

Some Problems of Analysis

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IN the last seven or eight years the political geography of the so called Third World has undoubtedly changed profoundly. This is so not only in relation to the evaluations, particularly by the European Left, that I would call optimistic in the period from 1950-1960, but also as regards the effective potentiality that it then had. I say potentiality because I am profoundly convinced that the course of events in the Third World could have been different or, in one way or another, need not have been doomed to be what it actually was, had the revolutionary forces developed a more suitable analysis and one matched to the real possibilities that then found expression. It is not a case, in my opinion, of evoking the scope of the anti-colonial revolutions and their close links with the world situation opened up by the October revolution and by the rise of a system of socialist states. The point of special interest will appear later. And I am aware that we find ourselves face to face with the maturing of processes that were already implicit in preceding stages of history, but that were neglected or completely ignored. They have, in this way, given birth to a series of new processes that constitute the whole complex of difficulties in which the so-called Third World finds itself today.

Accordingly it seems necessary, more than ever, to make an objective analysis free from preconceived frameworks or formulae, that corresponds to the complexity of the old and new factors that intertwine and accompany the National Liberation Movement of the people.

It is in this sense that I would like to advance just a few hypotheses for examination obviously open to every sort of correction, in the spirit of genuine discussion.

Common Features

The panorama of the so-called Third World obviously is not completely homogeneous, and so it is extremely difficult to speak today of a unifying characteristic of the Third World. Still there are some general elements that frequently crop up. They seem to me to be the following:

(a) a diffused process of neo-colonialism. The approach to political independence which, as no one would deny, has been an important

happening, has not—with few exceptions—represented the beginning of a process of economic liberation, and often not even of the effective construction of a state and a nation. The first consequence of neo-colonialism has been an integration—with certain definite characteristics—of many new states into the capitalist sphere;

- (b) the breaking-up, in some cases the crisis, in others the disruption of the bloc of political and social forces that carried the liberation movement forward to the conquest of independence, with a move back of the *élites* or of ruling classes to positions of agreement or understanding with imperialism;
- (c) a progressive disintegration of the relatively homogeneous orientation on the international plane (Conference of Bandung, Afro-Asianism etc.) with the crisis of positive neutralism, the assertion of a position of equidistance accompanied by a search for new bases of understanding and agreement with imperialism in general and American imperialism in particular.

Causes of Present Situation

We have here three interdependent elements, and the facts, the episodes that confirm them are too well known to require mention. I would like instead to go back to their causes, which are essentially three:

- (a) the first is objective; and it is intrinsic to the actual level of economic, political or social development of this or that country which has become independent. If truth be told we have frequently idealised these realities, transforming every moment of their evolution into an event which in itself is revolutionary. In general one may say that as they have advanced during these years, they have felt more and more the terrible weight of the whole complex of problems of underdevelopment capable of undermining far stronger constitutions than those of young independent states;
- (b) the second cause is subjective and relates to the politico-ideological weaknesses of the various liberation movements. Too often

independence has been the derivative of a complex of relations of international forces, rather than victory gained by struggle. I have in mind particularly black Africa. It is worth recording a very shrewd observation of Amílcar Cabral: "Too often the policy of the liberation struggle and the perspectives for the future"—he said in an excellent work titled *A Crisis of Knowing*—"have been not only devoid of theoretical basis, but also more or less divorced from the reality of the existing situation in which they are applied" and of the decisive factors in every struggle he mentions: "the historical reality of every people" and "the correct solution of the internal contradictions between the various categories that characterise this reality."

- (c) There is, finally a third group of reasons that has to do with the general action of the international working class movement, in brief those that I would call its limitations, and sometimes mistakes of analysis and hence of strategic orientation. I am not referring only to the backwardness of Marxist research that I have already mentioned, but to a specific mistake—from which there flows a whole series of consequences—consisting in a rigid and superficial analysis of the crisis of imperialism (in immediate political terms, not historical) following from the collapse of the traditional colonial empires. From this there has been a clear under-estimation of the capacity and possibility of imperialism itself coping with this collapse and so, in some cases, transforming it into an operation for consolidating its international machinery. To this there has been added the specific fact of the present division in the international working class movement that has weakened its forces, situations and prospects, which still appeared promising in the decade 1950/1960.

These are the general features and causes of the present situation. As against these as we shall see later, there are other positive processes in the radicalisation of the struggle, with important new features. Before proceeding to these we should pause to consider the inadequacy of the analysis and of the strategy of the revolutionary forces.

The "Non-Capitalist Road"

The line of the whole of the international working class movement, before the present splits, was that of the non-capitalist road and of national democracy. I shall say at once that personally, I have never accepted and used the expression non-capitalist road: it is, as I see it, without any scientific foundation, ambiguous and open to all the ambiguities

of an impossible "third road" in relation to that of socialism and capitalism. Around it there can arise ambivalent regimes, in which the phase of transition objectively necessary becomes something else. This line originates from a mistaken analysis of the catastrophic character of imperialism following the collapse of colonialism.

And so there came to be foreseen a long period of transition, gradual but linear and consistent in its developments in which all the national forces including the bourgeoisie, would inevitably be reabsorbed in an evolutionary process towards socialism. If one runs through the debate and the practical action taken in these years, one is, in effect, struck, or at least I have been, by the absence of analysis and posing of problems regarding the social and political dynamic internal to each state in relation to the anti-imperialist struggle. When this element appeared, it was always regarded as secondary.

In the whole phase of struggle against classical colonialism there is no doubt that common objectives for a complex of social and political forces are fairly plentiful. And this is the characteristic of more than ten years of anti-imperialist struggle. But in the phase of the achievement of political independence, when problems of economic independence present themselves, of breaking imperialist connections or in the same phase of completing the anti-imperialist revolution of national liberation, do these objectives remain common to the various component forces in the struggle? Or rather does there not begin to take place a differentiation of interests and aims?

The question becomes clearer with the intervention of neo-colonialism or with a different relationship between imperialism and the Third World. A mechanical transference of the same theoretical evaluation from one phase to another has been one of the causes of this mistake. The second source of error is practical. In the general clash between imperialism and socialism an important weight was and continues to be attached to state relationships and initiatives by states. The struggle for independence was necessarily marked by a push towards political independence from the capitalist and imperialist states. How long would this autonomy last on the basis of the internal dynamic that it developed? And on the basis of a too simple analysis has not all the development of the real internal dialectic of the social and political forces been subordinated to a certain international alignment of this or that state? Also on this aspect of things, which is not a secondary one, it is worth undertaking some research into the formulation of the analysis which in fact hid the emergence of the contradiction-nation (ex-colony) and imperialism in new terms.

“National Democracy”?

Well then, if we look around, we would look in vain for one single positive experience of “national democracy”. None of the typical models that support this definition have stood up to what has actually happened. All the regimes that have been so defined have suddenly swung back, returning to a position subordinate to imperialism, or they have been integrated within the capitalist sphere, or following an opposite course, they have had to make the political and social conflict internally, more radical, to pass rapidly and immediately to choices of political and economic direction of a more advanced character, and to fight the pressures of imperialism on this ground.

One may ask at this point whether there exists today in the Third World a national bourgeoisie capable of carrying to completion the anti-colonial revolution or which is interested in doing so in any way whatsoever. It is worth asking whether in certain parts of the Third World there even exists the possibility of a bourgeoisie worthy of the name coming into existence, on the economic basis that it provides.

My answer to this question is a negative. There can certainly be sections of the national bourgeoisie that participate in this or that phase of the struggle, even after having obtained political independence, but one is talking of a fringe and nothing more. My answer is negative not only because there is a huge mass of experience that points in the opposite direction, but also because I think that neo-colonialism is something extremely complex and, in part, new in relation to the classical analysis of imperialism.

The new element on which, in my view, it will be necessary to undertake more profound research is that concerning the extension of the capitalist mode of production in the sphere of the Third World. There is the co-existence in it of islands of capitalist development, the growing integration of the whole backward area in the international division of capitalist labour in terms that are different from those of the past. Obviously this does not mean that the general conditions of under-development are overcome; on the contrary it is often the beginning of its accentuation. So all the lines of these processes are subordinate and determined by the capitalist mechanism of imperialist countries and by their own international and national needs. In other words, capitalism enters into the under-developed countries according to a logic that generates privileges for some and increasing poverty for the rest (the majority), leaving no real margin of autonomous choice corresponding to specific national interests.

Privileged Groups

All this, it seems to me, gives rise to two main consequences:

- (a) that the sphere of the Third World cannot be considered as a homogeneous bloc objectively counter-posed to the capitalist sphere. The anti-imperialist struggle, that is, goes on within and outside of the neo-colonial countries;
- (b) that within these forms of development there grows social dynamic and privileged groups—they are the bureaucratic and parasitic bourgeoisie of black Africa or the industrial bourgeoisie of Latin America or Asia—that have as their essential characteristic the power of living and prospering with the backing of the neo-colonial penetration. This is the first reason that makes one seriously doubt whether the national bourgeoisie has a positive role. But there are other reasons also. Precisely because of this manner of existence, this bourgeoisie is condemned to be a fragment, a very weak and subordinate link in the world capitalist system.

It is not only not in a position to carry the struggle for political independence to an advanced level, but cannot even overcome some of the most dramatic problems of under-development; so it does not succeed in becoming a class that exercises hegemony, it does not succeed in governing without alliances. Although the situation varies from country to country, still it seems to be a general phenomenon that the bourgeoisie falls back on an internal alliance with the feudal groups and the privileged strata in the countryside and externally on the political and military support of international capitalism. In this phase, if the truth be told, for the picture of a vaguely progressive and national bourgeoisie, we ought to substitute the far more realistic picture of a bourgeoisie and of privileged groups that are reactionary internally and tied to imperialism internationally.

Far from the formula of national democracy and the non-capitalist road, we see as a dominant feature of these last years the explosion of divergent interests on the economic, social and political planes—internally and internationally—of groups and of forces that together demanded independence.

It is easy to see that this is still the problem around which the fortunes of some progressive states of the Third World turns today (obviously not alluding to those in which a true socialist revolution has been completed). This is how matters have turned out for other states such as Indonesia, Ghana, Mali etc. It is also the problem on which there has taken place what I would call a true and real crisis of the forces of the left of the Third

World, from its nationalist wings to those that are more consistently revolutionary.

To conclude on this point, it seems to me that the present phase in the whole of the Third World is dominated by a close intertwining between national and social revolution, by an ever more profound interweaving between the possibility of reaching a political independence that is more than nominal, of reversing the laws of underdevelopment, of breaking the imperialist mechanism, and the internal struggle against bourgeois and privileged groups of whatever kind they may be.

Contradictions within Neo-Colonialism

But if neo-colonialism has represented a possibility for imperialism to recoup itself, it has, however, opened new and uncontainable contradictions. We are faced from now on, with the collapse repeatedly, of all attempts by imperialism to prop up the governments of the "new bourgeoisie" and to guarantee a stable economic development of the backward territories, integrated into the international division of labour in the capitalist world, without modifying its exchange relations and the orientation of its investments and that is something that is impossible, obviously by its very nature. It is therefore quite incapable of overcoming the drama of under-development and of giving life to the national formations of the indigenous bourgeoisie capable of exercising a real national hegemony. The example of Latin America is very telling on this point. The modest reformist design of the Alliance for Progress has set in motion so violent a process, evoked so many and such great problems, that they have been constrained to turn to strong-arm regimes, to military regimes, to the old alliances, backward but more oppressive but such as give more guarantees of order; they have even been compelled to intervene militarily in San Domingo.

In effect, neo-colonialism cannot support itself on a precarious political and class balance, and so it has, and will more and more have need of military intervention from outside and/or coercive power within. The military coups that have been so numerous in the Third World these last years, have also this as their source. But—and this seems to me important—all this comes to life in a radicalisation of social relations and in a political clash within the countries of the Third World, and in its turn further polarises and radicalises the whole situation, creating a revolutionary potential at a more advanced level than that of the decade 1950/1960.

The important point is, in fact, that the neo-colonial process, if on the one hand it provokes all the phenomena to which we made reference in the first part of this introduction, on the other hand causes the emergence and intervention in the struggle of new social forces, provokes the dislocation of

other social forces which have been neutral or passive until then, and brings them all together at more advanced levels of the international class struggle.

A more careful and a more detailed recognition of the many shocks that are shaking the area of the Third World would help us to understand how, backed by this objective contradiction, a host of explosive situations are developing. It is certainly important not to over-estimate the meaning of these objective processes and to deduce that they, on their own, are leading to, and hence we are face to face with, a rapid transition to extended forms of social revolution in the area of the Third World. Some detonator or other (guerrillas, for example—as described theoretically by Debray) is not enough to cause this situation to explode. The problem remains that of constructing political and social forms for the revolution. And it is here that the decisive problems of a valid strategy for the revolutionary forces present themselves and hence also the decisive problems for a proper analysis and for a general reappraisal of all the problems of the anti-colonial revolution.

Defects of Our Analysis

One ought frankly to recognise that in the various perspectives of a general character and the alternative possibilities amongst them that have appeared during these last years (and I mean to refer to all that have appeared without any exception) there are two main defects:

- (a) an absolute generalisation from this or that experience, repeating it mechanically elsewhere, on the basis of a view that starts off as if the Third World were a homogeneous and unified whole;
- (b) the lack of a creative application of Marxism to the social movement that is taking place, and hence the repetition—in face of quite new developments—of old patterns of thought and set formulae, or else of what I would call "flights into the future" not founded on concrete analysis of the social fabric.

Take for example the question of the working class and its role as an advance guard. This is an historical truth that takes account of the true relationship between the development of a socialist struggle and the development of production relations. But it risks being a mere theoretical abstraction if one does not collect specific facts about our own epoch or the extension of revolutionary phenomena to the whole of the world even where the classical conditions do not exist for a revolutionary dialectic. If one thinks of black Africa, for example, it would be hard to answer the question: is the working class there by virtue of its numbers, by virtue of its position in the productive process,

a source of mobilisation and an advance guard for revolutionary struggle? And if it is not, are we to think that for a certain stretch of time there will be only intermediate democratic forces that represent the transition until such time as the working class, growing in the meanwhile, makes the socialist leap? In what is called Portuguese Guinea there is taking place, for example, a war of national liberation of a revolutionary character, without there being a working class. And it is a revolutionary struggle that comes about under the direction of a stratum of people that come from the small urban bourgeoisie.

In the Context of Experience

So ought we not henceforth to try to discuss these problems in the living context of experience and to retrace on the basis of a real social dialectic and the neo-colonial contradictions I have mentioned above, what social forces from now on can become motive forces in the revolutionary process? Certainly these forces become revolutionary—it is clear—when precisely revolutionary thought gives them an instrument for revolutionary action (the political party) and they act on the terrain of the revolution.

But this is already something different from a classical and traditional framework of thought. It is something more than that. Because of the problems to which I have referred we have had some facts that deserve careful attention. We have had, that is, an increase in the revolutionary forces that do not come from the Communist stock and that have not had Marxism and Leninism as their point of departure. They have come to that, but only some of them, after however, having borne the burden of their own original experience and it would be stupid to deny the contribution that they have made to the development of Marxism itself and of revolutionary practice. We have had the maturing of some movements of purely nationalist origin that have become alive to the necessity of finding anti-capitalist solutions, in order to pursue concrete objectives of national independence, so arriving at socialist thought. We have had, likewise, political forces and ideals absolutely extraneous to the revolutionary ranks and that have approached a revolutionary place on a terrain that does not separate off an anti-imperialist component with specific class contents. I am thinking, for example, of the enormous value of the entry into the field of the Catholic forces in Latin America. We have also had victorious revolutions of a socialist type that have come about without the leadership of the Communist Party. For example, Cuba. One could display a lot of pedantry in discussing all this, but the plain fact is that these are living things that have happened and are in process of happening, and they mean

more than any pedantic argument. And so this complex new situation—inherently the political and social forces—is one of the great terrains on which, in my view, it will be necessary to put in serious work, without preconceived ideas, with a real Marxist method, for what we can call the second phase, that which is taking place now, of the anti-colonial revolution.

The Revolutionary Process

A second question on which it seems to me that it will be necessary to work is the following—what does carrying forward a revolutionary process in the Third World *mean*? What *is* its model of development? The decisive point here is to take account of the level of social and production relations from which a start is being made, I would like to say country by country. This is the only measure by which to evaluate the meaning of a really revolutionary choice. But I believe that there cannot be a unifying paradigm, except for the universality of the hypothesis of scientific socialism, so that I do not believe that there can be an African, Asian or Arab socialism. What do I mean by that? I mean that given the point of departure for an under-developed country there must be a period of necessary transition. What matters is to fix the mechanisms for accumulation, the fundamental choices on the basis of political power and economic-social structure so as to correspond to a socialist perspective for that society, right from the very first steps of the independent country, since it is from the manner in which a start is made that the future development is decided. The complex of Indian experience and the Indonesian tragedy ought to give us a pointer in this direction.

Inter-Relations of the Struggle

Let me conclude by posing a third and equally decisive question. The experience of all these years tells us that the colonial revolution is not entirely autonomous.

So I think that all those strategies are therefore wrong which entrust the fate of world revolution only to the Third World and that on this basis try to find the decisive contradiction of our time in that between the poor countries and the rich countries. Equally that every strategy seems to me mistaken which tends to put in the first place, to give a special priority, to the other prongs of the struggle.

I would say therefore, that either there is a weakening of imperialism at other points—and particularly at its roots in the capitalist countries—or the anti-colonial revolution and the sequences of revolutionary developments will have to follow more tortuous routes, more full of difficulties and

of danger of defeat, checks and turning back upon themselves. I say this before all else in self-criticism of the Western working class and as a criticism of the excessive simplifications and flights into the future that are made in the Third World in the treatment of these problems.

By way of conclusion it is necessary to say that we ought to overcome serious delays, to re-work many questions, to deepen our enquiry into others. This calls not only for research and discussion,

in a very free spirit, but also practical experimentation, which can be painful. A considerable part of the questions here mentioned, in reality, can be resolved only within the actual movement of society in the Third World and not by any external formula. The objective conditions are there, the anti-imperialist forces are large and strong and the present confrontation between socialism and imperialism will also depend for a long period on their capacity to act positively.