeking to build a truly just, inclusive, and sustainable society.

Marxist view of societal change: The pivotal role of class struggle

Now, some preliminary notes on the Marxist view of societal change, from one socio-economic formation to another.

Marxists generally see pre-socialist society (i.e., slavery, feudal, capitalist) divided into two major groups of people. One group consists of an elite few who are able to accumulate wealth and power because they monopolize or control resources and weapons. They make the laws and secure the "votes." The governing structure is established according to the perspectives, philosophies, and culture of this elite group.

The second group refers to the larger community of people who suffer under the system dominated by the elite group. This group to which numerous people belong naturally seeks relief or redemption from the harsh life under an unequal system. They seek redemption inside and outside the existing system.

The second group includes those who seek relief or redemption with the help of "prophets"—who promise a new Jerusalem for the poor or miracles falling from heaven, or a better heavenly life in the crossover. The second group also includes those who rebel against the system, those who join strikes or revolutions against the abuses and oppression committed by a few. Some try to avoid the established norms by simply living a life of crime, drugs, and so on.

In their joint reflection on the foregoing divisions in society, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels came up in 1848 with the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (referred hereinafter as the *Manifesto*), which has the following memorable lines (1948, 9):

> The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.
>
> Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.
>
> In the earlier epochs of history, we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank. In ancient Rome we have patricians, knights, plebeians, slaves; in the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, serfs; in almost all of these classes, again, subordinate gradations.

The collapse of the old feudal order and the rise of capitalism

In the above quotation from the *Manifesto*, Marx and Engels cited the "complicated arrangement of society" in various historical orders or periods.

One historical period is the feudal order during the so-called "Middle Ages" (in the case of Europe), which had the following economic actors: feudal lords, vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, and serfs. In Europe, the Middle Ages were estimated to have existed from the 5th to the 15th centuries (Heaton 1948). The "feudal lords" included the kings/monarchs, dukes, manors/knights as well as the Pope, bishops, and the religious/monastic orders. They amassed large tracts of land called "fiefs," which were tilled by the vassals and serfs. Heaton (1948, 68) described the feudal society as one "headed by a fighting aristocracy which was maintained by lower classes of peasants." This was so because most of the feudal lords were usually busy defending their land territories from other tribes or foreign invaders.

In many cases, they were also asked by the ruling monarchies to help wage the wars of the king/queen or defend the royal kingdoms from an outside occupying force such as the intrusion into southern Europe by the Moslem Moors from the 8th to the 10th centuries or the sweeping conquest of the Europe and Asia (mainly Eastern Europe) by Genghis Khan's hordes during the 13th century. Up to now, many European countries have maintained the royal and feudal castles built during the Middle Ages to serve as tourist attractions. But during the Middle Ages, these castles served as the forts to defend a royalty or a fiefdom covering the lands around the castles.

Of course, below the feudal order are the vassals and serfs. There were various arrangements on how the feudal lords extracted wealth from the labor of the serfs (Hindess and Hirst 1975; Thomas 1996). But they came in any or all of the following: rendition of "free" service (tilling the land and/or serving in the castle/palace), sharing part of the harvest, paying rent/"corvée" (which developed from the 10th century onward due to the growth of commerce and greater use of money to facilitate trade), participation in military exercises during war periods, and contribution of "tithes" to the Church. Not surprisingly, the long Middle Ages saw numerous peasant uprisings, most of which failed to oust the ruling feudal lords. But like in the Philippines during the three centuries of Spanish rule, these numerous peasant revolts were hardly recorded.

By the turn of the second millennium,[2] the feudal order in Europe witnessed major changes due to the growth of commerce among tribal groups and kingdoms, with some monarchs' becoming obsessed in accumulating gold and silver and seeking colonies to acquire these metals. This marks the beginning of the decline of feudalism and the initial rise of capitalism, or what economists call as mercantile capitalism. Commercial exchanges within Europe and between Europe and parts of Asia and the Middle East grew rapidly.

One explanation for the growth of commercial exchanges was the rise of Crusade-inspired trading. In the 11th to 13th centuries, returning Crusaders carried with them various products from the Middle East, such as spices, rugs, silk, perfumes, precious stones, and other Oriental products. These products were exchanged for agricultural and household items produced in European castles and homes by the master craftsmen and journeymen, such as grain, wine, metals, oil, and so on.

As commerce and exchanges grew, the master craftsmen were forced to develop more journeymen as assistants and, eventually, to farm out some products to various homes willing to be part of the production system. In short, the putting-out system is as old as capitalism. After a while, trading of an increasing number of products gave birth to the use of gold and silver as mediums of exchange. Barter trade declined in importance. The last three centuries of the Middle Ages (the 13th to 15th centuries) saw the emergence of the banking and shipping industries in Southern Europe, which was on the path of Europe-Asia-Middle East trade.

In the 15th and 16th centuries, the accumulation of gold, silver, and tradable products such as spices and silk whetted the appetite of the feudalistic monarchies of Spain and Portugal, which organized sea expeditions to colonize lands outside Europe.

[2] The summarized historical accounts from feudalism to capitalism here are based on the above-cited works of Heathon (1948), Hindess and Hirst (1975), and Thomas (1996).

They invested heavily in the building of ocean-going ships captained by skilled Italian sea masters. The competition between the two Catholic countries was fierce, which was the reason the Pope in Rome tried to pacify the two by dividing the "New World" (or the world outside of Europe) between the two by asking one to go eastward and the other westward.

Ironically, it was during the frenzy of Spanish-Portuguese competition for colonial conquests that the old feudal order in Europe began crumbling. The expansion of the above mercantile trading system, the intermittent wars among the monarchies, the rise of new economic-scientific ideas articulated by Renaissance personalities such as Leonardo da Vinci and Galileo Galilei, the anti-Catholic religious Reformation or Protestant movement launched by Martin Luther, and the outright revolts against certain monarchs such as the one launched by Oliver Cromwell in Britain hastened the collapse of feudalism.

But critical in the breakdown of the feudal order was the role of the peasantry. The feudal order had been shaken intermittently and continuously through the centuries by endless peasant revolts. These revolts intensified in the 14th century onward, after the bubonic plague wiped out at least a third of the European population. The resulting shortages of peasant labor amid deepening social unrest facilitated the collapse of feudalism and hastened the birth of the new system called capitalism. In fact, the peasantry joined the French Revolution en masse (last two decades of the 18th century); thus, not surprisingly, one of the outcomes of the said Revolution was the formal abolition of feudalism.

Eventually, mercantile capitalism evolved into industrial capitalism. The shift towards industrial capitalism was rapid in some countries such as England, France, and Netherlands, where the trading and exchange of goods became a passion among the wealthy. They organized big trading houses such as the British East India Company and the Dutch East India Company in order to monopolize markets and trading. They also utilized advances in science and machine tools and replaced wood with coal and water power (steam engine). One outcome was the rise of the factory system, as illustrated by the phasing out of wooden hand looms at home by machine-run looms supported by dozens, if not hundreds, of poorly-paid workers. The work of the master craftsmen, journeymen, and their assistants in the putting-out system was eclipsed by the new system of "*manu*facturing" (root word: hand).

But where did the industrial capitalists get their workers? In England, the vivid answer was the "enclosure" movement, a program of expelling the peasants or serfs from the lands they tilled to give way to new uses of the land—as grazing lands of flocks of sheep, the major sources of weaving materials for the new textile industry. With no land to till and no money to buy goods, the landless peasants roaming the

streets of the emerging cities of Britain such as York ended up selling the only power they had—labor power.

The emergence of industrial capitalism coincided with the First Industrial Revolution, marked by some scholars to cover the 17th to 19th centuries. In his book *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), Adam Smith[3] celebrated the arrival of industrial capitalism. According to Smith, societies get wealthy if they can freely invest in the capitalist arrangement using the wonders of technological innovation and factory division of labor. The battle cry of *laissez faire* is "free to pass, free to trade."

The problem is: was the wealth being created under the ascendant industrial capitalism benefitting the workers in terms of better working conditions and better lives? Should Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* be appropriately re-titled as *The Wealth of the Nations' Industrial Capitalists*?

The emergence of socialist visionaries: Utopian and scientific

The truth is that the Industrial Revolution had a dark social and labor side.

Throughout the 18th century, there were no labor rules (Kaikai 1989). There were child workers (mostly orphans) as young as age five. The normal work hours were 14 to 16 hours a day. There was also high labor mortality. Many from the working class died at age 25 to 30, while the aristocratic class lived up to 60 and above. Workers were not allowed to form associations to defend their interests. As a matter of fact, European governments outrightly and expressly prohibited any form of workers' organizations through the enactment of legislations called "anti-Combination" acts, meaning it was unlawful for workers to associate and form any organization for purposes of influencing wages and conditions of work. In short, there was zero protection for the working population throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, when industrial capitalism was on the rise.

It was against this dark social and labor reality that a number of labor prophets or visionaries emerged. They came mainly from France and England, the leading countries in the capitalist transformation of Europe. These visionaries all dreamed of a better society; however, they differed on how this would be achieved or established. Edmund Wilson (1940) gave a good account of the ideas of the early "socialists" Gracchus Babeuf, Comte de Saint Simon, and Charles Fourier. Babeuf envisioned a society of "equals"; Saint Simon, a society dominated or guided by "savants" or learned

[3] Like the *Communist Manifesto*, Adam Smith's book has been reprinted by various publishing houses around the world, and is generally referred to by its shortened title, *The Wealth of Nations*.

people promoting "new Christianity" and giving attention to the poor; and Fourier, a society built on the pursuit of "human passions" and organizations called "phalanges," one of which was agricultural cooperative. Note that these visionaries articulated their ideas during the tumultuous but confusing decades of the French Revolution (from the 1780s to the 1790s), when there were no clear alternative programs advanced by the uprisings to replace the old monarchy.

In the middle of the 19th century (the 1850s), another group of visionaries emerged: the "anarchists," composed of Joseph Proudhon and his Russian follower Michael Bakunin and Italian Enrico Malatesta. No, "anarchy" here did not mean "chaos." Rather, it meant largely phasing out government authority—"order without power." They questioned the use of property to exploit another person and sought the formation of workers' associations. They also questioned the surviving system of monarchy in parts of Europe.

Marx and Engels recognized the positive impact of the socialist visioning of these prophets. However, they asserted that these prophets' ideas are "utopian" and out of touch with the objective conditions under industrial capitalism. They wrote in the *Manifesto* (1948, 9):

> The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.

In line with this, Marxists coined the term scientific socialism. Vladimir Lenin summarized the Marxist ideology in his work *The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism* (1913). The first source of Marxism comes from Hegel's philosophy, especially its famous "thesis/anti-thesis/synthesis" reasoning which is mainly applied to abstract ideas and logic. Marx and Engels eventually applied it to the concrete social, economic, and political material world. For example, the contradiction between the social/collective nature of production versus private appropriation/ownership of means of production can be resolved through socialist revolution.

The second source is the English political economy. As elaborated by Adam Smith, there was a quantum leap in production due to technology and division of labor. Meanwhile, David Ricardo talked of valuation of goods, mainly labor input. But Marx and Engels analyzed deeply the dynamics of capitalist production, focusing not on the relations between things/commodities in the market but in the relationships of people at work, the transformation of labor power into a commodity, and the growth/centralization of capital through the extraction of surplus value of labor and the monopolization of the market system.

The third source is the socialist visioning by the early socialist thinkers (see discussion above). Although Marx and Engels called them utopian, these early socialist thinkers helped focus the attention of the population on the oppression of the working people under capitalism and the social ills that capitalism bring. The early socialists seek to remedy mass poverty and misery by proposing an imaginary or futuristic society where everybody enjoys the good life. There were various shades of utopian socialism, from the naive or simplistic proposal of building or establishing a community separate from the larger society to outright overthrowing the existing political and economic order (but without any clear development compass).

To Marx and Engels and their avid follower in the person of Lenin, the socialist future is right there in the wombs of the capitalist system, bred by the contradictions between bourgeois-proletarian classes. These contradictions can only be resolved through a socialist revolution aimed at ending capitalist rule, the basis of class oppression and exploitation. Hence, the repeated reiteration by Marxists of the importance of class struggle culminating in a socialist revolution.

The contributions of Robert Owen

What then is the role of Robert Owen in all of this?

Robert Owen is considered the father of British socialism, although Owen hardly used the term "socialist" in his writings and advocacies. Marxists lumped him with the other utopian socialists mentioned earlier.

In sole charge of a cotton factory in Manchester, Owen was struck by the discrepancy between the attention given to the "dead machinery" and the "living machinery" in the manufactories of England (Wilson 1940, 88). He believed that the degraded children and workers in England (white slavery) were far worse than house slaves in the United States in terms of health, food, and clothing. Further, he claimed that under capitalism not only are workers suffering, their employers are also debased. He declared, "I am thoroughly convinced that there can be no superior character formed under this thoroughly selfish system" (cited in Wilson 1940, 89).

Owen was heavily influenced by the doctrine of Rousseau: "mankind is naturally good and that it is only institutions which have perverted it" (ibid., 89). He envisioned a community with high living standards, characterized by access to quality education, higher wages, and shorter work hours, among others. When he was invited to a conference on the abject economic conditions following the Napoleonic wars, he was astounded to discover that he, an uneducated man equipped with practical experience, was the only one who clearly understood the current situation. He explained that unemployment had been caused by the sudden collapse of the market created by the

needs of the war and the displacement of millions of workers by machinery (Wilson 1940).

Owen's accomplishments in the field of worker organizing and workers' welfare improvement were unmatched during the period of his active social activism and proselytizing, that is, between the 1790s to the 1850s. This is the period when labor standards still had to be legislated in most countries of Europe and the rest of the world. Kaikai (1989) and Wikipedia (n.d.) had amply documented the following facts about Owen:

(1) Son of a saddler, Owen became a textile mill manager at age 20 in New Lanark, Scotland. The cotton spinning factory had 2,000 workers. The young and precocious manager became a popular and well-admired manager for changing the pattern of worker hiring and treatment. First, he stopped the deployment of child workers below the age of 10; instead, he sent them to school. Second, he reduced the work hours, from 16 to 14, and then to 12 and 10. He invested on better working and living conditions such as cleaner mills, improved lighting, better housing/dormitory accommodations, well-paved streets for the community, and so on. And yet, his New Lanark became one of the most profitable. It was hailed as a "British miracle."

(2) In modern industrial relations, Owen's high profitability achievement was due to better labor practices, with the workers becoming more productive and highly committed to the work process. However, as reflected in his treatment of the children, Owen was clearly more than a modernizing Industrial Relations (IR) manager. He was a humanist who could not stand the sight of children aged 5 to 10 working side by side with stronger adult workers. He dressed them up and sent them to school. He also set up a school for infants.

Another sign of Owen's humanity and caring for the workers was his articulation of the ideal work hours for a worker. He was one of the first to articulate the eight-hour work standard, reasoning that an individual needs eight hours for social and family life, and another eight hours for rest and sleep. Incidentally, the concept of "eight-hour work standard" became one of the central demands of the struggling labor movements in Europe and the United States throughout the 19th and early 20th century. The history of May 1 becoming the Labor Day for the workers' movements everywhere revolved around the struggle for the eight-hour labor standard. On May 1 to 4, 1886, a city-wide strike-cum-demonstration of workers in Chicago, USA for the eight-hour standard ended with the demonstration being dispersed violently by the police, offices of the trade unions ransacked and closed the following

day, and the leaders of the demonstration eventually brought to the gallows for a very public hanging, triggering workers' anger over both sides of the Atlantic. Hence, the decision of the European trade unions to declare May 1 as Labor Day.

(3) Owen was persistent in his advocacy for factory reforms, especially in the treatment of children as workers. He pushed for the legislation of labor standards regulating the employment of children. He drafted a law prohibiting the hiring of workers below age ten, prohibiting requiring minors (below 16) to work beyond 10 hours, providing schooling for those aged below twelve years, and mandating the government to conduct factory inspection. His proposal became the Factory Act of 1819. However, Owen's full proposal was met by the government only halfway—prohibition on the hiring of workers age twelve and work of minors limited to twelve hours. No provisions on schooling and on factory inspection. Moreover, the Factory Act applied only to the textile industry. The law also took years of long advocacy by Owen.

(4) Not content in improving the working and living conditions of his workers, Owen conceptualized the formation of a cooperative store owned by the workers for the benefit of the workers. The original concept was a cooperative store where the workers can buy the essential goods they and their families need. This was successful in New Lanark. So Owen tried to push the cooperative idea further by envisioning "villages of cooperation," where workers could get out of poverty by growing their own food, making their own clothes, and so on. He tried to inculcate the cooperative principles of mutual assistance, mutual cooperation, and equal distribution of shares and benefits. He tried this audacious cooperative community building idea in a big way in Scotland (Orbiston) and Indiana, USA (New Harmony). But both projects failed.

In the 1840s, the Rochdale Society was formed and adopted more or less the cooperative principles enunciated by Owen. Thus, even if Owen had no hand in managing or forming Rochdale, the Society considered itself as Owenite. The success of Rochdale was followed by other successes in cooperative formation in England and other countries. In the 1890s, the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) was established. Today, ICA still reveres Owen and considers him the father of the international cooperative movement.

(5) Owen's focus on the welfare of the workers did not waver despite the failure of his Scotland and Indiana projects. He went into newspaper publishing and came out with his own paper titled "The Crisis." He kept advocating

for shorter hours, end of child labor, cooperative action, and "equal labor exchanges" (exchanges among cooperatives on surpluses that their members do not need). However, the support he received from the business community and from the government waned because he was increasingly becoming radical and strident in his demands for social and labor reforms. His isolation from the elite community was exacerbated by his attacks on established religion.

And in 1832, he became directly involved in trade union work. He proposed a bigger unity among the trade unions. This led to the formation of the Grand National Consolidated Trade Union (GNCTU), which attracted over half a million members. However, it collapsed in 1834, partly due to the government pressure, which was alarmed over this new mass labour movement.

Nonetheless, it is fascinating to see Owen, the utopian socialist, becoming head of the cooperative movement and the trade union movement, two movements of the working class!

(6) Aside from his ideas on cooperative formation, labor exchanges, and proposed labor reforms, Owen also tried to articulate his view on the "human character" or how it is formed. Owen developed his view on the "formation of human character" based on the children he helped. He posits that "man's human character" is shaped by the economic, social, and cultural environment (Morton 1962). This sounds very much like the Marxist notion that "social being determines social consciousness."

Furthermore, Owen believed that the overcoming of prejudices of all classes against one another requires "the wisdom said to be possessed by the serpent, with the harmlessness of the dove, and the courage of the lion" (as cited in Wilson 1940, 94).

Fleshing out the socialist vision of Marx and Engels: From demands for workers' welfare to to call for "dictatorship of the proletariat"

Robert Owen had an active social, economic, and political life in the first half of the 19th century. In the case of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, their influence grew mainly in the second half of the said century, starting with the publication in 1848 of the *Communist Manifesto*.

Hence, it is not surprising that some of the ideas of Owen for the welfare of the workers found a space in the writings of Marx and Engels. Of course, Marx and Engels, with their focus on the class struggle in a capitalist society, had a more radical

reform agenda. In the *Communist Manifesto* (1948, 30–31), Marx and Engels wrote on measures that the winning proletariat class should institute, namely:

- Abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes.
- A heavy progressive or graduated income tax.
- Abolition of all right of inheritance.
- Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels.
- Centralization of credit in the hands of the State, by means of a national bank with state capital and an exclusive monopoly.
- Centralization of the means of communication and transportation in the hands of the State.
- Extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the State; the bringing into cultivation of waste lands, and the improvement of the soil generally in accordance with a common plan.
- Equal obligation of all to work. Establishment of industrial armies, especially for agriculture.
- Combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries; gradual abolition of the distinction between town and country, by a more equitable distribution of the population over the country.
- Free education for all children in public schools. Abolition of children's factory labor in its present form.

Most of the above measures, clearly written in the context of the 1840s, can easily be accommodated in Owen's cooperative community and labor exchanges as well as in the reform agenda of some social democratic parties—today!

However, Marx and Engels did not stop at the level of these reform proposals. They added that, if "in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political power" (ibid., 31). They concluded that, "In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and the class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the *free development of each is the condition for the free development of all*" (ibid.).

In short, the above demands are transitory measures towards building a truly socialist order where the "free development of each is the condition for the free development of all." But who will shape "the course of development" that will lead to

the disappearance of "all class distinctions?" And how would production be transferred "in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation?"

Marx and Engels did not provide any further elucidations in the 1848 *Manifesto*. What is clear is that there will be a period of transition towards socialism, which is obviously the reason why Marx and Engels kept repeating the challenge for the victorious working class to become the "ruling class" and to win the socialist revolution, for the working class to be transformed from a class unto itself into "a class for itself."

More elucidations on the transitory stage in socialist development came three decades after the publication of the *Manifesto*. In 1871, for the first time in the history of the world, a Workers' Government was installed in Paris through a popular worker uprising. This was popularly described as the Paris Commune. It was an almost spontaneous, voluntary takeover of the state power by organized workers and citizens. For two months, they were in control of the City of Paris. Marx called the Paris takeover by the workers as an example of the "*dictatorship of the proletariat*."

Governance in the Paris Commune was characterized as democracy from below. The Communards voted themselves into different committees to manage public services. They issued progressive decrees such as: separation of church and state; remission of rents owed for the entire period of the siege; abolition of night work; granting of pensions to unmarried companions and children of national guardsmen killed in active service; free return by pawnshops of all workmen's tools and household items pledged during the siege; postponement of debt obligations, abolition of interest on debts; right of employees to take over an enterprise if deserted by owner; prohibition of fines imposed by employers on their workmen. Are these not common demands today by protesting workers in many countries with huge social protection deficits for the citizenry?

During the time of the Paris Commune, a Women's Union for the Defence of Paris and Care of the Wounded was formed. The Union called for a struggle against patriarchy and demanded gender and wage equality, the right of divorce for women, the right to secular education, and professional education for girls. They also demanded suppression of the distinction between married women and concubines, and between legitimate and illegitimate children. Women's liberation movement 150 years ago!

A Communard also composed the world-famous "Internationale," sang by Socialists and Communists everywhere.

The Commune did not last long. It was suppressed violently by the French government with the help of other European powers. The governments of these countries were afraid that the same phenomenon would happen to them. There were

also internal divisions within the Commune, especially between and among the anarchists and socialists of various persuasions. One estimate put the number of killed in the dismantling of the Commune at 17,000. For Marx and Engels, the critical issue was the failure of the Communards to practice fully "the dictatorship of the proletariat" in defending and strengthening the Commune.

After the fall of the Commune, the world's socialist-oriented labor movement got divided into two camps: the reformist/evolutionary wing (which spawned the Socialist/Social Democratic/Labor Parties in Europe) and the radical/revolutionary wing (as epitomized by Lenin's Bolsheviks). On top of that, there were anarcho-syndicalists and other tendencies. The reformist/evolutionary wing flourished in Western Europe while the radical/revolutionary developed in Eastern Europe.

Some labor reforms were instituted by some European governments in order to prevent another Paris Commune. They raised the age of child labor to eight, then to ten, and later to thirteen. Work hours were reduced to twelve and then to ten. A social and health insurance system adopted by Otto von Bismarck, a German military dictator, was copied by other countries. Unionism was also legalized in England, and a system of conciliation and collective bargaining was developed.

In short, the Paris Commune ushered in gigantic changes on the social and labor fronts of Europe. The bloody collapse of the Commune also led to some soul-searching on the part of labor activists and socialist visionaries in terms of the viability of the spontaneous takeover of state power as a strategy to bring about a genuine post-capitalist society.

Marx focused on lessons on how the working class could keep power and what the road towards socialism is. In this connection, he envisioned mature socialism to witness a "withering away of the state" as the police powers of the State become meaningless in a society of free and enlightened people who contribute voluntarily to the collective well-being of society and yet claim for themselves only what they deem due to them—"from each according to his ability, to each according to his need." And yes, a transition towards the higher stage of socialism is in order. Marx (as cited in Lenin 2014, 130) outlined this in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (1875):

> What we have to deal with here is a communist society, not as it has developed on its foundations, but, on the contrary, just as it emerges from capitalist society, which is thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it comes.

Further, Marx wrote (as cited in Lenin 2014, 133–34):

> In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labor, and with it also the antithesis between mental and physical labor, has vanished, after labor has become not only a livelihood but life's prime want, after the productive forces have increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois law be left behind in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs…

Marx continued (as cited in Lenin 2014, 124):

> Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

But new questions arise: is there a blueprint for the transition period, a road map on how the "dictatorship of the proletariat" shall be exercised? Again, Marx and Engels left these to the successful socialist revolutionaries because there is no ready-made formula on how to carve a socialist system out of the old capitalist order in a given country.

A short detour: How socialist advocacy arrived in underdeveloped Philippines

Let us now turn to Isabelo de los Reyes, fondly called by his followers as "Don Belong."

What has Isabelo de los Reyes got to do with socialism and the European labor politics? Don Belong was an active member of the anti-Spanish and anti-clerical propaganda movement during the tumultuous decades of the 1880s to 1890s. He was exiled to Spain and incarcerated at Montjuich Castle, Barcelona.

Don Belong had a colorful political and biological life, as reflected in the 27 children he sired from three wives. He was also a Renaissance man and published books on Philippine folklore, Ilocos history, and so on. He spoke different languages like Jose Rizal. He helped establish the nationalistic Iglesia Filipina Independiente or Aglipay Church. After a short stint as President of the *Union Obrera Democratica* (UOD), the first Philippine labor federation, de los Reyes concentrated on publishing nationalistic articles and on serving the government, first as a Councilor in Manila and later, as a Senator under the American-supervised Commonwealth government.

This section of the article is focused on Don Belong's role at UOD and the propagation of the socialistic ideas in the Philippines. UOD, set up in 1902, was surprisingly radical and socialist in orientation. The Philippines then, with a population of around seven million, was semi-agrarian, with some parts of the old city of Manila (no Metro Manila yet) devoted to farming.

The stated goals of UOD were the establishment of a classless society and Philippine independence from America. The establishment of UOD with radical goals and UOD's rapid growth from 1902 to 1903 were due to two major reasons.

First, Don Belong, the founding president, had been exposed in Spain to socialist and labor ideas during his incarceration in Montjuich Castle. The books he brought home from Spain included the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels as well as those written by the anarcho-socialists composed of Joseph Proudhon, Michael Bakunin, and Enrico Malatesta. It was clear that Don Belong had no time to understand or discern the ideological differences among these socialist thinkers, utopian and scientific.

Also, Don Belong did not forget the cooperative ideas of Robert Owen. The launching of UOD was preceded by the formation of the union of lithographers, printers, bookbinders, and other workers, whose constitution was presented by Don Belong and the union organizers to the American colonial government as a cooperative undertaking. This move to promote cooperativism was partly tactical, that is, to get quick registration. Don Belong explained that he had "to put into practice the good ideas I had learned from the anarchists of Barcelona who were imprisoned with me in the infamous Castle of Montjuich" (Scott 1992, 20). However, a quick perusal of the said Constitution indicates that the principles enunciated by Robert Owen and his followers on cooperativism were all there: practice of savings, cooperative industry, love of civilization and progress, mutual aid, programs to place the unemployed, among others.

The second reason for the rapid rise of UOD was the existence of organized workers, mostly veterans of the struggle of Katipunan against Spanish colonialism. In fact, these organized workers were the ones who sought Don Belong and asked him to lead UOD. The workers were organized into *gremios* or guilds (examples: g*remio de litograficos, gremio de cajistas, gremio de tabaqueros, gremio de marinos, gremio de escultores, gremio de cucineros, gremio de carpinteros, gremio de cigarilleros,* etc.). The meeting with Don Belong was organized by Hermenigildo Cruz, the leader of the *Union Impresores de Filipinas* (UIF), the first industry federation union in the country. The UIF activists immediately embraced the socialist ideas contained in the socialist books brought by Don Belong as well as those discussed by Don Belong himself. The UIF adopted the Marxian call as its organizing guide: only the workers can emancipate themselves (Runes 1983).

The UOD demands, aired through a wave of strikes and demonstrations in February to May 1902, were painful to the ears of American Governor-General Howard Taft. These include the recognition of the eight-hour labor standard, recognition of May 1 as Labor Day, adoption of latest European/American labor legislations, granting of Philippine Independence, and building of a classless socialist society. These were truly radical demands given the country's underdeveloped industry and agriculture.

UOD was more than the usual trade union organization. Members held regular Sunday meetings attended by families. These meetings eventually became big social and cultural gatherings. To address the spiritual needs of the members, Don Belong spearheaded the establishment of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) or Aglipayan Church, even without the initial blessings of Bishop Gregorio Aglipay himself. He asked the workers and families to patronize Teatro Verdadero, where anti-American plays were staged such as those written by Aurelio Tolentino. UOD also promoted social and health insurance (e.g., free consultation in the dental office of Dr. Dominador Gomez in Quiapo). In summary, UOD was not the typical legal federation or fish-and-viand union; it was a family/community-based labor movement.

The UOD-led waves of strikes and demonstrations alarmed Governor Taft, who ordered the arrest of de los Reyes in August 1902 based on the Spanish Penal Code banning the formation of any worker "combinations." After the incarceration of Don Belong, Dr. Dominador Gomez took over the leadership.

However, in mid-1903, UOD was eventually shut down by Taft based on trumped-up charges against the UOD leadership: sedition, brigandage, swindling, and so on. Taft also ordered a ban on unionism. This ban was lifted only in 1907, when a moderate Union del Trabajo de Filipinas (UTF) was formed with the help of moderate American trade unionists.

But the socialist seeds planted by Don Belong and partner union leaders in 1902 grew from decade to decade in the last 118 years. The UTF and the succeeding unions from the 1910s to the 1940s also came to be dominated by radical socialist leaders. One of them was Crisanto Evangelista, a young UIF member when UOD was launched in 1902. Evangelista later formed in 1930 the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP).

Overall, the advocacy of UOD revolved around the promotion of nationalism and socialism. The twins have remained the major advocacies of a large part of the Philippine trade union movement, up to the present time.

Back to Europe: The Great October Socialist Revolution and Lenin's search for a transition program

In 1917, the unthinkable happened: a socialist revolution broke out in Russia, a large semi-agrarian country with weak capitalist foundations. This phenomenon deviated from the prediction that socialism would be built first in the most advanced capitalist countries.

Immediately, Vladimir Lenin and his workers' party, the Bolshevik party, were confronted with the question of how to construct the socialist system under extremely difficult circumstances. First, there was the need to solve the numerous social and economic ills confronting the Soviet government, foremost of which were hunger and joblessness in a country which just lost in World War I. Second, there was active right-wing reaction and resistance coming from the followers of the defeated Tsarist regime, members of the Russian economic elite and interventionist force gathered by around fourteen to fifteen European countries. Neighboring European countries were horrified to see Russia under the hammer and sickle.

Thus, the socialist construction efforts were being subverted by these triple threats: food and job expectations of a hungry people, civil war launched by right-wing forces, and outside intervention by worried European countries right after the transfer of political power from the Tsarist regime to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR). The new government immediately embraced a policy of "War Communism." All power was arrogated by the Bolshevik Party and its Red Army. These two institutions ran society by decrees.

Somehow, the original slogan of the revolution—"All power to the Soviets"—lost its meaning because power was exercised centrally by the Russian Communist Party, popularly called the Bolshevik Party. As a backgrounder, the Soviets originally referred to a system of local governance where leaders called "deputies" were elected directly by the people in small towns and villages. From 1912 to 1917, the Soviets rapidly fell in the control of the Bolshevik activists, especially after the end of World War I and the collapse of the Tsarist regime. Hence, the slogan "All power to the Soviets" virtually became a general mobilization call for the people to unite behind the Bolshevik-led revolution.

At the beginning, the Party was led by Lenin and his Defense Minister, Leon Trotsky. However, Trotsky was a believer in "permanent revolution" that he thought should be waged by socialists around the world to ensure the victory of socialism over capitalism. He was severely criticized by Lenin for factionalism. Later, Trotsky lost to Joseph Stalin, a proponent of Bolshevik consolidation of power within Russia, in an inner Party struggle. Nonetheless, it was Lenin who was the prime leader in waging

the war with so many fronts and in initiating the transition steps towards socialist construction. However, from 1922 to 1924, Lenin became too ill to lead. Consequently, Stalin, who succeeded in centralizing power to the Party and to himself, tried to shape the new Republic by exercising dictatorial powers. Under Stalin, the Soviets and other government bodies became administrative transmission bodies of the Communist Party.

In April 1920, Lenin wrote poignantly about the multi-sided problem facing Russia and the unresolved challenge of socialist transition:

> We have now passed through two years of unprecedented and incredible difficulties, two years of famine, privation, and distress, and despite the accompanied by the unprecedented victories of the Red Army over the hordes of international capitalist reaction… (para. 4)
>
> During these two years we have acquired some experience in organization on the basis of socialism. That is why we can, and should, get right down to the problem of communist labor, or rather, it would be more correct to say, not communist, but socialist labor; for we are dealing not with the higher, but the lower, the primary stage of development of the new social system that is growing out of capitalism. (para. 6)
>
> Communist labor in the narrower and stricter sense of the term is labor performed gratis for the benefit of society, labor performed not as a definite duty, not for the purpose of obtaining a right to certain products, not according to previously established and legally fixed quotas, but voluntary labor, irrespective of quotas; it is labor performed without expectation of reward, without reward as a condition, labor performed because it has become a habit to work for the common good… (para. 7)
>
> It must be clear to everybody that we, i.e., our society, our social system, are still a very long way from the application of this form of labor on a broad, really mass scale. (para. 8)

Subsequently, Lenin and the Bolshevik Party moved away from the policy of "War Communism" in favor of a new blueprint called "New Economic Policy" (NEP), a retreat to some form of state capitalism and free trade in agriculture and the recognition of the role of cooperatives. Lenin rephrased the Marxist term for compensation to Communist labor—"*from each according to his need*"—into "*from each according to his labor.*" Hence, work was subject to performance appraisal or assessment. A series of five-year economic plans was adopted for the entire country, under the all-powerful

ministry called Gozplan. This five-year planning exercise was also instituted by Mao Tse-Tung in China and the transition period in China labeled as the "New Democracy."

Unfortunately, in the 1920s, Lenin was already too sick to guide the implementation of the NEP. Stalin, who succeeded in monopolizing power through the Russian Communist Party and to himself, eliminated contrary views and factions within the Party and government, pursued a reign of terror in the countryside that caused millions of deaths during the infamous anti-Kulak movement (in order to secure food and develop resources for a program of rapid Russian industrialization), and bureaucratized/militarized the state machinery—all in the name of the people.

The transition period imagined by Marx and Engels called for the transformation of the victorious working class into "a ruling class" during the early phase of socialist construction, preparatory to the higher stage of communist development. The concept of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" was imagined to apply to this early phase. They never imagined that in Stalin's Russia, this would be transformed into a dictatorship of the Party led by an all-powerful Political Bureau and one Generalissimo.

Rosa Luxemburg issued dire warning on pitfalls in Soviet socialist construction

It was against the foregoing internal crisis within Russia and within its Communist Party that Rosa Luxemburg, leader of the German Communist Party and colleague of Lenin in the international Communist movement, issued a number of warnings to Lenin and his Party.

These warnings had been disclosed only in recent years, after the collapse of the Soviet Union. She wrote to Lenin in 1918 on her negative observations on the tendency of the Bolshevik Party to monopolize power and discourage debates over policy directions within the party and the country, as follows:

> Freedom only for the supporters of the government, only for the members of one party—no matter how big its membership—is no freedom. Freedom is always freedom for dissenters. That is not said out of a fanatical sense of justice, but because that is the essence on which depends the reviving, healing and purifying effect of political freedom, and it ends the minute this freedom becomes a privilege.
>
> ...The practical realization of socialism as an economic, social and legal system is far more than an aggregate of ready-made instructions which only wait to be applied. It is entirely veiled in the mist of the future.

X X X

> Socialism calls for a genuine spiritual transformation of the masses who have been degenerating for centuries under bourgeois class domination. Social and not egoistic instincts are needed; mass initiative instead of inertness; idealism that helps people overcome all sufferings and so and so forth… Decrees, the dictatorial power of the factory overseers, severe punishment and terror are all palliatives. The dominance of terror has a demoralizing effect. The only road to revival is through the school of public life, unlimited democracy and public opinion. (Luxemburg 1990, 42–43)

Judging from the revelations that have come out of Russia, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, Luxemburg turned out to be a true prophet. And yet, the issues of what socialist construction really mean in the early phase of Communism and what is the true meaning of the working class becoming the "ruling class" have remained unresolved.

Concluding reflections on how socialism shall be established in the 21st century

In the present, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic or USSR is no more, while China is now derisively described as a capitalist economy managed by a Communist Party.

What has gone wrong? There are many questions and issues, which cannot be sufficiently addressed in one forum. But one thing is clear: the complex socialist transition issue has not been fleshed out and has been poorly managed in Russia, in China, in Vietnam, and other formerly socialist-oriented economies. Nevertheless, there are some lessons that can be drawn from these experiences.

First, building the socialist future is indeed a protracted process and the final outcomes are "veiled in the mist of time." Therefore, there can be a series of transition measures of different shapes, whatever you call them.

Second, the struggle for socialism, despite its setbacks, also has many achievements, for example, the 2019 centenary of the International Labor Organization (ILO). The ILO would not have been established without the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Out of fear for the spread of Bolshevism, US-British allied forces pushed for the establishment of the ILO in 1919. Similarly, the growth of welfare capitalism in Western Europe, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan after World War II was partly a reaction to the formation of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) in Eastern Europe, the Revolution in China, and other Red uprisings. Most of the colonies

of Asia, Africa, and Latin America acquired political independence with the help of the Communist bloc and with the sterling leadership provided by Communist leaders in the national liberation movements in different countries.

Third, the collapse of old-style Soviet states and the switch to market economy are not proof of the vindication of capitalism. Today, socialism is once more part of the political vocabulary in different countries, including in the United States (e.g., Senator Bernie Sanders and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez talking openly on the need for America to become socialist). The crisis of capitalism has remained acute everywhere. Social and economic inequality, including in countries that have shifted to market economy, is deep and widening.

Fourth, the State in a socialist society cannot be equated with the civil society or society as a whole. Rosa Luxemburg's criticisms of Russia were really focused on the failure of the Bolshevik Party to involve the larger society in building the socialist society.

Fifth, socialist transformation does not happen simply because there is success in the seizure of political power from the ruling bourgeois class. Changes are also required from the popular forces that support the revolutionary transformation of society—before, during, and after the Revolution. Change in consciousness, work ethics, solidarity with one another, etc. Lenin talked of the necessity of cultural revolution among the people because the state shall not wither away without changes in the people's values and attitudes (also of Owen's pet ideas). Mao tried to do it in one fell swoop through a bloody, arbitrary, and terror-filled Cultural Revolution, a Revolution which failed spectacularly.

Sixth, Marx and Engels studiously avoided coming up with a detailed blueprint of the future socialist arrangement. Following their perspective on dialectical materialism, they saw that such an enterprise of developing a blueprint truly belongs to the socialist builders on the ground based on the mobilization of existing knowledge, resources, and materials available in the given society at the time of the revolutionary transformation. Hence, the central importance of Rosa Luxemburg's advice: more democratic debates among the masses on how to move forward, simply because no one can claim he/she has a monopoly of what is right and what is wrong.

Finally, socialism is very much intertwined with the struggle of the trade unions, cooperatives, and civil society organizations for better life at the workplace. Owen's and de los Reyes' ideas still remain relevant. Owen's cooperative societies and de los Reyes' family/community-based unionism can be part of the grand socialist construction—before, during, and after the socialist revolution. The claim of a Brazilian minister (under Lula) that solidarity economy promoted by a network of cooperatives, social

enterprises, and other popular initiatives undertaken by various CSOs can be the socialism of the 21st century. This is something that socialists think about.

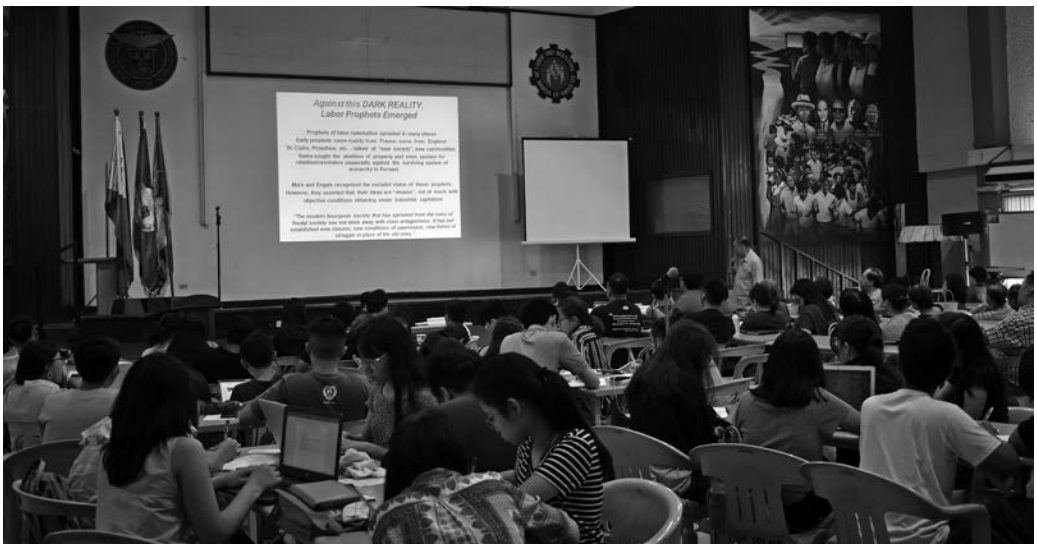
Venceremos!

Open Forum

In the last installment of the Marx Bicentennial Lecture Series, Rene Ofreneo, Ph.D. was joined by Ramon "Bomen" Guillermo, Ph.D., Professor at the Center for International Studies, UP Diliman. The open forum was moderated by Melisa R. Serrano, Ph.D., Professor at the School of Labor and Industrial Relations, UP Diliman.

The first question came from **Jenny Llaguno (Member, Laban ng Masa)** who requested further elaboration on Rosa Luxemburg's critique of the Russian Revolution, particularly on the cultural-spiritual dimension. According to **Dr. Rene Ofreneo**, Rosa Luxemburg emphasized the importance of the "cultural-spiritual" on the level of consciousness in societal transformation. "Progressives" tend to be too focused on changing the structure of government, often neglecting the importance of individual/personal transformation of the members of the progressive forces themselves and, by extension, of the whole nation. Dr. Ofreneo also pointed out that Robert Owen became a spiritualist after he was forsaken by the elite. He was initially anti-organized religion, but eventually, he became a spiritualist who allegedly talked to the spirits of Thomas Jefferson and of other US presidents.

Still on spiritualism, **Fr. Hendrick (a Catholic priest)** briefly compared Robert Owen with Isabelo de los Reyes. He said that the former started in unionism and



cooperativism while the latter started in unionism. The first one ended up as a spiritualist while the other one established his own religion. They both believed in Marxism. Noting these similarities, he raised the issue of Marxism in Christianity. He asked, "Can we 'Marxisize' Christianity and can we Christianize Marxism?"

Dr. Ramon Guillermo (Center for International Studies, UP Diliman), who also delivered a separate lecture, reminded the audience that it was Isabelo de los Reyes who brought the first recorded copy of *Das Kapital* to the Philippines. Since then, that copy has created its own history in our society. In response to the question, Dr. Guillermo immediately differentiated the realm of religion from Marxism. Religion usually deals with issues concerning death and the after-life which are not part of the scope of Marxism. He said that religion responds to and fulfils a different set of human needs and desires. While religion will still be part of a socialist society, there will be different spiritual ways of dealing with the world whether pantheism, atheism, or others.

Dr. Rene Ofreneo added that in the Philippines and in Latin America, some of the strongest and most solid contingents of the socialist activist movement are the followers of the theology of liberation even up to this day. For these people, a part of their spiritual zeal and spiritual transformation is inspired by the history of Christianity in the 4th century when early Christian communities were suppressed but organized their own utopian communities. This cultural-spiritual dimension of societal transformation has been a neglected area of discourse which Rosa Luxemburg emphasized time and again.

An undergraduate student from UP Manila asked about the specific nature of the relation of the worker to the capitalist production and of the worker to the struggles advanced by the labor movement. Dr. Ofreneo zeroed in on a chapter in *Das Kapital* called Labor Process where the relationship between the worker and the capitalist production is discussed. This relationship is often perceived as *technical*, one solely involving the relationship of the human worker and the machine. The workers find it difficult to keep up with the level of productivity of the machines, and as such, the workers' resistance is focused on destroying and sabotaging the operation of the machines. What is lost in this account is the necessary *social character* of the relationship as the control of the machines is determined by the management, the human resource, or the capitalists. The social nature of the relationship yields a contradiction: as the level of production improves and the profit increases, only one group appropriates the profit, leaving the working class ever more impoverished. The solution of the Marxists is to see the relationship of the worker and the capitalist production as both technical and social, particularly addressing the "degradation of labor" as manifested in outsourcing, contractualization, and the continuous splitting and division of labor leading to the alienation of work.

A professor was struck by one of the subtopics of Dr. Ofreneo's paper, "Cooperative Movement and the Solidarity Economy." She asked Dr. Ofreneo to expound further on the relationship between the cooperative movement and trade unionism. As a response, Dr. Ofreneo pointed out that the cooperative movement, the trade union movement, and the skills-based association are different forms of organizing workers. He suggested that Owen's insight on the importance of trade unions' forming cooperatives is worth revisiting. Further, what is valuable in the work of Owen and de los Reyes was their holistic approach to the labor movement, that is, they advanced the labor movement as a social movement rooted and embedded within the communities. This holistic approach seeks to fight not just for labor and wage issues but also for access to basic social services and other dimensions of well-being and community flourishing. For Dr. Ofreneo, what is unfortunate about the labor movement in the Philippines is that the labor system has become segmented and heavily legalistic. In 1953, Blas Ople, then an activist and reporter, wrote an article arguing that collective bargaining was introduced by the Americans to depoliticize and economize the labor relations by legally containing the workers to rely on jurisprudence to settle plant-level issues instead of organizing and agitating collectively for nation-wide or industry-wide reforms. Although the labor movement receives media attention, the movement is still very weak, number-wise.

Dr. Ramon Guillermo appreciated the point made by Dr. Ofreneo. Usually, collective bargaining agreements in the country (including the one in UP) tend to focus on benefits; Dr. Guillermo could not agree more with Dr. Ofreneo's insistence that the labor movement should aim beyond the labor concerns. For Dr. Guillermo, this short-sightedness seems to be true for cooperatives as well where they have been transmogrified into purely money-making enterprises; some are even mired in corruption. We need to re-imagine the form and function of unions and cooperatives today. Moreover, as Lenin and his party were designing and building their ship as they sailed towards their aspired socialist destination, Dr. Guillermo stressed that we need to respond to the struggles of our times with the same spirit of experimentation that animated Lenin. Building socialism in the 21st century requires building new formations and new practices on the ground (e.g., Lumad schools in Mindanao). We have no choice but to succeed, to change the way human beings live in this world.

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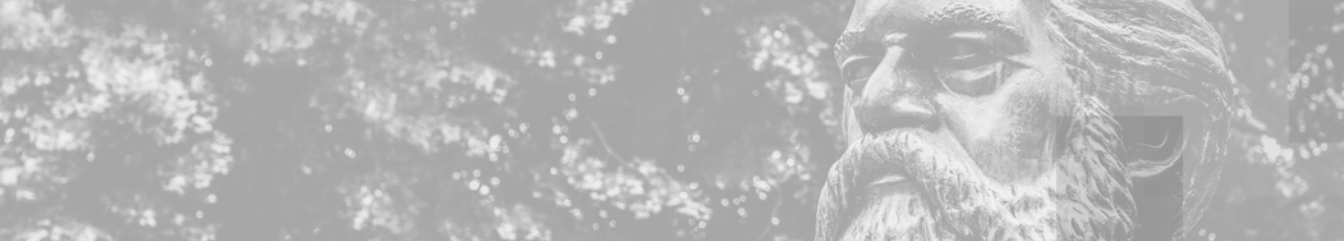

Marxism and Ecofeminism in the Era of Climate Change: Convergence and Divergence

ROSALINDA PINEDA OFRENEO

Abstract

Marxists lay the blame for climate disasters on the doorstep of global capitalism, but ecofeminists add to and critique the Marxist discourse via gendered explanations about capitalism's predatory nature rooted in its patriarchal moorings. Women's relationship to nature, due to their socially constructed reproductive functions, is in many ways different from that of men. Women-led ecofeminist movements also have a multiplicity of inclusive and participatory goals and strategies for global resistance and alternative development that may overlap with and at the same time depart from those of men-led class-based movements.

To survive as an activist these days, we have to wear three colors: green for the environmental movement, red for the class-based movements, and violet for the women's movement. We need to be animated and inspired by these social movements today to be able to diagnose and transform our political present.

The paper proceeds as follows. First, it provides the context which is climate change and its disastrous impact on life on the planet. Second, it reviews what Karl Marx said about the environment and what Marxists say now about the problem of planetary sustainability. Marx is often strereotyped as anti-environment, productivist, and indifferent to the advocacies of the environmental movement. This section explores recent discoveries in Marx's writings which are sympathetic to the environmental cause and quoted by ecosocialists of today who comprise what is called the "Green Left." The third section features the ecofeminist perspective which both affirms and critiques Marxism. And by way of conclusion, the last section spells out some implications on praxis.

Climate Change and Its Impact: Providing the Context

Global warming results in many disasters. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (2016), climate change has potential adverse impacts on *health* specifically in connection to weather-related mortality (e.g., super typhoons), infectious diseases, and air-quality respiratory illnesses; on *agriculture* with decreasing crop yields and increasing irrigation demands; *on forest health and productivity*; on *water resources* with the dwindling of supply, worsening quality, and increasing competition for water; on coastal areas with the erosion of beaches, inundation of coastal lands, and additional costs to protect coastal communities; and on *species and natural areas* with the loss of habitat and species and the diminishing of glaciers.

In terms of the impact of global warming on sea level rise, it is reported that the great cities of Asia would sink by 2050 (Climate Central 2019; Cooper 2020). Among these are Metro Manila, Jakarta, Bangkok, Ho Chi Minh City, and Yangon, among others. Metro Manila, in particular, is suffering subsidence of ten centimeters a year. Salination of fresh water and drying up of aquifers will affect the quantity and quality of drinking water. Agriculture will suffer because of the disappearance of fertile coastal land with sea level rise, greater frequency and intensity of floods and drought, and loss of biodiversity. This will result in food insecurity, increasing hunger, and eventually, social unrest.

The National Framework Strategy on Climate Change 2010–2022 produced by the Climate Change Commission (2010) reveals that the Philippines is highest in the world in terms of vulnerability to tropical cyclone occurrence and third in terms of people exposed to such seasonal events. In addition, the country experiences an average of

twenty typhoons yearly and increasing disaster risks with geologic/seismic dangers closely interacting with such meteorological hazards. The abovementioned document further claims that climate change also threatens the ability of the country's ecosystems to provide life-support services.

It is common knowledge that the poor, who are the most vulnerable and disadvantaged among the urban and rural population, suffer most from the impact of climate change. Those living in urban areas make do with makeshift, easily destroyed houses usually located in informal settlement areas close to or on danger zones prone to flooding and other hazards. The rural poor, on the other hand, are hit by drought, typhoons, and resultant floods, which destroy crops and livelihoods more and more frequently, intensely, and unpredictably. Pests and vector-borne diseases also have their destructive effects, along with the loss of fertile lands as storm surges and sea level rise erode coastal areas. Fisherfolk are among the most endangered as fish stocks decrease with continuing destruction of coral reefs, among other hazards.

According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC 2019), "2018 saw unprecedented heat waves, storms and floods across the globe, and global greenhouse gas emissions continued to grow last year, with the current concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere the highest it has been in 3 million years." Yet climate action is lagging far behind what is necessary to stem the already alarming level of global warming, reflecting "environmental policy failure" on the part of many governments (ibid.). If there is no change in the trend of rising global temperature by December 2040, we would have reached the tipping point, the point of no return when the climate would irrevocably change for the worse with either extreme heat or extreme cold. That would be the future of our children and grandchildren. Given the urgency and complexity of the problem, it is a challenge for us to determine where we stand and how to address the problem effectively.

Marx and Marxists on the Environment

What Marx Said About Being a Marxist

Marx had a lot of valid observations about the relationship of human beings to nature and the environment. Yet, Marxism has also been under criticism for its perceived inadequacies. For feminists, classical Marxism did not give sufficient attention to the crucial role of women's reproductive work. For the environmentalists, the "actually existing socialist societies" under the influence of Marxism tended to be productivist; that is, they gave too much emphasis on production regardless of the environmental costs, and put too much faith in technological fixes to the environmental damages that their productivism brought about.

Nevertheless, with this said, one defining characteristic of Marxist thought is its dynamism. As Marx famously quipped, "What is certain is that I myself am not a Marxist" (cited in Engels 1882). Further, Marx's work is also distinguished by its political commitment to social change as ensconced in this famous quotation: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it" (Marx 1845, 101). As rightly pointed out by Ana Maria Nemenzo in her opening remarks (2019), Marx left us a method of analysis and action which puts a premium on praxis—the unity of theory and practice. Action and practice must draw from a deep understanding of theory and vice versa. We have to critically diagnose the changes that shape our world, and to do this, we usually borrow and take inspiration from the works of Marx and those who still find Marx's core insights useful.

One exciting work that has recently come out is entitled *Karl Marx's Ecosocialism: Capital, Nature, and the Unfinished Critique of Political Economy* (2017) by Kohei Saito who earned his Ph.D. degree in Philosophy from Humboldt University. In this work, Saito traced and revisited Marx's notebooks, letters, and unpublished manuscripts on natural science. And Saito came to the conclusion that Marx can be appropriated by the ecosocialists of today by virtue of his writings' comprising an "unfinished critique of political economy" which is still unpublished and is supposed to be part of *Capital Volume 1*. This contains his critique of the devastation that capitalism wrought on the environment. In a book review of Saito's work, Hannah Holleman describes the brilliance of Marx's methodology (2018):

> Marx's broad engagement with intellectual and scientific developments across continents … demonstrates his extraordinary ability to put these in conversation with one another in order to arrive at his own critical understanding of what exists, as well as what is possible. In this we see Marx's methodology for studying the world in order to change it.

Life, Nature, and Labor

There is an intimate link between humans and nature. Humans are part of nature and are sustained by nature. It is labor that makes us human. It is worth quoting Marx at length to spell out this point:

> *Labour is, first of all, a process between man and nature, a process by which man, through his own actions, mediates, regulates and controls the metabolism between himself and nature. He confronts the materials of nature as a force of nature.* He sets into motion the natural forces which belong to his own body, his arms, legs, head, and hands, in order to appropriate the materials of nature in a form

> adapted to his own needs. *Through this movement he acts upon external nature and changes it, and in this way he simultaneously changes his own nature. … It [the labor process] is the universal condition for the metabolic interaction between man and nature, the everlasting nature-imposed condition of human existence.* (Marx 1976, 283, 290; emphasis added)

At this point, it is important to highlight the concept of metabolism which is key to the thinking and theorizing of ecofeminists, a term we shall return to later.

The feminist critique of Marx's conception of the relationship of man and nature attempts to put equal attention and importance on women's invisible reproductive work. According to this view, Marx's conception focuses exclusively on man's productive labor which is the kind valorized in the market place. Man's evolution from the ape is characterized by discovery and possession of tools that make him productive. Man uses tools to get what he needs from nature. Consequently, the tools became weapons. Men have the monopoly of weaponry which is why men are the ones who make war. All the while, the women remain stuck with domestic work. Approximately close to half of women in the world are housewives, unable to join the labor force.

Marx's dominant critique of capitalism is captured by what is called *metabolic or ecological rift.* This describes the disembedding of man from nature because of the development of capitalism. An example of this would be man's invention of synthetic fertilizer to maximize the value that can be extracted not only from the worker but also from the soil. This process is also facilitated by the growing separation of town and country. Marx describes the situation this way:

> Capitalist production collects the population together in great centres, and causes the urban population to achieve an ever-growing preponderance. This has two results. On the one hand it concentrates the historical motive force of society; on the other hand, *it disturbs the metabolic interaction between man and the earth, i.e. it prevents the return to the soil of its constituent elements consumed by man in the form of food and clothing; hence it hinders the operation of the eternal natural condition for the lasting fertility of the soil*… But by destroying the circumstances surrounding that metabolism … it compels its systematic restoration as a regulative law of social production, and in a form adequate to the full development of the human race … [a]ll progress in capitalist agriculture is a progress in the art, not only of robbing the worker, but of robbing the soil; all progress in increasing the fertility of the soil for a given time is a progress toward ruining the more long-lasting sources of that fertility … *Capitalist production, therefore, only develops the*

> *techniques and the degree of combination of the social process of production by simultaneously undermining the original sources of all wealth—the soil and the worker.* (ibid., 637–38; emphasis added)

Marx drew from the work of Carl Schorlemmer, a German chemist-naturalist who claimed that the soil would be defiled if one puts chemicals on it such as fertilizers and pesticides, among others. This would also poison not just the environment but also the workers tilling it. Some examples of metabolic or ecological rift are cash crop monoculture towards the production of biofuel which is food not of the human but of the machine, industrial farming, and desertification. Hunger and pollution are the major consequences of this phenomenon. Another form of ecological destruction is the use of fossil fuel, the vast amount of which can be traced to only seven corporations. Indeed, capitalism is destroying the earth for profits.

Of course, the ecological rift is part of the larger and more familiar story of the grave destruction and exploitation under the capitalist system. Capitalism is an economic system in which the means of production of goods and services are privately owned and operated for profit. This leads to the overconcentration of wealth in a few hands, with eight men owning as much wealth as the bottom half of the population of the whole world (Oxfam International 2017a). This also means that the super-rich, those who own most of the wealth in the society, are also those who influence or even control the state. They enforce their rule through the army, the prison, and the court system, and secure public acquiescence by influencing culture and ideology. They are also the ones enjoying and amassing the wealth and value created by the workers and farmers at the very bottom of the economic pyramid.

(Green) Marx's Vision: A Return to Nature

Marx envisions "a society in which the 'associated producers'—the majority of society—voluntarily and democratically decide the direction of the economy in the interest of human need rather than profit," effectively "removing the divide between town and country" (Terzakis 2018). This society would have a direct and appreciative relationship with nature and a whole lot more free time through which to develop it. This society would also be characterized by a "post-revolutionary" return to nature—"collective, democratic and informed involvement of workers in the rational planning of our labor and our relationship to nature." It would mean "democratically reorganizing production to satisfy human needs and reclaim our place in nature, with nature being the collective 'property' of the people rather than the private property of a small minority" (Terzakis 2018).

Tony Phillips (2018) spells out the main tenets of Karl Marx's Ecosocialism as follows. First, "the metabolic rift between humanity and the natural world" is "the

central contradiction of capitalism." This means that the social forces supporting the current economic system are fundamentally aligned against the social forces opposing the status quo and want another way of organizing the economy and the society to be in harmony with nature. Second, "[t]he labour process is a 'metabolic interaction with nature' which changes through time according to the mode of production" (Saito 2017, cited in Phillips 2018). "Capitalism is qualitatively and quantitatively different from previous modes in its impact on the environment as breakneck accumulation comes up against the limits of the Earth's resources" (ibid.). It is inherent in and unique to capitalism as an economic system to accumulate endlessly, regardless of the exhaustion and cannibalization of the Earth's resources which are the condition of its possibility. Third, as proposed by Saito, "if the environment is being destroyed by capitalism it can only be saved by replacing it with a higher mode of production, socialism" (ibid.). Because the destruction of the environment is the natural and necessary outcome of capitalist exploitation, the only way to solve it is through system change, not the so-called "sustainable development growth," "reformed capitalism," among others.

Ecofeminist Perspective: Affirming and Critiquing Marxism

Ecofeminism is a "'new term for an ancient wisdom' which grew out of various social movements—the feminist, peace, and ecology movements—in the late 1970s and early 1980s" (Mies and Shiva 1993, 13). It is the belief that both women and nature are united through their shared history of oppression by an uncaring patriarchal society. An icon of ecofeminism and Indian physicist, Vandana Shiva has been working with Indian farmers for a long time. She said, "We are either going to have a future where women lead the way to make peace with the Earth or we are not going to have a human future at all" (Shiva, cited in Friends of the Earth Limited 2017).

Ecofeminists seek to overcome and transform the patriarchal ideology. The patriarchal ideology is characterized by the following beliefs: first, men must conquer nature by force, and therefore set themselves apart from it; second, men must be on top of the hierarchy of domination, lording it over women, indigenous peoples, and nature; and third, men must be superior to women, and culture must be higher than nature because the world is constructed in dualisms where one part is opposed to and dominates the other.

Ecofeminists stress the importance of both nature and women as producers of life. Women's bodies are productive in themselves. They give birth, feed babies with natural milk, and then take care of them after. Women are especially intrinsically linked with nature because women give birth; women give life. As such, the violation of nature is linked with the violation and marginalization of women, especially in the South. Women produce and reproduce life not merely biologically, but also

through their social role in providing sustenance. Further, all ecological societies of forest dwellers and peasants, whose life is organized on the principle of sustainability and reproduction of life in all its richness, also embody the feminine principle; that is, life-giving and giving primacy to life. There is usually no socially constructed relationship of domination between women and nature. In many societies, especially among indigenous peoples and in subsistence economies, women do not see nature as property but as a partner in producing life and happiness. In such societies, women are different from men in their relationship with nature because women experience birthing and suckling; perform care work and maintenance chores which serve as a "bridge" between men and nature; perform manual work as cooks, farmers, herbalists; and serve as symbolic representations on feminine relations to "nature."

The basic tenet of ecofeminism is the primacy of life. This is further explicated in the following principles. First, human beings are part of nature and cannot exist outside it. Second, everything has its cost. Third, there should be no hierarchy of domination. And fourth, there should be a re-conceiving of power in forging new relationships from life-hostile power to nurturant power. Ecofeminism reimagines power not as domination ("power over") where one kills, maims, or jails those who are against him or her. Rather, nurturant power ("power with") enables people, plants, and animals to grow.

The Iceberg Model of Capitalist Patriarchal Economies succinctly illustrates the hierarchy and domination of workers, women, and nature (Mies 2007). According to the model, the two topmost layers of the pyramid structure belong to what is called the visible economy which is typically measured in Gross National Product (GNP) and operationalized through labor contracts and wage labor. Capital sits and reigns at the tip of the iceberg. Just below capital is wage labor. The succeeding layers all the way down to the bottom comprise the invisible economy which is not registered in the GNP. The layers include the informal sector such as the homeworkers and child labor, the subsistence peasants' work, domestic work usually performed by women in the family, internal and external colonies, and nature, respectively. It is also important to note that nature and women's work are treated as free goods which are readily disposable and exploitable.

The title of a provocative book captures women's subordination – Women: The Last Colony (Mies et al. 1988). Women's invisible and unpaid domestic labor resembles the exploited labor in a workplace setting. Further, women's care work is also what enables the male breadwinner to go to the factory, assembly work, or office work everyday. As Red Women's Workshop (1974) puts it: "a woman's work is never done."

Ecofeminists claim that the international system, defined and run from the North by male-dominated institutions, harms not only women but also the environment,

indigenous peoples, and less developed countries. It is a system conceptualized and structured to benefit the strong and exploit the weak and the vulnerable. It is a model of maldevelopment which is profoundly patriarchal, bereft of the feminine, the conservation, and the ecological principles.

Implications on Praxis: From Divergence to Convergence

The ecofeminist vision is animated by self-provisioning, self-sufficiency, and sustainable livelihood; decentralization; producing not for profit but for sustaining life and satisfying human needs; participatory and grassroots democracy; production for happiness and fulfillment; peace and disarmament; and recognition of traditional knowledge and technology (Mies, as cited in Pineda-Ofreneo 1997).

It covers a wide array of strategies which include voluntary simplicity, consumer liberation, environmental preservation and conservation, garbage recycling, shifting to a plant-based diet, and direct action for solidarity economy. It also includes educational campaigns for clean and renewable energy, freedom from debt, peace and disarmament, food security, reproductive rights, and recognizing, reducing, and redistributing unpaid care work.

Some concrete examples of these strategies abound. First is the Chipko movement which is a "hug a tree movement" in India where women surround a huge tree and hug its trunk so the loggers would not be able cut it. Second example is the organizing and mobilizing of indigenous women for the defense of their ancestral domain; e.g., the Dumagat indigenous community and the recognition of their traditional knowledge and the importance of going "back to basics." Third, various women's organizations also mobilize to fight mining and public-private partnerships (PPP). Fourth is solidarity economy which is hailed to be the socialism of the 21st century by progressives in Latin America. It is an economy where engagement in business whether by cooperatives, self-help groups, fair trade associations, or social enterprises should be for the people, for the planet, and for prosperity. In some way, these businesses carve out alternative spaces even from inside the "belly of the beast" called capitalism. Fifth is the campaign for the Reproductive Health (RH) Bill in the Philippines which is still an ongoing struggle due to ineffective implementation at the local level and the absence of civil society organizations (CSOs) that sit at the implementation teams. Last example is the campaign to foreground unpaid carework as a precondition for achieving women's political, social, and economic empowerment, and addressing poverty and inequality. This is to be done by recognizing care work; reducing difficult, inefficient tasks in the home; redistributing responsibility for care more equitably (from women to men and from families to the State/employers); and representation of carers in decision-making (Oxfam International 2017b).

According to Burkett (2017), the exploitation of the proletariat has always been intricately linked with the exploitation of the environment originating from the "forcible separation of the direct producers from their land" to "their conversion into wage-laborers." Under exploitative conditions, the working people have to make sure that they would not get ill, which calls for a work environment that is free from occupational hazards, is unpolluted, and is conducive to productivity. Burkett (2017) continues:

> The proletariat's struggle for a decent life has always been a struggle in and against unhealthy conditions both inside and outside the workplace, at home and at work—a struggle for a healthier connection with nature as a condition of human development. The climate crisis sheds new light on the different phases in this struggle, and their lessons for today.

Drawing on John Bellamy Foster, Burkett (2017) also claims that due to the erasure and blurring of the previous distinctions between workplace exploitation and environmental degradation, there has been a growing "convergence of economic and environmental struggles around the world" which is composed of diverse alliances along the lines of gender, race, class, indigenous, and environmental movements. This heralds "the rise of a *globalized* environmental proletariat as a conscious class *for itself*, i.e., as a worker-community formation" with "a new ecological sociability, embracing a vision of human production in its most fundamental sense as the metabolism of nature and society" (Foster 2013, cited in Burkett 2017).

Echoing Rosa Luxemburg and giving her words an environmental twist, ecosocialists began their impassioned declaration with this phrase: "Humanity today faces a stark choice: ecosocialism or barbarism" (Belem Ecosocialist Declaration 2008). "The ecosocialist movement aims to stop and to reverse this disastrous process of global warming in particular and of capitalist ecocide in general" by claiming that only a profound change in the very nature of civilization can save humanity from the catastrophic consequences of climate change (ibid.). The long-term commitment to the structural transformation of capitalism and thriving of ecosystems is expressed this way in another version of the manifesto:

> We will fight to impose every possible limit on capitalist ecocide, and to build a movement that can replace capitalism with a society in which common ownership of the means of production replaces capitalist ownership, and in which the preservation and restoration of ecosystems will be a fundamental part of all human activity. (Ecosocialist Manifesto n.d.)

Crucial to the project of building a "radical civilizational alternative" to capitalism is an economic system which puts primacy on non-monetary criteria such as "social needs and ecological equilibrium" as well as "ecological rationality, democratic control, social equality, and the predominance of use-value over exchange-value" (Ecosocialist Manifesto n.d.). Another cornerstone of this ecosocialist civilization is gender justice which foregrounds care work and the intimate link between women and nature. As further explained:

> Emancipation of gender is integral to ecosocialism. The degradation of women and of nature have been profoundly linked throughout history, and especially the history of capitalism, in which money has dominated life. To defend and enhance life, therefore, is not just a matter of restoring the dignity of women; it also requires defending and advancing those forms and relations of labor that care for life and have been dismissed as mere 'women's work' or 'subsistence.' (ibid.)

Ian Angus (2016, 207) and the Belem Ecosocialist Declaration (2008) sum up the radical transformations that must happen under the sign of ecosocialism, specifically in the following areas:

(a) the energy system, by replacing carbon-based fuels and bio-fuels with clean sources of power under community control: wind, geothermal, wave, and above all, solar power;

(b) the transportation system, by drastically reducing the use of private trucks and cars, replacing them with free and efficient public transportation;

(c) present patterns of production, consumption, and building, which are based on waste, inbuilt obsolescence, competition, and pollution, by producing only sustainable and recyclable goods and developing green architecture;

(d) food production and distribution, by defending local food sovereignty as far as this is possible, eliminating polluting industrial agribusinesses, creating sustainable agro-ecosystems, and working actively to renew soil fertility.

Around the world and across various issues, political formations and campaigns have been working towards more convergence. "Solidarity among people, and between people and the earth (with *all* its inhabitants), and the search for sustainable modes of good living (placing use value ahead of exchange value), seem to be the ideological glues holding the emergent eco-proletarian coalition together" (Burkett 2017). To illustrate, the ecological and communitarian values of some indigenous communities are beginning to make contact with newer varieties of feminism and more "traditional

proletarians" (ibid.). Meanwhile, "new circuits of sustainable material provisioning" have been emerging in and around urban centers for municipal power and public transit, cooperatives, worker-community groups, public schooling, community-based health care alternatives, among others.

The Ecosocialist Declaration was very clear in its reliance on global mass mobilization:

> Global Warming will not be stopped in conference rooms and treaty negotiations: only mass action by the oppressed, by the victims of ecocide can make a difference. Third World and indigenous peoples are at the forefront of this struggle, fighting polluting multinationals, poisonous chemical agro-business, invasive genetically modified seeds, and so-called "bio-fuels" that put corn into car tanks, taking it away from the mouths of hungry people. Solidarity between anticapitalist ecological mobilizations in the North and the South is a strategic priority.

The Ecosocialist Declaration is not an academic statement, but "a call to action" (Belem Ecosocialist Declaration 2008). It further claims that "the entrenched ruling elites are incredibly powerful," and the forces of radical opposition are still small. But these forces are the only hope that the catastrophic course of capitalist "growth" will be halted.

Open Forum

Dr. Rosalinda Pineda Ofreneo's lecture is an installment of the Marx Bicentennial Lecture Series focusing on "Marx and Women" in celebration of Women's Month. Dr. Ofreneo was joined by Aida Santos Maranan (Managing Director and co-Founder of WeDpro and Kalayaan) and Aurora Javate De Dios, Ph.D. (Associate Professor of International and Migration Studies, Miriam College). After the three lectures, an open forum was moderated by Jean S. Encinas-Franco, Ph.D. (Assistant Professor, UP Department of Political Science).

Judy Pasimio (Member, Lilak/Purple Action for Indigenous Women's Rights Inc.) communicated that ecofeminism as a concept and practice is significant to her organization as it works closely with indigenous women in its advocacies. However, she asked Dr. Rosalinda Ofreneo to speak about some challenges in the practice of ecofeminism. First, Pasimio sensed an essentialization of women in some of the discourse of ecofeminism which idealizes the "feminine traits" of women, especially the indigenous women, and facilitates the passing of the burden of addressing climate

change and environmental degradation to women. For her, this essentialization is problematic considering that women are the most vulnerable victims of land-grabbing and displacement due to armed conflict, natural disasters, or overseas work. Second, she also highlighted some tension between indigenous communities and the environmental movement, for example, in attempts to address climate change through the so-called "false solutions." Eyed as fixes to climate change, the construction of solar farms and the establishment of plantations which are purported to serve as carbon sinks have led to the displacement of indigenous communities from their ancestral domains making the forging of alliances between indigenous movements and environmentalist groups quite challenging.

Dr. Rosalinda Pineda Ofreneo stressed that there are many strands of ecofeminism. The strand that Ms. Pasimio described is the essentialist type where women are idealized as the privileged subjects who shall predominantly address climate change and environmental degradation. According to Dr. Ofreneo, the strand that she presented in her lecture is materialist, that is, an approach which puts a premium on the structural analysis of society and the social construction of reality. The problems that Ms. Pasimio enumerated besetting some indigenous communities such as armed conflict and development aggression in the form of mining and logging are, for Dr. Ofreneo, examples of metabolic rift which is an important concept in her lecture. She added that social movements are also often confronted with conflicts among themselves, often for ideological reasons where some vested interests play one social group against another. To be able to address these tensions, Dr. Ofreneo urged that it is important to assess possibilities for constructing the fulcrum of solidarity by looking at the forces that are aligning or in contradiction with one another. More importantly,

building solidarity means focusing on the bottom line of environmental movements in general which is saving the planet, a goal which makes all other considerations somehow peripheral.

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Navigating Contemporary Marxian Thought in the Age of Populism

EDUARDO T. GONZALEZ

Abstract

"Populism" has been constantly defined in unmistakably problematic terms, embracing as it does a range of diverse and often inconsistent political beliefs, from left to right. It is widely held to be "thin" on ideology but "thick" on ambiguous, polarizing, and strong emotive political rhetoric, often grounded in disenchantment with neoliberal policies. What has been the trajectory of modern-day Marxian thought in this regard? Ernesto Laclau defines the "populist moment" as the "hegemonic articulation of power"—the formation of an "us" (the people with unsatisfied demands) versus "them" (the source of unsatisfied demands, "the dominant bloc," "the institutional system"). Yet the key question is whether populism (especially of the left-wing variety) can seize on widespread discontent and free up space for the daunting demand for politically progressive participation, even at the risk, as Etienne Balibar puts it, of civil conflict between disparate sides and parties.

Marx can be interpreted in a hundred ways. This lecture presents a collection of different views on populism. The reason why I chose the word "Marxian" rather than Marxist is because the collection of views will involve the so-called "New Left." There are a few classical Marxists, but there are also neo-Marxists, post-Marxists, and para-Marxists. As for myself, I am no longer sure to which group I belong.

Typically, populism is discussed this way: you have systemic corruption that leads to social inequality. Public money or resources in the government are squandered for the benefit of the few. The system is rigged, and people do not feel they can change it. Social inequality is reproduced by the elite as they have the power and incentives to corrupt the system and maintain their privilege in status quo. And this becomes a cycle. Out of this cycle, popular disenchantment emerges which becomes the fertile ground for the so-called populism. Those disenchanted experience the system as no longer responsive to their needs, and therefore, they switch their support to populist candidates who promise to break the vicious cycle of corruption perpetuated by the elite. It is also said that popular disenchantment and social inequality are fueled not just by corruption but also by neoliberalism.

The sequence of the paper will be as follows: first, the paper will trace the connection between populism and the rise and fall(out) of neoliberalism. Second, the paper will also situate populism in relation to what is so-called "the movement to the political

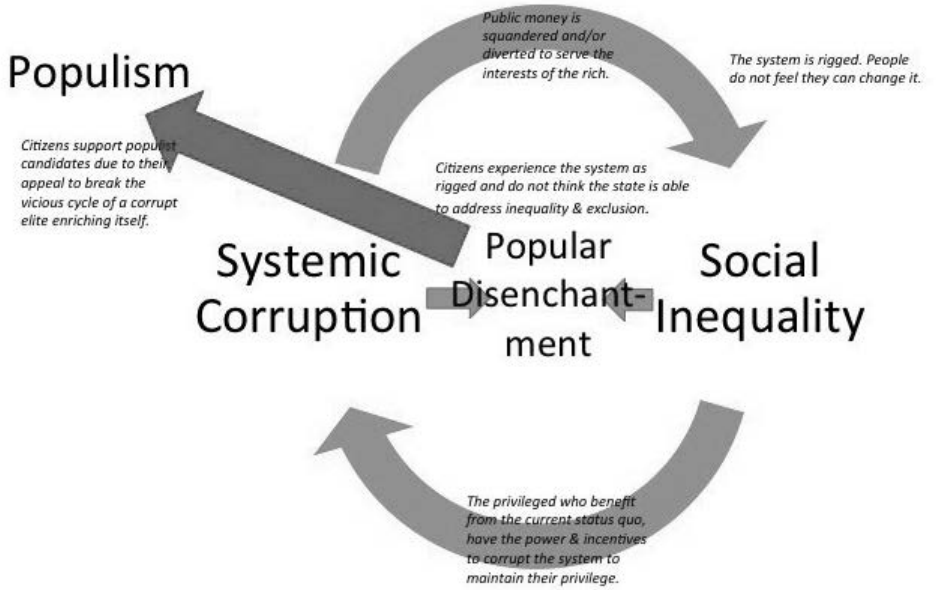

FIGURE 5.1 • State capture, grand corruption, and the death of democracy (Source: Heinrich 2017)

center" by established—both left and right—political parties. Further, the paper will tackle the question of representation and unpack the so-called "left populism." Lastly, the paper will present some critiques of the formulation of the concept of populism proposed by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe.

Neoliberalism: rise and fall(out)

In the 1980s, the global elite welcomed the arrival of neoliberalism—that specific predatory variant of the reign of capital—and enthusiastically embraced it. As many of you still remember, there is this particular statement from Margaret Thatcher: "There is no alternative." But Perry Anderson (2017b), a British neo-Marxist historian (otherwise known as the brother of Benedict Anderson), suggested that neoliberalism spread to the United States (US) and the United Kingdom and gradually to Europe, characterized by a reversal of policy directions of the past. Welfare systems were cut back, public industries and services were privatized, and financial markets were deregulated. All nation-states practically were forced to facilitate the deterioration of wages, labor rights, and welfare policies to attract the interest of transnational capital.

How did those policies impact on people? Neoliberalism reduced social security, uncertain wage and living conditions, also known as "flexploitation," caused the individualization of work contracts which brought up union-based bargaining, and channeled state assistance and subsidies to large corporations but provided only safety nets to the low-income classes (Fuchs 2008, 233). The outcomes of neoliberal policies include escalating social inequality (Anderson 2017b) and the precaritization of the middle classes (Mouffe 1999).

"Too many people are struggling economically despite seemingly positive numbers on the economy… [T]he vast majority of gains continue to go to those at the pinnacle of the income scale" (Garrett 2018). Interestingly, that statement came from the dean of the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, a center-left establishment figure. Figure 5.2 (on the next page) shows us that some are more equal than the others. We are not talking about the 1% of the US population. We are just talking about the 0.1%. The total wealth here—the top 0.1% of Americans—is almost as big as the total wealth of the bottom 90%. This trend has been going on for years.

Figure 5.3 (also on the next page) demonstrates that in the entire Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), income inequality is rising. The graaph shows the incomes of the bottom and top ten percent of the population in this group of countries.

Is this a case of abdication by the Left? Dani Rodrik (2018a), a Turkish economist at Harvard, said: "Twenty years ago when I was fretting that globalization would create a

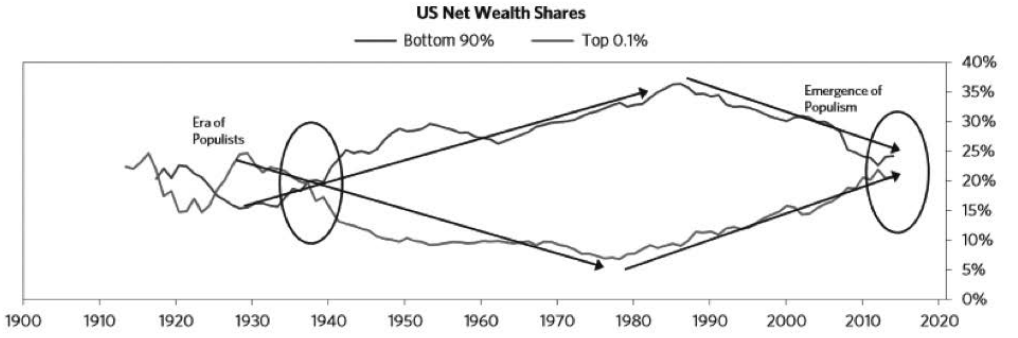

FIGURE 5.2 • US net wealth shares, 1900–2020
(Source: Garrett 2018)

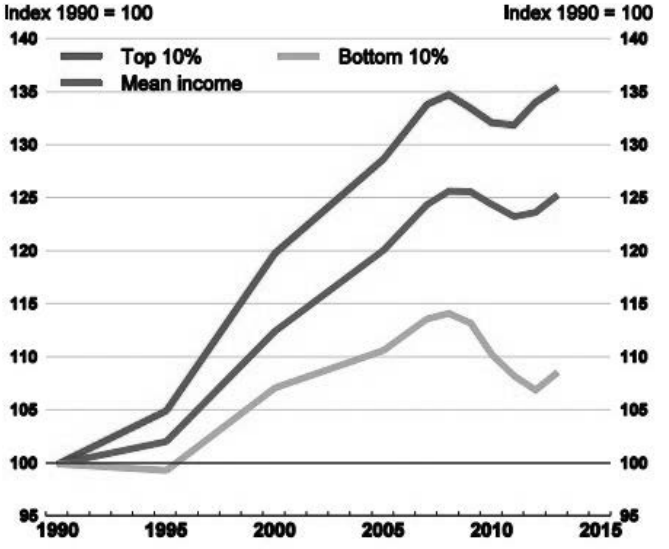

FIGURE 5.3 • Income inequality in OECD
(Source: Martens and Martens 2017)

backlash, I would have guessed that the main beneficiary of these might have been the Left because it could capitalize on the economic and social grievances that its divisions would create."

Why has the Left not been more consistent and powerful in its attack on "neoliberal integration"? Rodrik (2016) argued it is because the technocrats and economists themselves from the Left led the hyper-globalization movement at critical junctures. According to American gender theorist Judith Butler (2016), neoliberal economics

produces precarity throughout the population without discriminating between right and left, creating a fluid situation for mobilization of particular constituencies.

Thomas Piketty, author of *Capital in the 21st Century* (2014), attributed this particular dilemma to the weaknesses or the fall or descent of the class-based party system, which is very distinct in terms of classifying people on the Left and on the Right. Piketty (2018, 62) writes: "The class-based party system that emerged in the mid-20th century was due to specific historical circumstances, and proved to be fragile as social and economic structures evolved." Meanwhile, Perry Anderson (2017b) argued that the Left has to acknowledge that the "present Europe of neoliberal integration is more coherent than any of the hesitant alternatives that the Left have so far proposed."

What about neoliberalism in developing countries? If in the US and the European Union (EU), neoliberalism became well-established and entrenched through deliberate institutionalization, in the developing world, it was enforced and imposed through globalization, the Washington Consensus, and the financial opening. The main fault line, according to Rodrik (2016), has been the structural adjustment or austerity policies imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as well as the entry by foreign corporations in sensitive domestic sectors such as mining or public utilities. As you may well know, the Washington Consensus consists of deregulation, securing property rights, the reorientation of public expenditures, privatization, tax liberalization, unified and competitive exchange rates, financial liberalization, tax reform, openness to foreign direct investment (FDI), and fiscal discipline.

What is the price paid here? Of course, there was economic bonanza in countries like Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico. Until the Asian financial crisis in 1998, Southeast Asia was the darling of neoliberalism, with zooming growth rates upwards of eight percent per year. Our neighbors in Southeast Asia were on top of the world. Now, the Philippines is the newest economic poster boy, growing by an impressive six percent annually in the last six years, even as 26 million poor Filipinos are struggling to survive on a dollar a day (McCoy 2017). McCoy added that, in those years, just forty (40) elite Filipino families grabbed 76% of all the wealth this growth produced (ibid.). The economic boom appears to have only benefitted a tiny minority of elite, with the exception of Singapore and possibly Malaysia.

In Latin America, which is considered the "treasure house" of populism, it was easier to mobilize along income and social class lines; the neoliberal shock was experienced as the reduction of the welfare of the lower income classes (Rodrik 2018a). This reduction of welfare lent itself to the rise of socialist and leftist populisms. There were exceptions, of course, like Alberto Fujimori's right-wing populism, to which Asian "populisms" seem to reflect a closer affinity as suggested by Ramon Guillermo (2010). In other words, the version of populism in Asia seems to be more of the right-wing

variety. Thus, we witnessed the rise of Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines, Narendra Modi in India, and so on. Latin America, previously left-leaning, is now a mixed-up bowl, with reversals in Argentina, Uruguay, Colombia, and now in Brazil, with the election of Jair Bolsonaro.

Movement to the political 'center'

Directly correlated with neoliberalism was the political parties' movement to the political center. Conventionally speaking, left-wing parties are associated with increased government spending, a larger welfare state, and regulations on business while right-wing parties are associated with limited government, fewer safety nets, and more laissez-faire policies. Voting patterns-wise, the working class typically votes for the Left while the middle and upper classes vote for the Right. Therefore, income was the best predictor of a person's political choices.

In 1985, there were still socialist groups and factions within the major social democratic and labor parties in Europe that sought to abolish capitalism. They were embedded in so-called social democratic or left-wing parties. And "the parties had not yet embraced a 'third way' that eschewed any hint of socialism. In addition, there was an array of social movements that had emerged from the New Left" (Judis 2016). Later, the left-wing parties moved to the center, and so did the right-wing parties. "The resultant economic and political order has been accepted all but indistinguishably by governments of the centre-right and centre-left, in accordance with the central tenet of Thatcher's *la pensée unique*" (Anderson 2017b). According to Michael Sandel (2018), Bill Clinton in the US, Tony Blair in Britain, and Gerhard Schroeder in Germany only softened the harsh edges of unfettered markets, but they were still basically Thatcherite.

Interestingly, within the Left, there is still generally a consensus on the failings of neoliberalism. Jürgen Habermas (2017) notes that "in the 'battle for the middle ground' these political parties thought they could win majorities only by adopting the neoliberal course of action. This meant taking on board toleration of long-standing and growing social inequalities." Etienne Balibar (2017), French philosopher and ex-member of the French Communist Party, writes that "it is both absurd and a sure recipe for disaster to try and *neutralize the political*, in the line of post-democratic *governance* now hegemonic in our bi-partisan parliamentary systems, through a camouflage of the deep divisions within our societies that neoliberalism has either intensified or generated."

Despite all, the Center still stands:

> The socio-economic status quo is widely detested. But it is regularly ratified at the polls with the re-election of parties responsible for

> it, because of fears that to upset the status quo, alarming markets, would bring worse misery. The single currency has not accelerated growth in Europe, and has inflicted acute hardship in the countries of the south worst affected. But the prospect of an exit terrifies even those who know by now how much they have suffered from it. Fear trumps anger. (Anderson 2017b)

Despite the anger, there is also this negative feeling about the prospect of an exit from the neoliberal paradigm, and so, year after year, still the center-left and the center-right are elected.

What about in Latin America and in Asia? How did the Left preside over this global gravitation to the center? In general, there was grudging acceptance by left-wing parties of IMF-imposed neoliberal policies. This is manifested in Partidos Dos Trabalhadores (PT) in Brazil, the party of Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff, the Kirchner Justicialist Party in Argentina, even Evo Morales' Movimiento al Socialismo in Bolivia, which all moved to embrace neoliberal reforms, thereby diluting or hollowing out their leftist programs. For a while, Noriega's Sandinista Party in Nicaragua was the darling of the IMF. In Asia, of course, the communist parties in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia performed post-socialist rites of passage to the market. The center-left Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan or the PDI-P, led by Megawati Sukarnoputri but bannered by Joko Widodo, was at this time already allied with neoliberal forces when it started. Talking about the Philippine case, Herbert Docena (2018, 10) argues that:

> In an attempt to overcome their growing weakness, the two largest leftist forces in the country forged alliances with two competing sections of the ruling class during the recent elections—both espousing different versions of neoliberalism—in the hope of enhancing their chances in the country's elections. Though neither completely abandoned their platforms, they were still forced to tone down their criticism of their allies and they consequently failed to highlight just how different their programs and visions were from their elite allies.

A question of representation

Who is representing who? Piketty (2018), based on his research using post-electoral surveys from France, Britain, and Europe, said that in the 1950s and 1960s there was really a "class-based" party system. Lower education voters and lower income voters tended to vote for left-wing or socialist-labor-democratic parties. On the other hand, upper middle class voters tended to vote for the right-wing parties. In between 2000 and 2010, the highly educated elites voted for the Left. The high income, high wealth

elites still voted for the Right, although less and less so. According to Piketty (2018, 3), "The left has become the party of the intellectual elite (Brahmin left), while the 'right' can be viewed as the party of the business elite (Merchant right)."

What about the democratic party in the United States? They just recaptured the House of Representatives, right? Michael Sandel (2018), who is more associated with the center-left, said:

> The Democratic Party has become a party of a technocratic liberalism more congenial to the professional classes than to the blue collar and middle class voters who once constituted its base.
>
> ...
>
> In the 1990s, the Clinton administration joined with Republicans in promoting global trade agreements and deregulating the financial industry. The benefits of these policies flowed mostly to those at the top, but Democrats did little to address the deepening inequality.

The Democratic Party has strayed from its traditional mission of taming capitalism and holding economic power to democratic account (ibid.). Then, there was some hope, some promise. Obama seemed to reverse things in his public discourse, speaking about progressive politics and civic idealism, but later he placated the seething public anger towards Wall Street (ibid.). In fact, he appointed Wall Street guys in his cabinet.

Was there any relief from the New Left? The populist movements of the Left today did not overturn the trend. The anti-systemic movements are classic "new left" formations with disproportionate representation of university-educated people and people working in the public sector. "This is true even of Syriza in Greece, the most broadly based of the left anti-systemic movements" (Tooze 2017). As a result of the failure of the Left to subvert systemic economic inequalities, low-education, low income voters feel abandoned (Piketty 2018). It is no accident that the low-education, middle to low-income, often post-industrial working class and petty bourgeois have become the social correlates of right-wing movements (Tooze 2017). They are more attracted now to right-wing movements than to left-wing movements. The same is happening in Brazil and Indonesia. Brazilian sociologist Esther Solano interviewed people from all walks of life, and she found that Bolsonaro polls very well among university students, people with higher education (cited in Rodriguez 2018). In Indonesia, right-winger Prabowo Subbianto's Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya was supported by the majority of the middle-class, educated, and urban electorate (Mietzner 2015).

Basically, clientelism is really the experiential basis of popular representation in most countries in Asia and Latin America. For Kenny (2018), in democracies like

India, "[political] parties mobilise supporters through private exchange of goods and services for votes," particularly by "build[ing] up their networks by incorporating brokers—rural bigwigs and slum bosses—along with their clients" mostly loyal, poor constituents. Hence, it involves an asymmetric relationship between political patrons and their mass base (ibid.). Kenny adds that clientelism is endemic; for example, political parties in the Philippines are so pliable that nine in ten Filipinos identify with no political party at all, which enables politicians to switch sides after an election and bring their supporters with them. As such, populists like Duterte can appeal directly to independent voters in mass rallies (ibid.). Of course, they can eventually shanghai an existing political party, as Duterte did with the PDP–Laban Party.

In Europe, immigration was the game changer. For Garrett (2018), "physical boundaries protecting and managing entry into the US and in Western Europe of people and goods from often poorer neighbors are a pervasive feature of the contemporary world." Unfortunately, both in the US and EU, movements of the Right predominate because from early on, they made the immigration issue their own, playing on xenophobic and racist reactions to gain widespread support among the most vulnerable sectors of the population (Anderson 2017b). As a matter of fact, there is now a greater overall weight of movements of the Right, both in the number of countries where they have the upper hand and in voting strength. Meanwhile in Latin America, according to Rodrik (2016), waves of migration were not a factor, in part because migrants came from neighboring countries with similar social and cultural make up. We have to remember that in Europe, the immigrants came from the Middle East and Turkey, Syria—Muslim refugees.

Hegemonic populism

Now we go to a more formalized kind of populism based on the conceptualization of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985). In *On Populist Reason* (2005), populism became a powerful concept to name the process of articulation of disparate democratic demands into a collective will and started to take over other signifiers that were previously central to Laclau's work such as hegemony and socialism. Why turn to Laclau and Mouffe particularly? Perry Anderson (2017a, 95–96) provided the three reasons. First is that Laclau and Mouffe were some of the early theorists of hegemony in relation to populism. Their idea of hegemonic populism, first proposed in the time of Thatcher and Reagan, was a formal schema that anticipated developments in Europe 30 years later. Second, no less impressively, Laclau and Mouffe predicted the strong reaction against neoliberalism beyond 2008. Finally, in a truly remarkable feat, they achieved what others could not: "the adoption of their vision by a political force with mass support" (ibid., 95)—Podemos in Spain. Judis (2016), a left-wing journalist in Europe, said that Mouffe and Laclau's influence is not limited to Spain. Key members

of the Greek left-wing party, Syriza, studied under Laclau at Essex. In France, La France Insoumise received guidance from Mouffe herself. Before his death in 2014, Laclau was also a trusted advisor of the Kirchners of Argentina.

Together, in 1985, Laclau and Mouffe published *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (henceforth *Hegemony*). They began developing a theory that came to be known or classified as post-Marxist. In *Hegemony*, they surveyed and found wanting the history of socialist strategy and began to develop a theory that came to be classified as "post-Marxist." Often presented as the "bible of post-Marxism," *Hegemony* was not however published in French translation until 2009. According to Mouffe's editor, Pauline Colonna d'Istria, *Hegemony* was passed off as "Laclau's book" that relegated Mouffe to the second rank which "shows the academic world's basic misogyny" (Desmoulières 2017).

Who were the influences of Laclau and Mouffe? Of course, there was Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin, as well as Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser. What was the journey of the two, the trajectory they traced, in developing their theory? Laclau's early works on Peronism were classical Marxist analyses. Along the way, they tried to resolve the question of divisions between people, that is, they examined why the working class is divided if it is the carrier of the revolutionary hope of history. Likewise, how do you deal with the non-capitalist classes/those who do not belong to the workers' class? For Anderson (2017a), Laclau and Mouffe unsuccessfully tried to resolve the question of divisions not only within the working class as the carrier of economic necessity in the shape of the revolutionary subject of history, but also of non-capitalist classes that did not form part of the working class. According to Warren Breckman (2015), Laclau and Mouffe had to bank on Althusser's idea of "overdetermined contradiction"—which subverted the totalizing character of Marxist discourse. It opened the door for Laclau and Mouffe to break with the economistic reductionism of classic Marxism.

A narrow advance was "Lenin's notion of the 'hegemony of the proletariat' which involved some articulation of proletarian objectives with demands of the peasantry" (Anderson 2017a, 94). The key was Lenin's defense of "national peculiarities" in shaping the form and extent of alliances with other advanced forces. Perhaps the more decisive insight came from Gramsci's notion of "hegemony." The Russian Revolution succeeded because "[i]n the East, the State was everything," yet the European revolutionary movements failed because a direct victory over the State was not sufficient, especially given the legitimacy of the state and the capitalist society afforded by civil society (Gramsci, quoted in McHugh 2013). The bourgeoisie ruled with the consent of subordinate masses and was hegemonic because it protected some interests of the people in order to get their support (de Orellana 2015).

The tricky items from Gramsci that the duo appropriated are *hegemony, the war of maneuver versus the war of position*, and the *historic bloc*. According to Gramsci (cited in de Orellana 2015), first, hegemony is about the "'cultural, moral and ideological' leadership of a group over allied and subaltern groups," based on the equilibrium between consent and coercion. The second item is the War of Maneuver versus the War of Position. The War of Maneuver is what happened in Russia—the phase of open conflict between classes, where the outcome is decided by direct clashes between revolutionaries and the State. The capitalist class, Gramsci argued, does not just enjoy a monopoly of force but also of persuasion and has to be challenged on that front with a *war of position*, the struggle to gain influence *within capitalism* in which a Socialist or Communist Party would seek to achieve counter-hegemony by establishing counter-institutions and a counter-worldview. Gramsci saw Lenin as properly shifting strategy from the *war of maneuver* to the *war of position* with the formula of *the United Front*. Lenin actually did not do a sequential type (i.e., going from War of Maneuver to War of Position). Rather, he combined the two, clashing directly with the state but at the same time influencing the other classes to join the United Front. The third concept is the *historic bloc* constituted by the forces of the left, "combining all non-establishment groups of society, in order to conduct a 'war of position', so as to conquer hegemony" (Ferraresi 2016, para. 2). In Gramsci's Italy, the "historical bloc" was composed of the Southern Italian peasantry as well as the Northern Italian working class.

Which of these were adapted by Laclau and Mouffe? They said, "the subject of a hegemony could not be any socioeconomically preconstituted class, but had to be a politically constructed collective will—a force capable of synthesizing heteroclite demands that had no necessary connection with each other, and could take sharply different directions, into a national-popular unity" (Anderson 2017a, 94). They argued that the separate demands of the various groups have to be articulated into a collective will. In *Hegemony*, Laclau and Mouffe incorporated Gramsci's ideas of hegemony, War of Position, and historical bloc (Judis 2016). If you are in the social sciences, this is akin to classifying Marx as a positivist and partially categorizing Gramsci as a constructivist.

What did they reject? Although Gramsci had new insights on how to deal with various classes, he retained the idea that the proletariat was still structurally the basic and fundamental class. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) rejected this. They also rejected that a consensual "war of position" could be combined with a coercive "war of maneuver." Instead, they scrapped all residues of class essentialism and dropped any idea of a War of Maneuver. Their new framework in *Hegemony* was a "radical democracy" that incorporates the ideals of democracy, liberty, and equality, articulated by the French Revolution (Judis 2016). They argued that the Left must build a *historical bloc out of diverse classes*—the white-collar as well as blue-collar working class and the small business sector—*and diverse struggles* (including feminism, anti-racism, anti-war, and

ecology) that cannot be reduced to a struggle between classes (Judis 2016). Hence, many of Laclau's ideas in *On Populist Reason* (2005) reflected his and Mouffe's aversion of anything that they consider as *pre-determined*, essentialist, or reductionist.

They have a few concessions. First, Laclau and Mouffe grant that "socialism would—since capitalism bred relations of undemocratic subordination—remain a dimension, not the other way round" (Anderson 2017a, 94).

Second, an important aspect of populism is captured by the phrase "the people versus the elite." Laclau and Mouffe's key notion of people was influenced by Jacques Rancière who speaks of the "demos" which is not a preexisting sociological category but the name of an outcast, "of those who are denied an identity in a given order" (Arditi 2010, 489). Constructing people, therefore, is a political task and not a *datum* of the social structure (Laclau, quoted in Arditi 2010, 489). Laclau and Mouffe also promoted the idea of collective identity—"the people" were supposed to be "constituted through a process of identification, which is an ongoing and always incomplete process" (Thomassen 2016, 9).

Populism depends on a constitutive outside—the elite—a threatening heterogeneity against which the people's identities are formed (Panizza 2005). However, Panizza also notes that within the category of "the people" itself is a political battleground (2005, 17). The *demos*, or the people, is internally split between the populous and the cleansed—the whole and the part. The populist production of the people requires the operation that presents the cleansed as the totality of the *populous* (Arditi 2010).

Where do we draw the line between the varieties of populism? Inclusive populism is the left-wing variety. It identifies the oppressing elite first and constructs them in an antagonistic relationship with the rest of the population composed of the oppressed people who include the major groups and the minorities. In exclusivist populism, which is associated with the far-right, the elite lumped with some minority groups are constructed as "the others" who are taking away the benefits that belong to the native citizens. For example, "the other" would be the blacks in the US and the immigrants in Europe. They are not part of "*us*," the people. Curiously, in the US, in the eyes of the conservative Right, Obama simultaneously epitomized elitism and the otherness of African-Americans (Ikäheimo 2017).

Mouffe (1999) also talks of "agonistic pluralism" which represents the internal conflict within the category of "the people." In this process, they are not necessarily adversarial because they're not irreconcilable. By "adversarial," she meant the Enemy that should be fought. In this process, a distinct "people" emerges out of the chaotic plurality of identities of the holders of particularistic demands (neighbors, workers, peasants, the unemployed, women, ethnic groups, etc.) and their constant

reconstitution in the imaginary unity of the people (Panizza 2005). For example, in Bolivia, ethnic groups were subsumed into a unified image of the people identified by a white or *mestizo* political leadership in early versions of Latin American populism (e.g., under the Rodríguez regime). Later these groups used their own cultural and ethnic differences as raw materials to create a new populist identity based on ethnic identification (e.g., under Evo Morales) (Panizza 2005).

With the concepts and categories Laclau and Mouffe propose, the populist narrative unfolds this way. First, there must be a *logic of difference* where non-adversarial, unfulfilled demands are surfaced. Perry Anderson (2017b), interpreting Laclau and Mouffe, says that each person has his/her own particular demand or complaint. It could be unjust treatment, unfair taxes, poor services, and so on. The demands are all different. Second, the logic of difference must move to the *logic of equivalence* where the multiple demands are combined into a common "fighting" demand. Each person looks at all the other people with their different demands and realizes their demands are all united in some way (Laclau 2005, 78). For example, the oppressed groups realize that they are all mistreated or poorly served. Third, the multiple demands are then combined into a common fighting demand which creates an "agonistic frontier"—a division of the political space into "us" and "them." The people's unsatisfied demands and the system's inability to absorb them create a populist challenge to authority (Judis 2018). Fourth, universal signifiers are employed. This involves the creation of symbols or rallying points that express a larger end but are "empty" in the sense that they cannot be fulfilled (Laclau 2005). In any case, the people are bound together by these unifying signifiers which become the driving force for articulating their demands (Judis 2018). Some of the examples of empty signifiers are the following: "Change is coming" from Duterte; "Make America Great Again" from Trump; "For the many, not a few" from the Labour Party in the UK; "Brazil above everything" from Bolsonaro in Brazil; among others. Finally, the populist outcome is achieved where the people's demands are either met or the political regime is changed.

For a left-wing populism

There is "no a priori guarantee that the 'people' as a historical actor will be constituted around a progressive identity" (Laclau 2005, 246). Chantal Mouffe's latest response to this challenge is her book, *For A Left Populism* (2018). In an interview, she says, "What we urgently need today is the development of left-wing populist parties able to give an institutional expression to the democratic demands of the numerous groups aspiring to an alternative to the current hegemony of neo-liberalism" (Mouffe 2013, 236).

Mouffe offers a left-wing recipe for radical democracy (Mouffe 2013). First, she says that the progressive left should not try to reclaim the center but rather construct

its own frontier between "the people" along progressive lines and the "establishment." Second, the Left should use the language of social justice and equality, not xenophobic or 'national' rhetoric (especially against immigrants). Third, the Left should take into account the demands of feminism, anti-racism, the gay movement, ecology, in a non-class way. How should the Left establish this new frontiers? First, Mouffe believes that there is a need to reclaim what the left vision is. She notes as an example the progress of the New Labour Party and Momentum to break from the Blair neoliberal legacy and transform politics "for the many, not the few." Second, Mouffe urges the Left to deal with the right forces. This means that the Left should not ignore but talk with the supporters of Marine Le Pen, for example, noting that they used to vote for the Communist Party and have felt abandoned by the social democrats. For Mouffe, the electoral advances made by the militants of *La France Insoumise* in Le Pen's constituencies demonstrate that the Left can still win back the support of its constituencies that has drifted to the Right. Given these concrete strategies, Davies (2018) stressed Mouffe's equal attention to strategies and tactics in her political theorizing:

> Oddly for a political theorist, Mouffe recognizes that *theory is of little use in such situations*, given that so much is shaped by the contingencies of each situation. Everything comes down to strategies, tactics and the ability to seize the initiative before the adversary. The battle to achieve a new common sense encompasses party politics, civil society and the media, influencing how ordinary people feel as well as think.

Butler (2016) further notes:

> Laclau's concept of populism held out a left-wing promise. He did not understand populism to stay as an extra-parliamentary political movement; he actually saw its possibility to transform into elective assemblies, representative democracy, even state power, but the possibility of transforming the movement into a representative kind of body such as assemblies, congresses, parliaments, or even state power.

Podemos seems to be that realization when Laclau and Mouffe's insights were adopted by this left-leaning party in Spain. In an interview, Mouffe (quoted in Desmoulières 2017) reveals, "I have been Podemised. Seeing that my ideas inspire people and that [radical democracy] informs their practices is the best gift anyone could give me."

What happened in Podemos (Pavia, Bodoque, and Martin 2016)? First, the disparate, unfulfilled demands are surfaced by constituent groups like M15, Izquierda

Anticapitalista, etc. (the historic bloc). Each constituent group has its own particular demand emerging from the EU crisis: the right to employment, housing, social protection, health, education, the cancellation of unjust debt, the end of austerity policies, and Catalonian independence. Second, in constructing the logic of equivalence, they divided the political space between the indignados and the establishment (*la casta*). Podemos, however, could not include favoring Catalonian independence as part of the logic of equivalence because that would break the movement. Instead, it elected "anti-austerity" as its key demand and unifying concept, fortifying the bloc with a particular force which makes the equivalential chain possible. Third, in the agonistic frontier that it constructed, Podemos engages in both critically friendly and agonistic relations with other groups (e.g., PSOE is treated as enemy [part of *la casta*], but also an agonistic adversary and a potential coalition partner). Fourth, the universal signifiers employed by Podemos are manifested in their rallying points: "The real country versus a country of elites;" "Europe is governed by absolutists and we will be their *sans-culottes*;" "We are neither right nor left, we are coming from the bottom and going for the top." "*Tenemos un voto, pero no tenemos voz*" (We have a vote, but we have no voice) becomes the driving force for Movimiento 15-M to motivate people to mobilize, first in the squares and later at elections. Finally, as a populist outcome, in 2015, Podemos received 21% of the vote and became the third largest party in the parliament, with 69 out of 350 seats. It also won seats in the EU Parliament.

Critique

The theoretical insights of Laclau and Mouffe have received warm reception and appreciation. Yannis Stavrakakis (2004, 257) maintains that "Laclau's discursive theory of populism seems to be the only one that offers theoretical sophistication without succumbing to idealism or to any kind of intellectualist reductionism, one that combines a thorough philosophical grounding with a sensitivity towards the realities of political struggle in a variety of contexts." Peter Frase (2012) further notes:

> [as] postmodern, ironic subjects, we will be unable to avoid facing the artificiality of our identities. And this is just as well, because we will have to be self-conscious about constructing a new identity rather than finding one already made: to appropriate the past uncritically would be to exclude all those who were excluded in the past.

Besides the praises, the work has also received its fair share of criticism. Benedict Anderson comments that "[t]he problem for a populist movement is that once power is achieved, this equivalence tends to disappear, yet all the particularist demands are still there" (2009, 217–18). John Judis (2016), founding editor of *Socialist Review,* argues that left-wing populism is "diadic," whereas right-wing populism is "triadic."

The former opposes "the people" to an "elite," whereas the latter always adds a third party, typically immigrants, whom the "elite" are accused of favouring. This is far more categorical than Mouffe is willing to concede, given her insistence that politics is riven with uncertainty, emotion, and conflict. Benjamin McKean (2016) states that "[p]opulism can minimize differences in the name of unity, but it doesn't make those differences go away. For example, if pointing out that white workers and black workers face significantly different employment conditions disrupts the unity of 'the people,' then populist politics will leave African Americans behind." For William Davies (2018), "[w]hen Mouffe strives to articulate what distinguishes left populism, it sometimes tips into the banalities of any moderate politician of the past thirty years. 'The objective of a left populist strategy is the creation of a popular majority to come to power and establish a progressive hegemony' could almost have been written by Tony Blair." Slavoj Žižek (quoted in Jäger 2018) holds that "Left populism might work in practice, but it certainly does not work in theory!" Perry Anderson (2017a, 96) points out that "political efficacy is one thing and intellectual cogency another," while Giuseppe Ballacci (2017, 53) insists that "[i]t is a theory that suffers from excessive voluntarism and decisionism."

Afterword

Let me start with a quote from Piketty (2018, 4): "With multi-dimensional inequality, multiple political equilibria and bifurcations can occur."

The political battleground is now much larger. The stakes are higher. Has the Left been left behind? Not necessarily. Diagnoses and critiques of inequality, the natural consequence of the cycles and crises of neoliberalism, have been updated and rendered in ever-increasing sophistication, variedly theorized or articulated by the likes of Perry Anderson and David Harvey in the West, or Vedi Hadiz and Arundhati Roy in the East. Nor is there a shortage of models of how a more equal society might be constructed from elements that already exist in the present. These range from the detailed blueprints of political theorist Michael Albert and economist Robin Hahnel, who describe participatory economics or *Parecon* as an anarchist economic vision. Or consider Podemos' plan de rescate, or La France Insoumise's L'Avenir en commun. Or the NLF's blueprint after liberating South Vietnam. Or the National Democratic Front's "national democracy."

Gramsci spoke of the historic bloc, namely the workers and peasantry, but Mao had long put that into practice in China, and Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam. Such historic bloc was thought to be the leading edge of socialist politics not merely because they were exploited, but because they occupied a specific environment that tended to forge a collective identity and facilitate disruptive mass action. Not anymore. The historic bloc

has lost its political centrality because of structural changes in society. The economy, for instance, is more and more dominated by service employment that may no longer be conducive to fostering solidarity. The rise of feminist and environmental movements has also brought to the surface many new faces and issues, like unpaid labor of women in the household, climate refugees, or Judith Butler's precariat, derived from proletariat. As Butler (2016) points out: "The precariat may not have jobs at all. They may have a job and lose a job in quick succession. They may be transient labourers. They may have shelter and lose it the next day. The future is radically unpredictable."

The empirical findings of Harvard University researchers Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris (2016) may be quite insightful. One of the core claims of their research paper is that the significance of income level and social class as political indicators has been steadily falling in Western countries, gradually replaced by cultural and identity policy issues. Identity cleavages based on race, ethnicity, or religion have become the new dividing line.

Today, we have to deal with a heterogeneity of individuals and publics—the workers, but also middle class feminists, LGBTs, migrants, overseas workers, and others who have been marginalized, and movements—environment, civil/human rights, housing, etc. Since at least the 1970s, the broad trajectory, both in the West and in the developing countries, has been to wrestle with ever more differences in society, politics, and the economy; this trajectory means viewing diversity as an opportunity to be leveraged and a threat to be defended against. In the main, we should consider the promotion of diversity as progress, rather than to be nostalgic about "the good old ways" of constructing a pre-fixed identity.

The sphere in which this new identity, not necessarily based on class, is constructed has become broader and more sophisticated. Given a wider space in which to operate, populism seems to be better equipped than we usually think of. Here, right-wingers have the distinct advantage, as they always add a third party to the people-elite dichotomy, as Judis (2018) has explained. In Europe, "the other" was the immigrants. In Latin America or in the Philippines, the issue is peace and order. How important is this? In Europe, according to Perry Anderson (2017b), "no European electorate was ever consulted about the arrival or scale of foreign labor," the immigrants. This always occurred behind the people's back. So it is no surprise that the rejection of immigration by movements of the Right is politically more consistent than rejection of social injustices by the Left.

In Brazil, people are definitely talking a lot about security and violence in their neighborhoods, and they are genuinely fed up with what they perceive as a failure of the state to take care of security issues (Junge 2018). Drawing from her research on Brazilian voters from different social backgrounds, kinds of employment, and age

groups, in 2017, Brazilian sociologist Esther Solano (cited in Rodriguez 2018) found that the voters feel the discomfort and dissatisfaction with the system, especially on public safety issues, on which the Left does not propose anything.

Or consider social media and the cyberspace. The emergence of forms of political representation outside traditional political institutions has also redrawn political boundaries. This is a terrain much more explored by the Right, which unjustifiably incorporate contestable and inflammatory statements in the content of their messages. Jake Swearingen (2018), technology writer for *New York Magazine*, has documented how, after the launch of Free Facebook, a heavily subsidized program that Zuckerberg introduced in the Philippines, with its 100 million users, posts made by the political operatives and followers of Duterte as a tough-on-crime, anti-elite Everyman did extremely well. In Brazil, its equivalent was the deft use by the Bolsonaro camp of WhatsApp, which is widely used in different neighborhoods. According to Benjamin Junge, WhatsApp was where the circulation of the right-wing *resistente ao corrupção e drogas* (resistant to corruption and drugs) message happened, where the actual congealing of voter sensibility in Brazil is concentrated (2018).

This is where Laclau and Mouffe have relevance. If the Left wants to win back the terrain from the Right, Laclau suggested, the Left, too, needed to rely on some of the very same "symbolic mechanisms" used by the Right, putting them to work on behalf of its own, non-reactionary agenda. The Left must "cross the aisle." In Europe, interestingly, "the European backlash against immigrants and refugees has some of its roots in the concern that the social benefits of the welfare state will be eroded or displaced" (Rodrik 2018b, 17). In Latin America, the collective social advance in terms of women's rights and anti-racism is seen as threatening. In Brazil, particularly, most disadvantaged and middle-class people talk about a phenomenon Solano (quoted in Rodriguez 2018) calls "jumping the queue," echoing anxieties such as "Blacks want privileges, gay people want privileges, what about people who are middle-class and white? Don't they get any privilege?"

The Left must accept that there are issues we need to reflect on. Direct confrontations are negative because they cause a violent reaction. As society is very polarized and divided, a leftist person, even if he or she has good, clear arguments, will not be able to speak to the disenchanted because they have a cognitive block. It is hard to fight it, according to Solano.

The Left must overcome what right-wing populism has done—put themes rejected by traditional parties but still important to the majority of the population back on the political agenda (like peace and order). "By reintegrating themes rejected by traditional parties back into political discussion, populist parties have given a voice to people who feel that traditional parties and leaders are not listening to them" (Ikäheimo 2017).

The ideal situation would be to deconstruct right-wing populism where it matters: synchronizing equity programs and politics, for instance. According to Junge (2018), "the Workers' Party [in Brazil] prioritized social assistance programs but failed to link those incredible welfare benefits to any kind of political position or policy position among the beneficiaries; the Workers' Party failed to bring into being a kind of new citizen consciousness—they just created a new middle class of consumers." Could we say the same thing of, say the 4Ps program, especially during the time of the administration of former President Benigno Aquino III, when it would have probably been important to bring about a new progressive civic consciousness among the beneficiaries?

At the broader level, amidst growing global rejection of the economic and political theories that support the idea that neoliberal globalization is the only route to modernity and a better world, we can of course use Gramsci's war of position, which means, according to Rodrik (2018), "taking aim at concentrations of power" at "current pattern of trade agreements, which often privilege particular corporate interests and investors." For the Left, it is necessary to construct a political identity that encompasses the entire dynamic of production and reproduction that embrace ever larger aspects of historical reality in an increasingly chaotic world. Needless to say, this is not just about winning a nicer version of capitalism.

Let me end with an insight from Hungarian philosopher István Mészáros' book *Marx's Theory of Alienation* (1970), where he claims that the alienation from the self is a consequence of being a mechanistic part of a social class, the condition of which estranges a person from their humanity.

Marx famously said that our labor alienated us from who we are. We have unvaryingly lost the ability to determine our choices and destiny because the circumstances have deprived us of the right to regard ourselves as the master of our own actions,the right to have meaningful relationships with other people. Instead, we are diverted to socially non-productive activities that diminish our capacity as self-realized human beings. Today, we are as alienated as ever.

Open Forum

An **unidentified member of the audience** clarified whether leaders branded as populist but implementing anti-people policies such as Duterte can really be classified as populist.

Dr. Eduardo Gonzalez explained that Duterte is not actually a populist in the strict sense of the word, but he has some elements of a populist agent. He gave three characteristics of a populist but remains unsure whether Duterte can be clearly classified as one. First, a populist agent/leader must have a highly personalistic kind of characteristic or a charisma in the way he enacts his policies, rules, etc. The second characteristic is that a populist agent must have some elements of nativism. Donald Trump in the US, for example, has some nativist tendencies because he said that the Mexicans are trying to rob the Americans of their jobs. The third characteristic is that the populist agent/leader must deliver. In the case of Thaksin in northeast Thailand, he gave the poor a lot of entitlements. We may also consider Morales of Bolivia as someone who delivers as he has policies in ensuring ethnic unity despite the differences among the ethnic groups. Jokowi also delivered a lot in terms of his own promises to make life a little better for the poor of Indonesia.

Dr. Antoinette Raquiza (Convenor, UP CIDS Political Economy Program) commended Dr. Gonzalez's discussion which is theoretical rather than a performance-based definition of populism. She pointed out that recognizing populism as a character of the Left, the Right, or the Center is generative because it allows us to begin a conversation on populism from a progressive perspective.

Dr. Temario Rivera (Moderator and Former Professor, UP Department of Political Science) added that a key insight in Dr. Gonzalez's talk is its attempt to shed light on the complexity of any populist agenda to legitimize their authority to represent any kind of society, given the extreme sociological diversity of any society. A populist response would say "I represent the people, I represent the people's interests." Important questions to ask are: who are the people? How do you define the people? There are usually two responses from a left-wing perspective. The more traditional Marxist response would be "the working class and the oppressed." But, the discussion of Laclau and Mouffe is interesting because they are now saying that the people is not defined as a preexisting category. You have to construct the people. Hence, this is the challenge now. Our first question to anybody claiming to represent the people should be: "How do you define the people? Who is your adversary?" By identifying who are included in the definition of "people," we can have a better understanding of what the populist agenda are. Finally, Dr. Rivera also noted that neoliberalism has accentuated and magnified social diversity and political divisions. This is exhibited in the proliferation of various party-lists in the Philippines who claim to present solutions addressing the problems produced by neoliberalism/global capitalism, thereby, forcing the groups to adopt a politically-centrist kind of response in an attempt to be more inclusive.

Randy David (Professor Emeritus, UP Department of Sociology) contended that populism is a political style rather than an agenda. In addition, he argued that Duterte

is not just a populist, but a dysfunctional, monstrous kind of populist who rejects conventional politics and capitalizes on the unarticulated resentment and complex emotions of the people who have long been underserved and betrayed by their leaders. **An unidentified UP student** remarked on Randy David's use of the word "monster" by echoing the words used by Duterte's supporters to defend him: "There are no monsters, there are monstrous acts. But there are no monsters. There are only humans." On another note, he asked, as the populists' goal is to get the votes of the people, does it ultimately make the process of voting democratic? Finally, he asked whether there is libertarian socialist movement in the Philippines.

Dr. Maria Victoria Raquiza (Assistant Professor, UP National College of Public Administration and Governance) stressed the importance of the sociological imagination in analyzing the rise and continued popularity of the Duterte phenomenon. For her, what needs to be problematized is not Duterte but his ability to tap into the popular impulse of the people that enables him to do what he does and get away with it. Supposedly, the Left would harvest the social discontent and dissent brought about by the failure of neoliberalism; however, it is actually right-wing leaders who have harvested that discontent. The exercise of the social imagination is to be the more constructive way to approach the dilemma. The Left needs to go back to the trenches and rethink its assumptions and strategies. One great tragedy in recent years was the time when a millenarian uprising occurred in 2001 (dubbed as "EDSA 3") which was largely ignored by the Left—a sign of the discontent between and among the masses. Hence, there is the need to have a more self-reflexive and nuanced approach within the Left.

Responding to the question on the possibility of populists upholding democracy, **Dr. Gonzalez** drew on Gramsci's notion of War of Position to suggest that elections can actually transform parts of society as many left-wing movements in Latin America came to power using elections. However, they could not sustain the gains as pretty soon they were engulfed and overwhelmed by problems associated with neoliberalism. This happened in Brazil, which was also exacerbated by corruption scandals of the Lula and Rousseff regimes respectively. Dr. Gonzalez also reflected on the comments made by Prof. Randy David and Dr. Maria Victoria Raquiza on the oversights committed by the Left. For him, Brazilian sociologist Esther Solano's findings on people's discomfort with the system and the Left's failure to offer alternatives are a big invitation for the Left. The Left may also consider the use of other methods and fora such as social media and cyberspace, a terrain much more explored by the Right. Facebook became a platform for Duterte's tough-on-crime image and for his eventual win, aided by the help of his supporters. In Brazil, Bolsonaro tapped WhatsApp which is very popular in most neighborhoods. In other words, we must accept that there are issues we have to reflect on, therefore we cannot be in direct confrontation with the trolls of the other side. Thus, the ideal situation would be to deconstruct right-wing populism where it

matters and then synchronize equity programs and politics. In the case of the Workers' Party in Brazil, they prioritized social assistance programs but failed to connect those welfare benefits to a new kind of citizen consciousness. Thus, they just created a new middle class of consumers. Although it is uncertain if this is also applicable in the Philippines with the 4Ps program, perhaps the leftists, especially during the administration of Benigno Aquino III, could have brought back a new progressive civic consciousness using 4Ps as a strategy.

The term "populist" has been used as a derogatory term describing autocrats such as Trump, Putin, Xi Jinpin, and Duterte. As such, **Bobby Garcia (writer)** asked if there have been any instances where populism had been used as a force for good or at least had been very efficient. **Dr. Gonzalez** cited the example of Podemos in Spain, which was a success in terms of the application of a particular left-wing kind of strategy. Hugo Chavez may also be considered successful as he raised the level of living standards of many of the Venezuelans.

An **unidentified member of the audience and citizen of the United States** wondered if left-leaning populist political parties in Europe are possible in the United States where both Republican and Democratic parties are considered right-wing. There are no mass-based parties in the US which makes it unlikely to have political alternatives. **Jenny Llaguno (writer and UP Diliman Alumna)** reminded the audience to go back to the essence of Marxism which is class struggle. This, along with human nature, can be used to better understand how to deal with corruption. **Dr. Sithy Reihana Mohideen (Senior Research Fellow, Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, University of Melbourne)** suggested that a socialist feminist

critique must be applied to further understand populism. One of the clear features of populism today is its extreme misogyny. There is misogyny from Duterte with large numbers of women supporting him as well. The women's movement has a particularly important role to play in the resistance to this misogyny. She added that we can become comfortable with Left populism as the counterpoint of Right populism if the movements of the Left are able to put forward a socialist alternative in a way that is relevant and practical to the people.

Dr. Gonzalez agreed that there are no mass parties in the United States and the established parties will persist although there is some hope in trying to recapture the old base of the Democratic Party. In the last election, there were some new faces, although it was a tiny minority. There are two Muslim women, native Americans, and a gay candidate elected into the US Congress for the first time. We do not know if it will be a harbinger of the future. On the other hand, Trump has consolidated his own elements in the Republican Party. Most of those who were defeated in the last election were the moderate ones (the center-right) while most of those elected belong to the far-right. Hence, it is something that might breakup the two-party system in favor of a third, more progressive party. **Dr. Gonzalez** maintained that corruption is in place because of a bigger malice which is neoliberalism, but he is uncertain whether corruption is part of human nature. Corruption is a consequence of neoliberal policies, but that may not be its entire cause.

An unidentified member of the audience echoed some arguments he previously heard that populism is a reflection of discontent with the Left's abandonment of class struggle/contradictions in favor of emergent styles such as LGBTQ, environmental awareness, indigenous peoples, migrants, etc. Populists then offer a "kickback" which is "the state that cares." Hence, populism can be seen as a return to class struggle. **Dr. Gonzalez** agreed and supposed that the challenge now is incorporating all of these legitimate demands. We cannot just ignore these new forms of struggle. What needs to be figured out is the strategy that will enable the Left to create a more substantive historic bloc to create a more successful struggle to use Gramsci's terms.

Precious Jewel Amor Manalo (Student, Development Studies Program, UP Manila) proposed that the concept of intersectionality can be used to find a common ground for both the Left and the Right to aggregate the demands of the various sectoral struggles. As for Duterte's "monstrous" kind of populism, she suggested that it is the State and the ruling forces of society that are to be blamed. The only thing progressives can do is to educate the masses and open their eyes to the situation.

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Part Three

Marx and Religion

Islamologists as Alternative Marxists

ROQUE MORALES

Abstract

Islam has had, from the time of the Prophet Muhammad, a progressive and revolutionary flavor, tending to critique established modes of power and espousing alternative ways of addressing social change. This methodology has been established through understanding both the Prophetic corpus of knowledge (*Qur'an* and *hadith*) as well as context (*ijma* also referred to as consensus of the learned, and *qiyas* referred to as analogy). With these, Muslim thinkers have developed a methodology and tools of analysis that can be considered as alternative Marxism. Although practitioners may be called Islamologists (using Islam as a worldview and paradigm), their methodology can also be said to be proximate to Marxism.

We understand that the world now, instead of facing *ideology*-based conflicts, is pushing towards identity-based conflicts. One example is the current phenomenon of what we call the "Black Flag," the symbol associated with the extremist Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). With this, I would like to

highlight that Muslims, since time immemorial, refer to a particular term that they use to describe ideology, the Persian word *shenasi* and the Arabic word *aqeedah*. The Arabic word *aqeedah* stems from the word *aqaed*, which refers to a set of beliefs that determine the political, economic, and the educational worldview that a Muslim has. Basically, *aqeedah* describes what a person should believe in. In other aspects of the Muslim faith, a Muslim should follow a religious leader or what can be referred to as the sheikh or spiritual guide, but in the sense of *aqeedah* or *shenasi*, he has to discover for himself this worldview or perspective. This is also in the case of how one should view his political understanding of the world. Therefore, in the 1900s onwards, a series of Islamic thinkers or the "Islamic reformers" discussed Islamic ideology in a way that would proximate to Marxism.

The two personalities that I would like to highlight are Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, who is one of Turkey's greatest philosophers, and Ali Shariati, the ideologue behind the success of Islamic revolution in Iran. Both have two opposite ideologies because one looks distastefully at the West while the other one uses the Marxist nature of the West to interpret politics in his own country.

How does Islam look at the tools of analysis that they use? Basically, everything boils down to the *Qur'an*. They cannot change anything without using the *Qur'an* as the primary basis of analysis because it is the revealed scripture. But of course, the *Qur'an* itself needs to be interpreted. That is why we have the *Hadith*, a record of the words and actions of Prophet Mohammad, which provides context to a period which is known as the "Time of the Prophet." But after the "Time of the Prophet," there was a need to re-interpret the *Qur'an* according to the current context of time which is the time of righteous predecessors, the *salaf*, who are the successors of the prophet who decided to use two additional tools. Like many philosophers would say, there was no airplane during the time of the prophet and now they use airplanes. When you pray, you need to have a compass to determine the direction towards Mecca so they needed scholars to agree on certain philosophical and intellectual issues. The third tool that they used was *ijma*, the scholars' arriving at a consensus on certain issues. The fourth tool that they used was *qiyas* (analogy) because there were many issues that were present during the time of the successors of the prophet that were not present in today's modern, postmodern, and millennial period. Therefore, there was a need to find and use appropriate analogies which could help scholars interpret events in their ever-changing social contexts. Looking at how Ali Shariati and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi interpreted political events and the economic system in Iran and in Turkey, these were the four primary tools that they used. In addition to these four, the three other tools are public interest, necessity (creating a new tool or mechanism demanded by the situation or phenomenon), and the culture of the people.

Basically, Turkey and Iran are mirror opposites. Turkey is Ottoman Sunni and Iran is Alawi Shia. Their culture and norms may differ in a way that Ottoman Turkey presents a civilizational worldview of many centuries while Iran offers a counter-ideology to what Ottoman Turkey is.

What were the reasons why an analogy between Islam and Marxism was used? Islam was a response to the current traditions in Arabia which was a feudal society where there were economic oppressions, slavery, and all of those difficult socioeconomic conditions that oppress third world peoples today. Islam as interpreted by the prophets was, in the mind of Said Nursi and Ali Shariati, a response to destroy the old social order and put a new social order in place. Basically, Islam was a response to destroy the old feudal society which was controlled by the *Quraish*. The *Quraish* was the set of merchant-based ruling class who controlled everything, and they used religion (polytheism) as a way of controlling the people in the sense that they provide all spiritual guidance to the people of the Middle East. During that time, oral knowledge was preferred over written knowledge. And as we know, when oral knowledge is preferred over written knowledge, it is easy to wield mental control over the people. When Islam came in bringing in the aforementioned tools, it destroyed the old pagan class structure of the *Quraish*.

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi

What was the context of Ali Shariati? Ali Shariati lived in three periods. First, he lived in the period wherein the Ottoman Empire was coming to a collapse. Second, he lived in a period to see the Ottoman Caliphate collapse, and finally in the period during the rise of secularism which was controlled by then Prime Minister Kamal Ataturk or the phenomenon of what is already known as "Kemalism." With that, "Kemalism" destroyed all existing education, cultural, and political systems in Turkey that connected itself to Islam and the Ottoman Legacy, which resulted in the destruction of the Ottoman mindset. With secularism, Said Nursi saw that the Turks were slowly being intellectually enslaved by the West, which led towards "Kemalization" in which all available Turkish culture were attempted to be erased or altered. Women could not wear hijabs. The old traditional lending systems were abolished by introducing a profit-based lending system which was considered unacceptable. The Western economic system is based on interest.

When you lend, people are forced to pay back their loans with corresponding interest. In Islam, lending is considered ethically unacceptable, so the new economic system the West was bringing in was destroying the moral and ethical fiber of the Turkish society. So, Said Nursi tried to reinterpret a new worldview for the Turkish in order to respond to the secularization and Kemalization of Turkey.

Said Nursi saw that these were the things that led to the eventual Ottoman collapse. First, the Turks lost their identity. For the Turkish, it was primary to be Ottoman—to be Ottoman is to live out all of the practices and beliefs, whether they are cultural, economic, educational, of what it is to be Turkish.

Second, secularization was something that was totally unacceptable to the Ottomans; for them, religion and politics are strongly intertwined with each other. The Ottoman caliph appoints the religious and the secular judges, and therefore, whatever the caliph decides, is actually in connection with Islamic precepts. With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk destroyed that order and the authority of religious leaders. In a way, the Turkish were at a loss on whom to listen to because they disempowered the religious leaders and religious scholars from providing guidance to the regular Turks. It led to the collapse of the Turkish society. It also led to the loss of identity of the Turkish which eventually pushed them towards Westernization.

There is a concept, both in Turkish and Persian circles, called Gharbzadeghi which means "westoxification" or considering any idea that came from the West as toxic. This is the beginnings of the context where the Turkish had to gradually oppose Kemalization and face extreme martial law measures to protect their identity. Women could not wear veils so they wore hats with scarves inside. Madaris had to operate in houses instead of the regular schools because the Ottoman script was prohibited. They were forced to use Latin. The classical Islamic books were not allowed. Instead, all western ideas were forced on them.

These led to a lot of suffering spiritually and intellectually among the Turks, and it facilitated the collapse of Turkish society as a whole. The only one that set it in operation was the Kemalist governance structure. Said Nursi said that the cause of suffering in Turkey during the three periods was poverty because the old economic systems do not work. The lending system would not work, and it was all interest-based. So a lot of the old "Bazaaris" (the merchant class) collapsed. This led to a lot of poverty in Turkey. It also led to a lot of ignorance because the Turkish would refuse to educate themselves in accepting Western culture, so they became intellectually at a loss, and this also caused a lot of conflict within. Said Nursi expressed that, in order to address these issues, the Turkish had to have their own industries. They had to develop their own economic and business systems and models, separate from the Western system that was being proposed to them.

The situation continued to the 1980s, until the Justice and Development Party of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan managed to take over, which allowed gradual freedoms to come in, and this Islamist party was actually influenced by the ideas of Said Nursi, therefore, collapsing the Kemalist intellectual superstructure. Said Nursi also

critiqued the Western education system. Said Nursi stated that the loss of theism or the loss of the belief in God due to secularization would be disastrous to the Turkish people. Therefore, he said that the Turks must continue to develop themselves in the field of Islam, science, and politics which protected the Turkish from the onslaught of Westernization. In order to prevent a gradual clash of civilizations with the West, Said Nursi also encouraged the concept of dialogue by developing a type of discourse wherein Turkish Islam should develop a philosophical, sociocultural, and political approach to issues confronting Turkey. One of the issues that he put forward was for the Turkish to develop their own system of how to engage in politics, not similar to what Western democracy proposed but highly focused on the values and the beliefs of Turkish Muslims.

Before the 2016 coup that happened in Turkey, Islamist politics in Turkey was actually focused on ensuring that democracy in Turkey was within the context of the Turkish interpretation of Islam. Marxist and liberal democratic parties had to compete there. But, Said Nursi wanted to see that an Islamic interpretation of democracy would later be in place.

Ali Shariati

Ali Shariati presents a very different image. Ali Shariati calls himself a God-Worshipping Socialist, and most of his works actually mirror his proximity to Franz Fanon and to Vladimir Lenin. In fact, one of Shariati's monumental works, *What Should be Done,* was written as a homage to Lenin and Marx. He tried to explain that, if progressive thinkers wanted to transform Iranian society, they have to use the language of Shia Islam. Iran is predominantly Shia, and it was unwelcoming to Marxism. When Ali Shariati wanted to interpret certain political ideas, he used the narratives of Shi'ism which he branded as Red Shi'ism in the sense that it is revolutionary, anti-systemic, anti-change, and anti-capitalist. He called the old Shi'ism as Black Shi'ism which is pro-monarchy, pro-capitalist, and pro-West. In a way, he tried to show that progressive Shi'ism is anti-capitalist. Progressive Shi'ism is anti-foreign domination. Progressive Shi'ism is anti-monarchy because it wants to establish a democratic system. Originally, the political system that Ali Shariati was pushing for was parliamentary-based, a council of experts composed of both Marxist intelligentsia and Islamic scholars. This council of experts would provide guidance to the parliament. But eventually, Ali Shariati passed away seven weeks before the success of the Islamic revolution, and the God-worshiping Marxists and Socialists were eased out of the Islamic parliament that was established by the Islamic Republic of Turkey.

Ali Shariati used the Husayni narrative. What is the context of Husayn's (*alayhis salaam*) narrative? There are two opposing forces: Muawiyah and Imam Huseih (as).

Muawiyah, represented the capitalist and the ruling class, and Husayn represented the revolutionary classes who wanted to destroy the system.

Since Ali Shariati understood that it was not easy to introduce socialism immediately in Iran, he had to rework his ideas and carefully choose the categories to use. He always said that oppression is cyclical through conflict created by the ruling class, and he used, instead of the term "working class," the Persian word *Mustadhafan* which refers to a person who toils and is oppressed. He tried to persianize the terms in order not to run in direct conflict with the ruling clerical class because technically, in Islam, there is no clergy. But in Shia Islam, they developed an intellectual class known as Mullahs who provided ideological guidance. In order to avoid going into conflict with this class, Ali Shariati started using the very terms that the Iran religious intelligentsia were using. He used two basic terms because he could not talk about the mode of production. He could not use the different classes. He simply said that the suffering of the Iranians was a result of two things: first is ignorance, and second is control of the mechanisms of power. Ali Shariati defined the two controls of mechanism of power as the corrupt political system and the corrupt economic system. Interest-based banking first entered Persia before it went into Turkey. In fact, the concept of "5-6" was already happening in Iran before the Iranian revolution. It was an extremely unacceptable usurious practice that was used by the banking circles in Iran. He used that as another template to oppose.

The ruler of Iran during that time was the Shia who tried Westernizing Iranian society. Like Turkey, they tried to Westernize but, on this part, Ali Shariati mobilized both the religious intellectual class and the masses against westoxification. The context of westoxification as defined by the "Ulama" is characterized by the following: first, westoxification aims to destroy the economic and political basis of the existence of the Persian state (because during that time Iran was still called Persian). Westoxification in the words of Ahmad (1984) was introducing capitalism and liberal democracy. While Jalal Akhmad conflated liberal democracy with fascism, as during those days, the Middle East viewed the entry of democracy as another way of bringing in a fascist regime during the 1960s.

Instead of opposing the ruling intelligentsia in Iran, Ali Shariati created the concept of Ruhshanfekr (the enlightened individuals). Instead of using the term "intellectual vanguard," he used the concept Ruhshanfekr to refer to individuals enlightened by the social ills of society who would contribute to social transformation by enlightening the masses. The visualization that Ali Shariati used was that, instead of lighting a candle, the Ruhshanfekr will light a bonfire to force it to become bigger to burn the system (Shariati 1986). I don't know if he was influenced by anarchism or pseudo-anarchism, but I am surprised that in some of his writings, he likes to use the term "burning" a lot.

Although he was critical of Western democracy, Ali Shariati used the context of Demokrasi Hedaya Shoded. In Persian, this simply means that democracy has to be guided by ideology provided by the council of experts. The council of experts that Ali Shariati was pushing for was the mixed council of God-worshipping socialists and the religious intelligentsia of Iran. This was demonstrated by Ali Shariati in practice when he took Ayatollah Murtaza Mutahhari (one of the Ayatullah Ruhollah Khomeini's best students) to help him teach the workers, the students, and the other working classes of Iran. He created what he called Husayniyyah Irshad which is a place where people from all walks of life would learn the correct understanding of revolution, politics, and economics so that they would be strong enough to confront the forces of Muawiyah which is, in Shariati's term, the forces of the monarch, the capitalist, and the colonial powers.

Eventually, Ali Shariati knew that this would come to an end. He believed that the Ruhshanfekr should come from the professionals, the workers, and the youth. But throughout Ali Shariati's writings in *Fatima is Fatima* (1971) as well as in *A Letter to my Son* (2011), he said that, at the end of the day, the intellectual religious elite of Iran must understand the economic systems that plague the world and how they are implicated in the oppression of the people. Ali Shariati did not mention the mode of production, but he was hinting at many of the elements that were the cause of suffering, which pertain to capitalism. He indirectly hinted at some sections of *Das Kapital,* but he did not elaborate the work in its entirety.

In a way, Ali Shariati and Said Nursi tried to galvanize and use ideology to transform the current political system that their governments were in at that time. Erdoğan and his political party right now in Turkey are actually a by-product of Said Nursi's political ideology. As philosophers, Ali Shariati and Sayyed Motahari had massive influence on the ideologies of the Islamic Republic. But because of the Shiite clergy who were controlling the council of experts in Iran, the God-worshipping Marxists were removed from the political system of the country . That is why you have the Mojahideen-Khalqih Organization (MKO) which is located in Iraq composed of die-hard Marxists who decided to stop being God-worshipping Marxists to becoming purely Marxists.

They used the language of their time and tried to hint at capitalism and foreign domination as the cause of all suffering. They also had to rework Marxism so that it would be Marxism to their people, as the Ottomans and the Persians were very critical of any Western ideology. At the end of the day, the discourse that Ali Shariati was using was closer to liberation theology, and with that, he could be termed as the first Middle Eastern scholar who tried to use liberation theology. Said Nursi was not necessarily Marxist, but I only used him as a mirror to show that Turkey and Iran had similar ideologues using different references of mind.

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The National Democratic Front (NDF) and the Moro Question

ELISEO MERCADO

Abstract

The relations between the National Democratic Front (NDF) and the Moro peoples have always been a source of speculations, especially among Filipino social scientists. Our knowledge of the subject is, at best, through social scientists that interviewed some former leaders of the NDF in Mindanao. At worst, the knowledge is through some social scientists that pretended to know these relations and made baseless conclusions. The lecturer had been part of the evolution of the NDF initiatives to expand and reach out to the Moro people from the beginnings of the discussion, debates, and formation and dissolution of the Moro Revolutionary Organization (MORO). This lecture will lay bare what truly happened and perhaps through this disclosure begin to understand the early initiatives of the NDF in attempts to integrate the Moro peoples' struggle into the mainstream struggle for "National Democracy" under the tutelage of the Party shaped by the ideology of Marx, Lenin, and Mao.

The history of the movement of the National Democratic Front (NDF) and of the rebellions of our Muslim brothers has been complicated and probably full of ambiguity. There have been written reflections on the relationship of the NDF and the liberation fronts of Muslims. But unknown to many, most of the real people involved in this history are silent. Many of them have died, but many of them are still alive, and it is about time to write a history about their story. If I have more time, I would gather former comrades who became pillars of the attempts, trials, failures, and successes of the relationship between the NDF and Kilusang Mamamayang Moro (KMM), not just within the context of liberation fronts but also in endeavors beyond them.

These are not yet written; they are yet to be written. They are there, mostly Moro peoples and non-Moro peoples that are in Mindanao. Most of the individuals interviewed about the history were either Davao-based or Manila-based and were not really part of the original leadership of the group or the movement involved. I just laughed whenever they express their judgment and assessment.

First Chapter

From a historical perspective, the new party started in 1968. The new army also started in 1969, similar with the establishment of the protracted war or People's War subscribing to the ideology of Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, and Mao Zedong. The previous leaders were Marxist and Leninist, but in 1969, the new set of leaders who took over endorsed the three thinkers: Marx, Lenin, and Mao Zedong. This is on the side of the national democratic movement.

On the side of the Moro people, the Moro consciousness sparked in 1968. This was organized by the former governor of the province of Cotabato, Datu Udtog Matalam. In fact, the Cotabato province was not small; it was as big as Central Luzon or the eight provinces that rebelled against the Spaniards. It was the largest province in the whole republic during the time of the Americans until it was divided during the time of Marcos. In 1968, the Muslim Independence Movement (MIM) was established under the leadership of Datu Udtog Matalam. Moro professionals such as lawyers and professors joined and promoted this Muslim movement.

There were two bases for the establishment of the MIM, apart from the exclusionary politics of Marcos. The first one was the growing consciousness that there has been a national oppression against the minority nationality of the Moro people. The second was the growing awareness that there really was discrimination towards the Moro peoples, especially outside the boundary of Cotabato or Mindanao, which is practically the rest of the Republic of the Philippines. Another thing that sparked the movement was the different massacres that happened in Cotabato and Lanao, especially the

Jabidah massacre in March 1968. All these things piled up to establish the Moro consciousness.

Also during these times, a convergence was formed among those who were in the universities in Manila and in the National Capital Region (NCR) that sought to end the reign of the ruling class in the Philippines. This is called the First Quarter Storm. Progressive members of the Moro peoples joined activists in the First Quarter Storm in shouting the slogans against the three evils: colonialism, feudalism, and fascism. The Moro peoples actively took part in establishing the national consciousness to end the grip of the oppressors in Philippine society.

However, in the early '70s, war erupted in Mindanao, taking place in parallel with the movement's protracted war (that is, organizing the countryside, encircling the cities, and then taking over of the state). While one war was protracted, the other war was a conventional, frontal warfare fought by the Moros—arms versus arms, territory versus territory. It was a full-blown war, causing full-blown evacuation due to full-blown burning. Indeed, there should be a historical investigation of those times. I was a witness. I was there.

It is also important to note that there was a consciousness for these two wars to converge for they had a common enemy: Mr. Ferdinand Marcos, who is supported by the United States of America. The challenge was to suture, on one hand, the causes of the Moro to advance a national consciousness of being a Moro and put an end to national oppression, and on the other, the causes of the NDF to putting an end to the ruling class by using Marxism, Leninism, and Mao Zedong ideology.

The coming together of these two forces during the First Quarter Storm may be considered the first stage where key personalities got to know one another, such as Jose Maria Sison, Nur Misuari, and his wife, Desdemona Tan-Misuari in the University of the Philippines (UP)—they were comrades at the Kabataang Makabayan (KM). But a genuine and vibrant relationship was formed during the displacement of the students, especially the ones from UP, due to the Martial Law's leading them to flee and be based in Mindanao. Most of the displaced students went to the Mindanao State University (MSU), a premier university in Mindanao and nest of the advanced-thinking Moro peoples and Mindanaons. Those "MSU days" catalyzed the process of befriending the Muslims who were very sympathetic to the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and, at the same time, open to the idea of a national consciousness, national democracy, and liberation along an ideological framework.

When we expanded having more Moro cadres, both in the national and regional level particularly in Lanao and Cotabato, an important decision was made during the first stage of the convergence of the two forces: the creation of a Moro Committee in the period of 1977–1979. The said committee led the Moro work which means giving

consciousness about a specific identity of being a Muslim which was part of NDF's promotion of a national consciousness and a national movement.

Because of this, a series of studies was conducted about the progressive writings of Muslims. I was assigned to give an educational discussion on progressive thinking in Islam. I studied Maxime Robinson, the parties of the different countries in the Middle East, and the communist party in different governments in the Soviet Union that professed Islam. The goal of the study is to put forth a progressive interpretation of Islam so that they can mobilize under a movement with Marxist and Leninist perspectives. Because of this, the real basis of interacting and expanding the consciousness of Moro cadres was the thesis of Vladimir Lenin which is the Rights of Minority Nationality that includes the right to self-determination including secession. This thesis became the basis of promoting the rights of national minority among Moro peoples.

This has been accepted because the right to self-determination (RSD) also includes the right to secession. If you remember the first part of Moro War was a War of Secession. Because of that, there was reconciliation since Lenin also accepted that the right to secession is included in the right to self-determination in the face of national oppression and discrimination. This insight was well-received. The cities of Cotabato, Iligan, Marawi, and Pagadian became the centers of the Moro Committee. It is important to point that the pre-existing accounts and interviews about this history thus far are from people who were based outside of these abovementioned cities.

The target of this was none other than the students, especially those in educational institutions such as MSU and its various campuses, Notre Dame University, and other famous universities in Mindanao. Non-government organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations, and churches (that had programs for the Muslims) also took part in the expanding and the deepening of the consciousness of being a Moro—their identity and being part of the national struggle.

A product of the 1977–1979 period was *Two Hills of the Same Land*, a collaborative work under the Moro Committee. The Moro Committee and the Moro Resource Center spread the consciousness based on the real situation in Mindanao, especially between the Muslims and Christians and based on a political awakening of the Muslims and Christians in a national consciousness towards liberation.

The Moro Kurier and the Moro Resource Center bannered a new and progressive perspective for the Moros' struggle. Another important thing is the creation of the Moro Committee's publication called "Ang Moro," which first ran from 1977 to 1979 and was revived from 1982 to 1984. That publication disseminated propaganda and organized and consolidated Moro cadres, especially within the combined frameworks of ideology and of progressive Islam.

Parallel to this development is the attempt to establish a United Front which was characterized by a "strategic alliance" between the Moro Liberation Fronts and the NDF. Part of the work of the Moro Committee was to engage in dialogues with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) as well as to facilitate exchanges of literature and camp visits. The MILF commanders and cadres had exposure to the areas within the sphere of influence of the movement and vice versa. This ran until 1979.

Crises started unfolding in the Moro Committee among the Moro cadres in 1979. The first crisis was due to the thinking that the Moro Committee had to be under the territorial committee. The Moro Committee's being put under the territorial committee led Moro cadres to ask whether Moro concerns had become secondary within the movement. They started to think that they could just be taken to different directions depending on the decisions of the territorial committee. The second crisis was the observation that the leaders of the territories were not the Moro peoples but (non-Moro) Filipino citizens who were perceived by the Moro cadres to harbor anti-Moro animus despite their critical consciousness. It was a double-whammy.

The third crisis in the movement approached in 1979 when the thought of Mao Zedong started to become unpopular and diluted which led to the prevailing of the Marxist and Leninist perspectives. This implied that the protracted war was no longer necessary—there was no need to encircle the city from the countryside and then to seize the power. This had a major effect on the ground, especially on the Moro peoples.

The fourth crisis was the failure of the Moro Committee to recruit religious leaders of Islam to articulate progressive thinking within the language of Islam. The Moro cadres asked why the one providing progressive interpretations of Islam was a Catholic priest albeit Islam was his specialty.

Those events and tensions ended the first chapter of the NDF and the Moro cadres. The cadres were told to go out or to keep quiet. I myself went my way out for the simple reason that I was not familiar with the territories. The Muslim cadres also detached themselves while the debates were still being resolved.

Second Chapter

The second chapter ran from 1981 to 1984. If you remember, the head of the Mindanao Committee was Edgar Jopson. He was a friend and colleague in discussions on Moro concerns. He was the one who understood the Moro issues and struggles. Because of his extensive genuine contributions to the establishment of the Moro Committee, he remained in charge amidst the heated debates and the dissolution of the Moro Committee in the territories. It was also during the time that he wrote "Assessment of

the Party Work among the Moro," where the progressive accomplishments of the Moro Committee were reflected.

Because of this assessment in 1981, a decision was made to revive the Moro Committee. But at this time, most of the cadres went cold, and a new set of cadres came from the universities in Visayas and Luzon. Along with some NGOs, the new cadres began again the task of spreading the propaganda, of raising the consciousness of the Moro peoples, and of resuming the formal talks with the liberation fronts, particularly the MILF.

Crises always happen. The first crisis was the death of Edgar Jopson on September 21, 1982. He—who was the main supporter of the Moro Committee, who was responsible for its creation, and who understood the intricacies of the Moro work—was killed in a military raid in Davao. It was a huge blow to the movement, especially in dealing with the Moro peoples. The second crisis was the ideological debate within the movement at that time. Debates always happened within the movement. And the third crisis, especially in Mindanao, was the difficulty of determining who to trust within the movement. A response to this massive crisis was the execution of some cadres, the so-called *Kampanyang Ahos*, which really affected Mindanao, especially its inhabitants. This was the crisis of the second chapter in 1981–1984 which caused its failure to move forward.

Despite the setbacks, during the period from 1981 to 1984, the propaganda and the formation of different committees were strengthened. There was also an attempt to form an army. For the first time during this second chapter, the army was formed and operated in Daguma Range, Upi, and in Lanao del Norte. It started successfully, but it did not prosper due to severe crises and ideological debates. However, one important contribution of this chapter was the establishment of the Moro Revolutionary Organization. The established army, neither aligned with the MILF nor with the MNLF, was adversely affected by the crises and eventually got dissolved. The others also detached after the dissolution and went to the splinter groups of the movement.

Where are we now?

One of the conclusions of the ideological debates was to stop separating the Moro cadres from the major political movements of the Moro peoples. It was a major decision to stop establishing our own army which would compete with MNLF and MILF. Instead, we would have cadres prepared to engage the MNLF and MILF, and from there, influence the progressive thinking of the movement. There would be tactical and strategic alliances with the MNLF and MILF. We would not create our armed forces within the Moro peoples. Instead, they would be part of the Moro movement and Moro liberation front. The premise would be for them to join the mainstream liberation front.

The problem was that our Moro cadres failed to bring the progressive consciousness inside the mainstream liberation front. They became fully integrated within and were co-opted. Our former cadres even occupied positions in the MILF leadership, but do not carry anymore the progressive consciousness. Or perhaps, our cadres just fell short in deepening and consolidating the efforts to establish a progressive movement within the mainstream liberation front.

There was a glimmer of hope when Mujiv Hataman was appointed as Officer-in-Charge (OIC) Regional Governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), because Mujiv was one of our young Moro cadres. The former Moro cadres gathered and asked if Muslim Mindanao under the leadership of Mujiv could have a different type of governance and administration as the former progressives and Moro cadres were around Mujiv. As a result, a committee was formed inside Muslim Mindanao composed of former cadres to put in place a progressive agenda of governance different from what had previously existed. They called it Reform Governance so that it would not be too obvious that this type of governance was informed by Marxist and Leninist consciousness. Even up to that day, the members of the Reform Governance Committee belong to the Leftist tradition, and their ideals are still alive.

Perhaps, one of the biggest challenges to people who still belong to the Leftist tradition is to engage former cadres who are now officials serving in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and to urge them to promote not only a different consciousness but also a different service that is based on their ideals of service to the people and on their principles.

This has been the experience and experiment of the dialogue between the NDF and the Moro peoples in general and the Moro liberation fronts in particular. There has been a positive appreciation of the NDF's tradition by the Moro liberation fronts because some of their members were former cadres who lived with, served, and dialogued with the Moro peoples towards one goal which is to end national oppression and discrimination in the country.

Open Forum

An unidentified member of the audience asked whether and how the ideology and presence of the ISIS Black Flag in Marawi City pose a challenge to the Marxist movement in the Philippines. **Fr. Mercado** responded that the Black Flag has outright expressed rejection of the status quo which could mean a rejection of the MILF, MNLF, the Philippine government, and everything that is western and not Islamic. Although the Intelligence suspects that the Black Flag is in talks with other groups in Mindanao, including the NDF, at this point, those connections have yet to be verified.

Loreta Ann "Etta" P. Rosales (Former House Representative, Akbayan Citizens' Action Party) solicited Fr. Mercado's thoughts on the fact that some communities of indigenous peoples (IPs) in Mindanao have questions on the issue of ancestral domain within the context of the Bangsamoro Organic Law. Secondly, Rosales wanted to know if Fr. Mercado knew of the Palimbang Massacre which took place in one of the MNLF territories where observers noted that songs that were sung by people there are reminiscent of missionary movement songs. For Rosales, this signifies a relationship between the national democratic movement at that time and the MNLF. Thirdly, finding the history and profile of the two celebrated thinkers very interesting, Rosales wanted to have a deeper clarification of the reasons for the collapse of the feudal Ottoman Empire, particularly the role of progressive forces in facilitating the secularization of the religious forces in the centers of political power. Finally, being cognizant of the interesting contributions of the Mesopotamian/Babylonian period in the evolution of human rights, she asked in what ways the Qur'an has contributed to precepts, tenets, and principles of human rights and the rule of law.

Fr. Mercado shared that he was in the neighborhood when the Palimbang Massacre happened. The priest assigned in the area went to Fr. Mercado's convent to seek refuge. A lot of massacres happened in the provinces of Maguindanao, North Cotabato, and Sultan Kudarat. They remain undocumented but continue to be vibrant in the collective memory of the people. These massacres have been remembered through songs which the Moro people sing to put their babies to sleep. As such, even at a tender age, the Moro is already a warrior, having heard how their grandparents were killed as chronicled in songs. On the concern of some indigenous communities on ancestral domain within the BOL, Fr. Mercado thinks it is a welcome development for the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997 (IPRA) to be integrated into the Republic Act No. 11054 through congressional intervention. Nevertheless, he worries about the term "ancestral domain" which is in the singular, understood by the MILF leadership as one, indivisible, and all indigenous. This understanding of ancestral domain as singular and indivisible is what worries and threatens some indigenous communities because this notion does not capture the complexity of the term. While indigenous communities are happy with the inclusion of IPRA and with having representation, for Fr. Mercado, what is needed is "equitable representation;" having one representative in the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) from non-Moro IPs and also in the parliament is not enough. Having said this, Fr. Mercado remains optimistic about BTA and Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), especially that these processes are still taking shape. The proof of the pudding is in the eating.

Commissioner Roque Morales (National Commission on Muslim Filipinos) added that each of the indigenous communities has its own discourse and concerns about ancestral domain, whether it is within or outside the territory of BARMM. He clarified that there are two types of indigenous peoples in the Philippines: those who

embraced Islam and those who did not. The Bangsamoro people is composed of three mainstream Islamic tribes and ten Islamized tribes (who still experience the same type of majority-minority relations with the three mainstream tribes).

Commissioner Morales explained that the Ottoman Empire collapsed as a result of a few things. First, the British Empire conducted some political campaigns on inciting the local Arab tribes to rebel against the Ottoman caliph. Second, after World War I, the Ottoman caliph sided with the Germans which led to the empire's collapse. Part of the concessions was for Turkey to adopt a secularist process. Turkey sent people to be educated in Europe and secularists came to the country to help de-Islamize it. Among these secularists who came were progressive thinkers who thought that the introduction of progressive ideas to Turkey requires deconstructing the Ottoman culture itself. All of the aspects of Ottoman life and culture were disassembled from a government level (e.g., forcing people to be educated in secular schools). The role played by progressive thinkers on the successful Kemalization of Turkey was not lost on Said Nursi, who is critical to both capitalism and Marxism.

Further, according to **Commisioner Morales**, Said Nursi believes that the Qur'an contains the solution for governance, human rights, and the rule of law. Morales stressed that whenever Said Nursi responds to questions, he would not refer to his responses as his own answers. He would point to the answers of Qur'an as interpreted by the Risale-i Nur, a voluminous commentary on Islam based on the Qur'an and the *Hadith*, which explains how his political, economic, socio-cultural, and educational

platform for the Muslims was affected by secularization. In the Philippines, Risale-i Nur managed to enter and to influence Filipino thinkers because of the paradigm pushed by Said Nursi.

Temario Rivera, Ph.D. (Former Professor, UP Department of Political Science) asked for Fr. Mercado's deeper insights on the emergence of the Moro Committee. When the Moro Committee was established and initiated by the Communist Party, the MILF and MNLF have already existed. What was the gap that the Moro Committee tried to address that would also entice a Moro activist to join which the MNLF and MILF did not seem to address? Also, reflecting on the Iranian experience in Dr. Morales' presentation, Rivera expressed that the closest thing to a possible synthesis of Marxism and Islam is Ali Shariati's concept of "God-worshipping socialists." He asked whether we could apply the same term to describe the Moro cadres and activists in the context of the Philippines.

Fr. Mercado stressed two important contributions of the Moro Committee of the NDF to the Moro struggle. First is the concept of the Right to Self-Determination (RSD). Originally proposed by Vladimir Lenin to foreground class analysis, the concept of RSD was appropriated by the Moro struggle which previously simply focused on war of secession and autonomy. The Moro Committee strove to promote RSD, couched in class analysis, among the Moro cadres to stress that the oppressive ruling class should not dominate the Moro people and that the MILF should not be co-opted by the ruling class which would leave the masses as landless plantation workers. While there is a recognition that the leadership of MILF and MNLF is not composed of traditional leaders, there is always fear and apprehension that the leaders would be co-opted by the ruling class. Their co-optation happened during the Marcos regime in 1977 and under the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), and there is no guarantee that co-optation would not take place under BARMM.

The second contribution of the Moro Committee was the conception of ancestral domain. Prior to its engagement with the NDF, the MILF simply understood "ancestral domain" (*hula*) as the sultanate or as the "romantic" idea of the homeland. With the Moro Committee's elaboration, the term has been understood as the land on which one lives and which one tills as a matter of right. For the NDF, it was important to tie the concept of ancestral domain to agrarian reform as the MILF and MNLF did not have that agenda, even as many of the Moro peoples are still under their landlords. Fr. Mercado stressed that while he considers MILF and MNLF as possible forces of liberation, it is still important for these groups to deepen and enrich their ideology and viewpoint. That was why, in the past, the Moro Committee simultaneously organized its communities while still engaging the MILF and MNLF on their ideology and practice.

On whether or not Moro cadres can be described as God-worshipping socialists in the sense proposed by Ali Shariati, **Commissioner Morales** thinks it is not easy to establish such parallelism. The Moros are Sunni; even the political ideology of the MILF is proximate to the Ilhwanul Muslimin (Muslim Brotherhood) who follows Salafi political Islam that is more Sunni. Meanwhile, Ali Shariati is a Shia Muslim that has socialism and Marxism into it. Given that there has been no clear, definite ideology or political plan that has been defined by the MILF, one could not describe the MILF or the MNLF as God-worshipping socialists. But in one sense, one may say that Moro cadres who did not give up their Muslim identity may come close to being God-worshipping socialists. However, having said that, Morales shared that the ideas of Ali Shariati influenced a lot of Moro cadres. From 1978 to 1980s, Husaynia Ershad and another organization distributed books of Ali Shariati to Zamboaga City, particularly in Mahad Moro in Sta. Barbara, to schools such as Western Mindanao State University and Ateneo de Zamboanga University.

In another round of questions, **an unidentified member of the audience** asked Morales' thoughts on Turkey President Erdoğan's obsession with repatriating Muhammed Fethullah Gülen. If any, what is the relationship between Gülen and Said Nursi? He also asked Fr. Mercado whether the Bangsamoro Organic Law would be more politically responsive if it created two autonomous regions, one for Central Mindanao and another for the Sulu Archipelago. Finally, he asked about a series of articles published by *The Philippine Star* five years ago concerning an alleged agreement between Malaysia's Mahathir bin Mohamad and then Sen. Benigno Simeon "Ninoy" Aquino, Jr. An article in the series allegedly mentions that Ninoy sought the help of Mahathir in overthrowing Marcos by destabilizing Mindanao in exchange for Ninoy's pledge to help drop the Philippine claim to Sabah through the revision of the Philippine Constitution. The article allegedly claims further that the two politicians fulfilled their part of the agreement as evident in the 1987 Constitution's definition of Philippine territory which no longer mentions "territories belonging to the Philippines by historic right." The audience member sought Fr. Mercado's thoughts on this issue, especially that arguably there was no rebuttal to the articles since their publication.

Jaime Maria (Foreign Direct Investment Consultant, South Korea) wanted Fr. Mercado's reaction to some economic intelligence reports they have received. Reports say that upon its ratification, the BTA will immediately act as interim government. As the establishment of the BTA will likely to result in the transfer of membership of some MNLF to the MILF, the possibility of conflict among MILF leaders needs to be considered as not all can be accommodated by the BTA. Meanwhile the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) congratulated the MILF for the successful negotiation with the government and says it will observe how the MILF will implement the Sharia Law. In the intelligence report read by Mr. Maria, the BIFF also affirms that it will continue to fight until "they will be able to get their independence." According to the

same reports, the current MILF Chairman admitted that his organization is faced with huge challenges as it transitions from armed to democratic struggle particularly in undergoing the de-commissioning process and in fully controlling its ground commanders in areas which may not be included in the BARMM. These challenges are said to intensify given the ongoing internal rift between ground commanders and the need to recruit new members to meet the claim of 40,000 MILF members. Finally, Mr. Maria pointed out that the reports claim that "the BARMM and ARMM territories might or will fail" due to the discontent among MILF commanders and members in Lanao del Norte and that some MILF commanders within the current ARMM will likely join lawless groups. Mr. Maria mentioned that, sometime in the late 1990s, Satur Ocampo brokered a deal with Muslim secessionists on mutually supporting each other, but at present, the CPP-NPA will not infuse into the MILF and MNLF territories.

A student from the Development Studies Program of the Ateneo de Manila University, who said that he was from Mindanao, wanted clarification on whether armed struggle or aggression is a valid form of resistance in Islam, especially in the light of the actions of the Maute ISIS in Marawi which were tagged by some as militant Salafism.

Fr. Mercado said that, to his knowledge, there is no current proposal to create two separate autonomous regions. The law says there is only one autonomous region in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region. While it is a legitimate issue, at this point, it is very speculative. As well, the secret agreement between Mahathir and Ninoy was also very speculative. He pointed out that, when the issue exploded, the personalities involved were actually Mahathir and former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. The speculation then was that, in exchange for the head of Nur Misuari on a silver platter, Malaysia would not contribute to the destabilization in Mindanao and would rather be the main sponsor for the peace process between the Philippine government and the MILF. In 2001, after elections in ARMM, Maas Nur Misuari fled to Malaysia as a Muslim rebel seeking refuge in a Muslim country. He entered Malaysia but was suddenly arrested and handed over to President Gloria Arroyo through the Presidential Adviser for the Peace Process (PAPP) Jess Dureza. Speculation also mounted that Malaysia's support for the peace agreement with MILF is due to Misuari's persistent claim that North Borneo is part of the Sultanate of Sulu to which Malaysia disagrees. This is also compounded by the fact that the Sultan's army that went to Lahad Datu was in part composed of previous MNLF combatants. These are the reasons why Malaysia is very happy to have contributed to the peace agreement with MILF and that the power of BTA will be established under the auspices of Malaysia.

What continues to be missing in the picture is the MNLF. To Fr. Mercado, the Philippine government's perception was that the MNLF is already in the peace agreement. With the MILF being integrated, the Moro people do not have liberation

forces anymore. What is left is just the BIFF, Abu Sayyaf, and the Maute/ISIS group. The mainstream groups are gone. Today, President Rodrigo Duterte continues to show deference and support for Nur Misuari which was different from the stance of former Presidents Macapagal Arroyo and Benigno Simeon "Noynoy" Aquino III.

In response to the questions addressed to him, **Commissioner Morales** thinks that the conflict between Erdoğan and Muhammed Fethullah Gülen is political in nature. He highlighted that Islamic parties in Turkey are influenced by two primary groups. The first is Ikhwanul Muslimin which is a Muslim brotherhood in Egypt, and the second is the local homegrown groups which are influenced by the ideas of Said Nursi. Erdoğan comes from a tradition of a political party (Welfare Party) that was influenced by both groups. The Welfare Party struck a political deal with both the main followers of Said Nursi and the group of Fethullah Gülen that compels the Welfare Party to run on a platform of corruption-free governance, accountability, and transparency. When the ISIS threat erupted, several news agencies reported that key members of the Erdoğan administration were engaged in the sale of black market oil from ISIS territories which was unacceptable in the eyes of Fethullah Gülen considering ISIS' destruction of the lives of people in Syria and Iraq. This led to Gülen's withdrawal of support for Erdoğan. Furthermore, Gülen is increasingly perceived as a threat as his followers in Turkey achieved imminence by being in the justice system, in the police and military, among others. A coup was initiated, and the Turkish government accused Gülen of participating in it despite the western intelligence saying otherwise.

On the validity of armed struggle as a form of resistance within the Islamic political spectrum, Morales thinks that it depends on the *aqeedah* (political worldview) of a Muslim. In the Philippines, Muslims can pray together in one mosque under one prayer leader; the only difference is in the *aqeedah*. Unlike Shari'a which everyone must follow, *aqeedah* in the creed and ideology must be understood by each Muslim. In the Salafi perspective, rebellion is legitimized if a government does not allow Muslims to practice their interpretation of Islam. However, in the classical Sunni thought which is practiced by majority of Muslims around the world, rebellion against legitimate authority is not allowed unless that authority is killing Muslims on account of their being a Muslim. There is a *Hadith* mentioning *"Hubbul Watan min Eiman,"* which means love of country indicates part of faith. This explains why classical Islamic scholars discouraged violent actions against the state and focused on transforming the state from within unless Islam was under threat.

In addition to what he said earlier, **Fr. Mercado** thinks it is important to remember that when agreements are entered into or institutions like BARMM are built, there is no such thing as "peace right away" or "instant peace," given the different trajectories of various forces and actors on the ground. Political actors often propagate, for a lack of a better term, "myths" to promote certain things. Sometimes, myths are true; sometimes

they have no basis. In the past, a certain myth was propagated which held that with the mainstreaming of the MNLF, it would be better able to control the Abu Sayyaf and other groups in Sulu. Meanwhile, another myth was disseminated which maintains that the Philippine government would be able to control the BIFF and the Maute/ISIS groups with the mainstreaming of the MILF. But at this point, these are myths which can be proven to be false, as revealed by the inability of the MNLF to exercise effective control over the Abu Sayyaf. At present, Central Maguindanao, composed of six municipalities, is under the influence of BIFF rather than the influence of MILF. Similarly, even after the Marawi siege, the Maute/ISIS group is still in three or four municipalities in Lanao del Sur, irrespective of the government's acknowledgment of that. The Abu Sayyaf is still present in Basilan and Sulu. For Fr. Mercado, an important caveat is this: "it is good to hold on to our myths, but sooner or later we have to give up on our myths and really put ourselves in touch with what is happening on the ground." Accurate assessment of security threats emerges from an analysis of realities on the ground, as well as maintaining a critical distance from the myths that we propagate. The Philippine government tends to propagate myths, as any political actors tend to do, but there must be something wrong the moment it believes its own propaganda.

Another unidentified member of the audience asked why Islamic theology of liberation did not flourish in the Philippines while Islamic and Christian fundamentalism have been on the rise. According to **Fr. Mercado**, all of these social actions in the Catholic Church oriented to the poor are part and parcel of the theology of liberation. At present, theology of liberation is being mainstreamed again but in a form different from the form it took in the 1970s and 1980s. Because realities are changing, theology of liberation is also evolving. For **Commissioner Morales**, the work of Ali Shariati which merges Shia Islam and socialism did not seem to have gained traction in the Philippines and in Southeast Asia because the region is fundamentally Sunni; only a small portion is Shia. Shariati's tradition of liberation theology only managed to gain a following, but it did not generate knowledge for it to have a discourse. Indonesian Marxists have been the ones attempting to generate a discourse on liberation theology. But because of the identity-based politics of Indonesia where the Black Flag is gaining traction, their texts which are usually in Bahasa are not easily accessible. If the NDF cadres or other factions that have broken off from the ND tradition would take immersions in Indonesia, they would be able to see the vibrancy of the tradition of liberation theology. Morales pointed out that the Indonesian Marxists promoting liberation theology are often academicians who do not usually participate in agitation in public discourse.

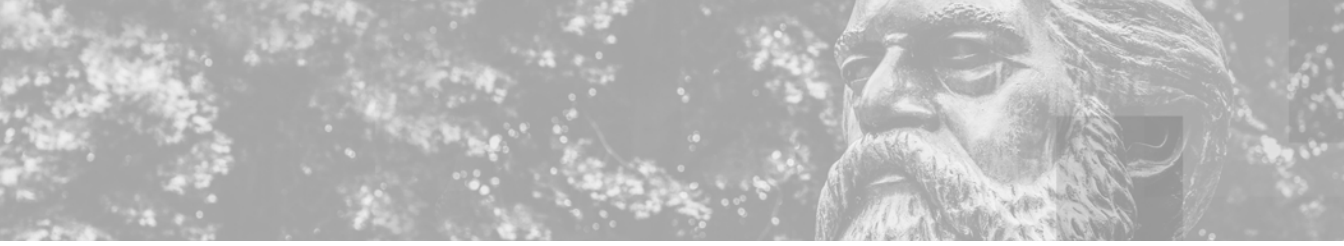
Professor Julkipli Wadi (UP Institute of Islamic Studies) raised the possibility that MILF might use the parliament to advance a new form of RSD. **Fr. Mercado** emphasized that the progressive left in general and the NDF and the MILF in particular need to deepen their conception of the RSD. It would be good if this

comes within the BTA itself, not from the outside. It is important to study RSD in the whole Marxist-Leninist theory which is class-based and is preceded by a class analysis. This kind of analysis has been waning, especially among the Moro cadres. On one hand, the NDF has always been inadequate in transcending the Moro struggle. It has no deep appreciation of the minority nationality and their right to ancestral domain, and its analysis is often stuck with the basic ideological framework provided by Lenin's small treatise. On the other hand, the prominence of class analysis in the discourse of RSD is also something that one does not get from the analysis of Maute and BIFF for the simple reason that they come from an Islamist perspective. In both the NDF and the MILF, those who are equipped with the adequate perspectives are often marginalized because they do not hold positions in any of the committees. With BARMM, the current apprehension is that it would be "business as usual but [only] with a different leadership," just like what happened with the ARMM. The only hope is to enrich the understanding of RSD not only of the Moro leaders, but also of the Moro people.

Having said this, Fr. Mercado's projection is "very negative." Eighty members of the BTA are all appointed, but in the 2022 election, Fr. Mercado fears that the parliament would be overwhelmed by traditional politicians. Fine-tuning must be done on the understanding of RSD, on the leadership within the Bangsamoro, and on the development model for the Bangsamoro. Specifically on economic development, in 2000 after former President Joseph Ejercito Estrada's all-out war against MILF, Estrada brought up the idea of converting occupied camps into plantations. Fr. Mercado shared that he registered his opposition before former Secretary of Agrarian Reform Horacio Morales. For Fr. Mercado, it would be a misfortune if the years of Moro struggle would just end up making the Bangsamoro people the plantation workers for Mindanao's plantation economy.

As the last question, **Prof. Wadi** asked Fr. Mercado on the possible scenario if BARMM still fails. **Fr. Mercado** warns, the future would be the Black Flag. **Commissioner Morales** reminded the audience that "in any political process, there are always victors and there will always be those in the margins." For the moment, it is the MILF who is at the center, and some members of the council of MILF (a faction and some others) have been appointed by Pres. Duterte. Commissioner Morales believes BARMM should be supported to prepare the Bangsamoro people to govern themselves properly. He quipped: "We understand the subtleties of power and politics, but for those of us in development work, perhaps, now is the right time to make the proper interventions by influencing certain mechanisms that will happen inside the BTA." Now might be the opportune time to inspire the MILF to enrich and deepen their concept of RSD. For Morales, there is an important opening that may be explored. For example, Bangsamoro Youth Organization is opening its front organizations to engage development workers and to engage in discussions on social services provision, on

economic systems, and on managing bureaucracy. Now is the time to capacitate the new political machinery that has been put in place.



About the Contributors

EMMANUEL S. DE DIOS, Ph.D. is Professor Emeritus at the University of the Philippines School of Economics (UPSE) and former Convenor of the Program on Escaping the Middle-Income Trap: Chains for Change (EMIT C4C) at the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS). He is the Oscar M. Lopez Sterling Professor of Law and Economics and former Dean at the UPSE. His research interests are international economics, economic theory, history of economic thought, and institutions and economic development. He has published books and articles on these topics and is a regular columnist in *Business World*.

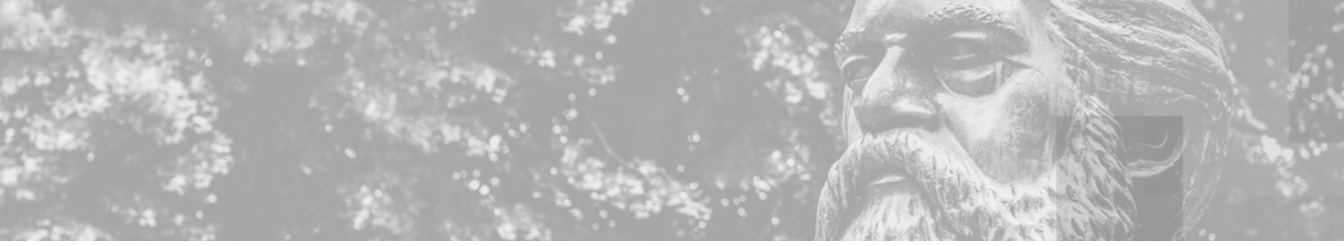
EDUARDO T. GONZALEZ, Ph.D. is former Professor and Dean of the University of the Philippines Asian Center and former President of the Development Academy of the Philippines (1998–2006). His fields of specialization are policy research and development, public administration, and management.

Fr. ELISEO R. MERCADO, JR., OMI, Ph.D. is an expert on the role of Islam in Southeast Asia and a longtime Mindanao peace advocate who served as Chairperson of the Independent Ceasefire Monitoring Committee of the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and as Lead Convener of the National Peace Council, which works for the resumption of the formal peace talks between the Philippine government and all rebel fronts, including the National Liberation Front. He was president of Notre Dame University in Cotabato City (from 1992 to 2002) and served as the Director for Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation at the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) (from 2003 to 2006). He holds a doctorate in Divinity and Humanity and master's degrees in Theology and Philosophy. He also completed work in Islamic Studies and Arabic Studies at the Gregorian University in Rome and at the Oriental Institute in Cairo. His publications on Islam and Mindanao have appeared in books and leading journals in the Philippines and abroad.

YUSUF ROQUE S. MORALES, Ph.D. was Commissioner at the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos, representing Muslim tribal minorities (Sama Bangingi). He is also a member of the board of advisers of Al-Qalam Institute of Islamic Identities in Southeast Asia at the Ateneo de Davao University (ADDU); a former Muslim and IP Affairs Coordinator for the Ateneo Peace Institute at the Social Development Council, Ateneo de Zamboanga University; former Head of the Academic Affairs of Al-Mustafa College; administrator of a technical-vocational college which designed many courses in ICT; and earlier consultant for the Chair of the Technical Panel on Islamic Studies at the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). Currently, he is a senior fellow at the Institute for Comparative and Advanced Studies (ICAS Phils) and one of the Lead Convenors of the Consortium of Peacebuilders, Development, Governance and Peace Studies. His primary interests are Muslim Cultural Studies, Islamic Theology, Moro History and Culture, Islamic Eco-theology, Islamic Philosophy, Islamic Leadership Ethics, and Interfaith Dialogue. He is also a practitioner of Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) and has been actively engaged in development work, community development, interfaith, and cultural work. Prior to his stint in government and the academia, Yusuf Morales was active in progressive movements.

RENE E. OFRENEO, Ph.D. is Professor Emeritus and former Dean of the University of the Philippines, School of Labor and Industrial Relations (SOLAIR). He is currently the President of the Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC). He has published on labor and industrial relations issues in Asia and served in the board of various journals on labor and management issues in the Asia-Pacific. His expertise has been tapped by various Philippine government agencies and International Labour Organization (ILO) offices, including serving as an Undersecretary for Labor Relations in the Philippine Department of Labor and Employment (from 1997 to 1998). He has a Certificate in Development Economics, an MA in Industrial Relations, and a Ph.D. in Philippine Studies (Labor and Economy).

ROSALINDA PINEDA OFRENEO, Ph.D. is Professor Emeritus and former Dean of the College of Social Work and Community Development (CSWCD), University of the Philippines Diliman, where she taught in the graduate programs on social development and on women and development studies. Her research and academic work has focused on homebased workers, including doing research and organizing of the national network called PATAMABA. She also served as a volunteer Regional Coordinator of Homenet Southeast Asia, a network of homebased workers' organizations across seven countries.



About the Editors

EDUARDO C. TADEM, Ph.D. is Convenor of the Program on Alternative Development, University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS AltDev). He was President of the Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC) from 2014 to 2018, co-convenor of the ASEAN Civil Society Conference/ASEAN Peoples' Forum (ACSC/APF) Philippine National Organizing Committee (2017), and a founding Governing Board Member of the Consortium on Southeast Asian Studies in Asia (SEASIA). He earned his Ph.D. in Southeast Asian Studies from the National University of Singapore, and a Master of Arts in Asian Studies and Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from the University of the Philippines Diliman. He retired as Professor of Asian Studies at the University of the Philippines Diliman in 2015 where he served as Editor-in-chief of *Asian Studies: Journal of Critical Perspectives on Asia*. He has published over 100 articles in books, academic journals, and periodicals.

HONEY B. TABIOLA is Junior Research Analyst of the Program on Alternative Development (AltDev) of the University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS) and Ph.D. student at the Department of Political Science, University of the Philippines Diliman. His fields of interest include political theory, comparative politics, and critical theory and theories of contemporary capitalism. In 2013, he was a graduate student research fellow at the Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore.

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