

Development is Anti-Democratic¹

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THE FACT THAT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS ANTI-DEMOCRATIC, though written in large letters on the face of history, is hard to see. For we have been taught just the opposite, that democracy and development go together. It is no coincidence, most historians argue, that the democratic movement and the industrial revolution appeared at the same moment in European history. The two support one another. On the one hand, economic development is the necessary condition for democracy. Industrialization produces wealth, wealth produces leisure, leisure gives people the freedom to learn about and participate in politics, and this freedom makes democracy possible. On the other hand, the argument goes, economic development takes place most rapidly under conditions of democratic freedom. All of this seems to be borne out by the fact that the richest countries today are the ones we call "democratic." At the same time, the idea is an axiom in the ideology (though not in the practice) of Third World development. It is particularly hard to doubt today, when the peoples of Eastern Europe seem to be opting simultaneously for democracy and economic development. The trouble with their "communism," we now hear, was that it both brought political oppression and was an "obstacle to development." The establishment of "democracy" in those countries is expected to help their economies begin developing again. Surely, the idea that development is democratic is one of the most powerful of our time.

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FUNDAMENTALLY POLITICAL. *The economy organizes power, distributes goods, and rules people.*

The idea is powerful, but wrong. To see in what way it is wrong, it is necessary first to make clear what is meant by "economic development." The expression is not universal, but particular. It does not mean the development of any of the various ways that people have maintained their livelihood throughout history. Rather it means the elimination of most of those ways and their replacement by certain historically specific practices originating in Europe. "Economic development" means the development of those practices.

The word "economic" itself in "economic development" also refers to a historically specific phenomenon. It means a particular way of organizing power in a society, and of simultaneously concealing this power arrangement, or more accurately, of concealing that it is a power arrangement. If this formulation seems surprising, that is a tribute to the effectiveness of the concealing function. If one were to say that the highest value of the economy was efficiency of production, no one would be particularly surprised. But this is only saying the same thing in a different way. The "economy" is a way of organizing people

to work efficiently, that is, to do unnatural kinds of work under unnatural conditions for unnaturally long hours, and to extract all or part of the extra wealth so produced and transfer it elsewhere. This is equally true in capitalist and "socialist" countries.

The economy is thus political in the most fundamental sense: it organizes power, distributes goods, and rules people. Aristotle called politics the Master Science because it was the process by which the basic ordering of a society was decided. In the "economically developed" societies today, economics determines this basic ordering. We tend to think of this as inevitable. Even those who have never read Marx tend to see the economy as a substructure that develops according to its own Iron Laws and is beyond the power of human beings to change or choose against. But this inevitability exists only within the context of the ideology of development.

Under the domination of this ideology, economics has in a sense replaced politics as the Master Science. But this political character of the economy is hidden. Through economic processes, cultures are abolished or restructured, environments are destroyed or made over, work is ordered, wealth is transferred, goods are distributed, classes are formed, and people are managed. But the words for talking intelligibly about these things -- words like founding, order, lawgiving, revolution, power, justice, rule, consent -- do not exist as technical terms in economic science.

Economic development means, then, the extension and strengthening of this particular mode of economic power, order, and rule. To say that economic development is anti-democratic is not simply to say that it tends to produce undemocratic forms of rule in what we now consider the political sphere. It means that it is an undemocratic form of rule in its own sphere. And keeping the vocabulary of politics out of economic discourse is part of what keeps it undemocratic.

2. See Sheldon S. Wolin's description of the U.S. political system as "[a] political economy, in which the state [is] grounded in economic relationships and act[s] mainly through its administrative branch...." Wolin, "The People's Two Bodies," *Democracy*, Vol. 1, Jan. 1981, p. 15 and ff. Cf. also Robert S. Lynd, fifty years ago: "Power is no less 'political' for being called 'economic power.'" Lynd, foreword to Robert A. Brady, *Business as a System of Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), viii.

Economic development is anti-democratic in several ways. It is anti-democratic in that it requires kinds, conditions, and amounts of labor that people would never choose -- and, historically, never *have* chosen -- in a state of freedom. Only by giving a society one or another kind of undemocratic structure can people be made to spend the greater part of their lives laboring "efficiently" in fields, factories, or offices and handing over the surplus value to capitalists, managers, communist party leaders, or technocrats. You can make people do this by destroying their traditional means of livelihood, or by forcibly separating them from it; the enclosure of land gave Europe its first generation of industrial workers. Or you can make people do it by drafting them as forced laborers; this is how the first generation of plantation and industrial workers was established in most of the European colonies. You can arrange a society in which the only alternative to such work is the humiliation of poverty, or actual starvation; Karl Polanyi has shown how the free market economists intentionally in-

"Economic development is anti-democratic in that it requires kinds, conditions, and amounts of labor that people would never choose in a state of freedom."

roduced the possibility of starvation into European society (e.g., by abolishing poor relief) as a means of labor discipline.³ You can arrange a society such that virtually nothing of value can be had in any other way than by exchange for money, and industrialized work (yours or someone else's) is the only way to get money. Or you can put the economy directly under the power of the state, call this "socialism" or whatever, and use the iron fist of state power to enforce the iron laws of economic development and keep everyone at their jobs.

All of these systems can be strengthened by the addition of an ideology that doing industrial labor is virtuous or heroic or patriotic or a characteristic of "advanced civilization," or mature (for people who doubt their adulthood) or prestigious (for office workers) or macho (for men) or liberating (for women) or the like. The point is that to make people do unnatural kinds of work for unnaturally long hours under unnatural working conditions you must either force them or implant in their minds some ideology under which they will force themselves. The various "economic systems" we see in the world today are different combinations of these different sorts of force and ideology.

Economic development is also anti-democratic because it promotes social inequality. (I assume here, as some theorists do not, that social equality is a democratic ideal.)



PLANTATION WORKERS IN MINDANAO. *Only through an undemocratic structure can people spend the rest of their lives laboring.*

Of course we have known for two centuries that this was true of capitalist economic development. Socialism was proposed as a solution to this, on the hypothesis that socialization of the ownership of the means of production would democratize the economy, that is, put it under the control of the workers, and distribute power and wealth equally within its ranks. This hypothesis is in the midst of a grave crisis today. Granting that the pursuit of inequality ("getting ahead," "rising in the

Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (New York: Octagon Books, 1975).

world," etc.) is the driving force behind the free market economy, it seems that if you replace this with a socialist economy *and still want economic development*, you have to find a new driving force. The Leninist solution was to rely on the power of the state, supplemented by the power of ideology. The result is, as we well know today, only the replacing of one kind of inequality with another -- you can't have a command economy without commanders and footsoldiers. Where once workers in the capitalist countries hoped that socialism would bring the democratization of their economies, today workers in the socialist countries, at least some of them, hope that a return to the free market will bring them democracy.⁴ But this only takes the problem back to where it was in the 19th century. The free market continues to generate inequality in wealth and power, as before. If "socialism" is not the solution to this, then what is?

Economic development is anti-democratic for it is a process of establishing and strengthening an undemocratic form of rule over a central aspect of people's lives -- their work -- and also in that it generates inequality in wealth and power. In addition, it is anti-democratic because people's attention is turned away from political goals and struggles, and are then replaced with "economic" ones.

The economic development ideology teaches that most of the things people really want are economic, hence most social problems are economic, so that the ultimate solution to them is economic development itself. It is no accident that the shift of the labor movement away from the struggle for power and for democratization of the workplace, in the direction of wage demands, is called "economism."

The development ideology redefines the classical political demands: freedom becomes the free market; equality becomes equality of opportunity; security becomes job security; consent becomes "consumer sovereignty;" and the pursuit of happiness becomes a

lifetime of shopping. Economic development of the Third World countries is offered as a solution to the continued domination over them by the industrial powers, and to the vast inequality in wealth and power generated and maintained by that domination. Economic development ideology transforms political domination, for which democracy is the solution, into economic domination, for which submission in the form of disciplined hard work, eventually leading to prosperity and "leisure" is the alleged solution. Economic development is anti-democratic in that it is the expansion of a sphere of life from which democracy is to be excluded in principle.

The Tenacity of the Belief in Development

The anti-democratic character of economic development may be hard to see, but that is not because it has been kept a secret. Many development ideologists have advocated democratic development as an abstract ideal, but few have ever suggested that such a thing should be attempted in practice. The un-



OUTCOME OF MARCOS'S "DEVELOPMENTALISM"

4. And returning to the nineteenth century gives us an opportunity to take a new look at the nineteenth century social system. William Morris. Morris saw capitalism and industrialism as virtually identical: the industrialization of work was the system oppressing the worker. For Morris, under a socialism of truly free labor, industrialism itself would fade away. See especially his beautiful *News From Nowhere*, in Morris, *Selected Writings*, G.D.H. Cole, ed. (New York, London: Nonessuch Press, 1954) pp. 3-197.

democratic character of a society organized to maximize efficiency in production is well known among technocrats, economists, and business managers all over the world. It is an axiom of management science, believed in more fervently by advocates of the "Japanese system of management."

It has been considered as plain common sense by such development dictators as Mussolini, Stalin, Pinochet, Park Chung Hee, Deng Xiaoping, Ceausescu, and Ferdinand Marcos. Marcos, for example, organized a thinktank and had it put together an elaborate ideology to legitimize his martial law regime, which Philippine scholar Alexander Magno analyzed and appropriately labelled "developmentalism."⁵ And the scholars who wrote Marcos's books for him had no difficulty in finding firm grounds for martial law development in mainstream Western (mainly American) social science.⁶

What is remarkable is that the horrors perpetrated around the world under such developmentalist dictatorships do not seem



to have discredited the idea of developmentalism itself. In many places, this is because it can be argued that development was never really attempted: what was supposed to have been a team of technocrats turned out to be a band of robbers, and the painfully extracted surplus value, instead of going into capital investment, went into Manhattan real estate and Swiss banks.

The "development debacle" under which so many crimes and horrors were committed can be denounced as an impostor. The genuine article (should it ever appear) will be a different thing altogether. Critics of development as it has been advocate development as it might be. Many seem to think that it can be saved by finding just the right adjective for it: "true," "genuine," "alternative," "appropriate," "pro-people," "sustainable," or the like.

After Marcos's development dictatorship was overthrown, the Philippine government adopted a new constitution (1986) in which the word "development" appears thirty-four times.⁷ This compares to four times for the 1935 Constitution (five, if one includes the provision added in 1945 allowing U.S. citizens equal rights in the development of Philippine natural resources) and seven times for the 1973 Constitution.

This increase in the use of the word reflects an increase in the number of entities seen as proper objects for development. In the 1935 Constitution, three things are to be developed: natural resources, the national language, and "the patrimony of the nation." In the 1986 Constitution some of the things which are to be subjected to development are: the economy, the nation, humans, policy, the rural areas, human resources, the national wealth, regions, self-government units, society, tourism, the cultural heritage, agriculture, science and technology, "a reservoir of national talents," health, manpower, the family, Filipino capability, and children.

Alexander R. Magno, "Development and the 'New Society': The Repressive Ideology of Underdevelopment," *Third World Studies Papers*, Series No. 35 (Third World Studies Center, University of the Philippines, August, 1983).

See for example Ferdinand E. Marcos, *Notes on the New Society of the Philippines* (Manila: Marcos Foundation Inc., 1973).

Republic of the Philippines: The Constitutional Commission of 1986, *The Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines* (Quezon City: National Book Store, 1986). References to the 1935 and 1973 Constitutions are also from this National Book Store edition.

This may or may not be disturbing depending on what is meant by "development" in the several contexts. But it is disturbing to find even in the People's Power Constitution passages in which development is recognized as a potential limiting factor to democracy. In particular, the section on land reform -- the key issue in the democratization of Philippine society -- provides that "the state shall encourage and undertake the just distribution of all agricultural lands...taking into account...developmental...considerations..."⁸ Behind this bland language is the recognition that just distribution may turn out to be an "obstacle to development," and the implication is that in such an eventuality, development should be given first priority.

Of course, the People's Power Constitution was written largely by landlords, and one may suspect the sections on land reform of being insincere. But if so, we should expect to find things different on the Left. However, at least on the intellectual Left, they are about the same.

In the debate among Marxists over whether the dominant mode of production in the Philippines is semi-feudal or dependent capitalist, and therefore whether Philippine revolutionaries should fight to establish capitalism or socialism, the key factor is development. That is, the crucial failure of the present mode of production is not so much its injustice as the fact that it stands as an "obstacle to development." From which it is possible to conclude that in determining which new mode of production to fight for, the main criterion is development. In the post-revolutionary society, writes an economist of a national democratic persuasion, "the thrust of the overall program for agriculture is to make access to land be based on the ability to optimize resource use...In other words, efficiency of production, not equity of the principle of 'land to the tiller,' will be the deciding factor."⁹

It would be a mistake to take this as representative of the thinking of the farmers in this country where land reform is one of the prin-



STRIKING DEVELOPMENT.

cipal demands of the people. Still, though the above statement may be extreme, the structure of its thought is common enough in contemporary Marxism around the world.

Development as Iron Law: Marx

Of course, those who already see Marxism as a theory of economic development may find nothing surprising here. After all, it was Marx who gave the word "development" much of its contemporary meaning. Before Marx, the word was applied in ordinary use only to a limited number of things: you could develop a chess position or a military attack, you could develop shafts in a mine, you could develop virtues, or you could develop the plot of a novel. In Hegelian philosophy, history was the development (*Entwicklung*) of the human spirit. Marx took this term which Hegel had bloated to metaphysical proportions and applied it to the field of economics. In this way it was given a specific technical meaning without losing its mystical overtones. Marx could write very concretely about the development of the forces of production, and at the same time make God-like pronouncements about the development of entire countries, as

8. *Ibid.*, Article XIII, Sec. 4.

9. Ricardo D. Ferrer, "Theoretic and Programmatic Framework for the Development of Underdeveloped Countries," *Progressive Review*.



for revolutionaries.

his famous passage in the introduction to *Capital*, Vol. 1: "The country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future."¹⁰

But this is still different from the way the term is used today. For Marx, development was never a *project*. It was not something intentionally to be brought about by means of a development strategy. Rather it was, as he wrote in the sentence immediately preceding the one quoted above, a consequence of laws...winning their way through and working themselves out with iron necessity." Development had no conscious author, but it had an unconscious agent. It was an intended consequence of the quest for profits of the bourgeoisie.

And if development was not a project for the bourgeoisie, much less was it a project for revolutionaries. This is because, taken together, the particular actions which constituted development were crimes. To transform the world into something from which it could systematically extract profit, the bourgeoisie was ripping the world apart, tearing people from their homes, exploding their communities, trampling on their ancient customs

and liberties, expropriating their craft skills, and placing them under an unprecedented form of oppression and in an unprecedented form of systematized poverty. It was precisely development that had created the situation Engels described in *The Condition of the English Working Class*.

Of course, Marx's attitude towards this was two-sided. On the one hand, the bourgeoisie had done an awesome and useful piece of work. "It has been the first to show what man's activity can bring about. It has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals..."¹¹ But at the same time it had created a world based on "naked, shameless, direct, brutal, exploitation,"¹² and precisely for that reason deserved to be overthrown, expropriated, and driven from the stage of history.

Development was no project for revolutionaries. Revolutionary action was *against* the developers, justified by the crimes of development, and by the fact that whatever good came of development had never been intended by the bourgeoisie. At the same time, revolution *redeemed* development by turning the newly created apparatus of production to just purposes for the first time. But the *purpose* of revolution was establishment of justice, not promotion of development.

Concentrating his attention mainly on France and England, Marx was able to believe that the new industrial order would be fully established *before* the revolution. This was, if one may put it so, a great convenience. It meant the bourgeoisie would do all the necessary dirty work, take its just punishment, and the new industrial society -- thus purged of the crimes that had brought it into being -- could be inherited by the guiltless working class. The revolution, in addition to being an act of power, was also to be a ritual purification of industrial development. Obviously this script cannot be followed where there is a Marxist revolution in a society that has not been in-

Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, "Preface to the First Edition" (Penguin Books, 1976), p. 91.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York and London: Norton, 1978), p. 476.

Vol. 1, p. 475.



KOMPRADOR (COMPRADOR). *Capitalism is objectively progressive.*

dustrialized, which is why Marx's writings on the non-industrialized societies of his day tended to be among his most obscure. And it is also why the Marxism of development Marxists today is correctly called Marxism-Leninism.

Development as Iron Discipline: Lenin

In the career of Lenin we can see the historical moment at which "development" was transformed from a process spun out by the cunning of history, to a project under the direction of human will and reason.¹³

In 1899 Lenin published what may have been the most widely read, or at least the most widely distributed, book ever written about development: over three million copies of *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* are said to have been sold. In this work one can see the beginnings of the shift from Marxism to Marxism-Leninism. The basic structure is the same as Marx's: capitalism is subjectively criminal and objectively progressive.

But the emphasis is on the progressive role. In the context of a Russia that has only just begun to industrialize, Lenin was arguing against the Narodnik position that if capitalism was such a brutal arrangement it should be kept out of Russia altogether. The main text of the work is an account of the good and necessary things capitalism would bring, interspersed only occasionally with qualifying phrases such as, "with full recognition of the negative and dark sides of capitalism."¹⁴

Capitalism is progressive because "separates industry from agriculture," that is, it takes farmers and makes them into industrial proletarians working in factories. It takes them from under the control of the traditions of agrarian society and places them under the control of industrial organization. It changes the nature of production by concentrating and organizing it; it changes the nature of consumption by destroying subsistence and making people dependent on commodity consumption.¹⁵ "The progressive historical role of capitalism (i.e., its role as the agent of

13. This does not mean that the Russian government under Lenin was the first to launch a program of intentional mass industrialization. Surely Japan's Meiji government was the first to do this. The point here, however, is not to locate the historical "first," but to trace the history of the notion of development in Western thought. Japan's economic development was not taken up seriously as object of study in the West until after World War II.

14. V.I. Lenin, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia: The Process of the Formation of a Home Market for Large-Scale Industry* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1956), p.602.

15. This is the main theme of the book, as indicated in its subtitle, *The Process of the Formation of a Home Market for Large-Scale Industry*.

development') may be summed up in two main propositions: 1.) increase in the productive forces of social labor, and 2.) the socialization of that labor.¹⁶ This massive transformation from "natural economy"¹⁷ to industrial economy leads also to "a change in the mentality of the population,"¹⁸ a change Lenin judges to be an improvement. He is sure enough of this that he is ready to oppose efforts to ban labor by women and children in the factories as "reactionary and utopian." By drawing them into direct participation in social production, large-scale machine industry stimulates their development and in-



...ases their inde-
pendence...¹⁹

Development increases efficiency, raises production, and improves both the workers' society and the workers themselves. But, as with Marx, none of this is carried out intentionally. "[L]arge-scale machine industry...imperatively calls for the planned regulation of production and public control over it..."²⁰ That this is the natural order of things is taken for granted: public

control is a *result* of development, not a *cause* of it.

The last section of *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, entitled "The 'Mission' of Capitalism," is a summary of the progressive gains that capitalism was to bring to Russia. Less than twenty years after writing this, Lenin found himself at the head of a revolutionary government in control of a country in which capitalism's "mission" had not been carried out. In March, 1918, only months after the October Revolution, Lenin wrote in an essay called "The Chief Task of Our Day,"

Yes, learn from the Germans! History is moving in zigzags and by roundabout ways. It so happens that it is the Germans who now personify, besides a brutal imperialism, the principle of discipline, organization, harmonious co-operation on the basis of modern machine industry, and strict accounting and control.

And that is just what we are lacking.²¹

Capitalism had been overthrown before its work was done; there was



But subjectively criminal.

nothing for it but for the Bolsheviks to take over that work. Lenin saw this as a major historical transition, and as a fundamental change in the nature of development.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 602-603.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 37.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 606.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 552.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 37.

²¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Chief Task of Our Day," (orig. pub. in *Izvestia VTsIK* No. 46, Mar. 12, 1918) in *Lenin Collected Works*, Vol. 1 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965), p. 163.

Whereas "the chief organizing force of anarchically built capitalist society is the spontaneously growing and expanding national and international market," now after the revolution the reorganization of the society for factory production was "the principal task of the proletariat."²² The Bolsheviks had "started from the opposite end to that prescribed by theory (the theory of pedants of all kinds), because in our country the political and social revolution precede the cultural revolution, that very cultural revolution which nevertheless now confronts us."²³

The task was huge. It involved "the organizational reconstruction of the whole social economy, by a transition from individual dis-united, petty commodity production to large-scale social production."²⁴



LENIN. "Soviets plus electrification."

At the same time it was also necessary to bring about a complete change in the mood of the people and to bring them on to the proper path of steady and disciplined labour."²⁵

This work is rather different from what Marx had described as the historical task of the revolutionary proletariat. But now the proletariat has become the *ruling* class; it wields state power;" and as a result faces "tasks which the proletariat formerly did not and could not have set itself."²⁶

Lenin was frank -- "passionate" might be a better word -- in emphasizing that in the field of economic development there was no room for democracy. One notion of socialism had been that it was an attempt to extend democracy from the political to the economic sphere: the bourgeois revolutions had won democracy for the people as citizens; now socialism would win democracy for the people as workers. But this was not Lenin's idea. First of

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he saw a contradiction between economic development and what was supposed to have been one aspect of worker's democracy, economic equality. He had no hesitation about which to choose. "I insist that bonuses of this kind...mean a great deal more

22. _____, "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government," (orig. pub. in *Pravda*, No. 83, April 28, 1918) in *Lenin Collected Works*, Vol. 27, pp. 238, 241.

23. _____, "On Co-operation," (orig. pub. in *Pravda*, No. 115, 116, May 26, 27, 1923) in *Lenin Collected Works*, Vol. 28, pp. 474.

24. _____, "Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," (orig. pub. in *Pravda* No. 290, November 1919) in *Lenin Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 112.

25. *Op. cit.*, Lenin, "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government," p. 244.

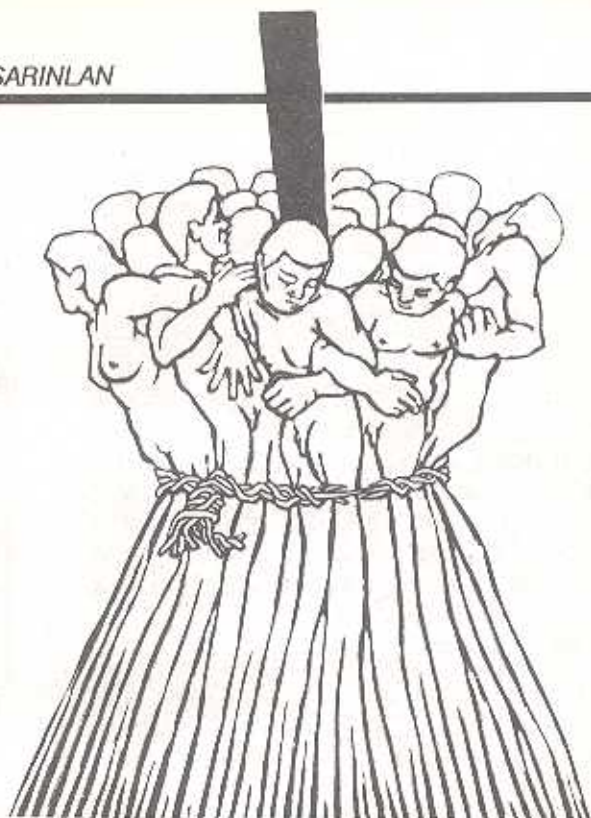
26. *Op. cit.*, Lenin, "Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," p. 115. Emphasis in original.

economic development, — industrial management, and wider union participation than the absolutely abstract and therefore empty talk about 'industrial democracy...'²⁷

More importantly, he saw democracy as alien to the workplace. "We must learn to combine the 'public meeting' democracy of the working people — turbulent, struggling, overflowing its banks like a Spring flood — with discipline when at work, with unquestioning obedience to the will of a single person, the Soviet leader, while at work."²⁸ To make this point all the stronger, Lenin was willing to give a new definition to a key Marxist term — a definition which, I am sure, Marx never anticipated. The "dictatorship of the proletariat," Lenin wrote, "by no means consists merely in overthrowing the bourgeoisie or the landowners — that happened in all revolutions — our dictatorship of the proletariat is the establishment of order, discipline, labour productivity, accounting and control by the proletarian Soviet power..."²⁹

But mere dictatorship at the workplace was not enough. To make this dictatorship scientific and efficient, Lenin advocated the introduction of a management technology hated by workers the world over.

The Russian is a bad worker compared with people in other countries. It could not be otherwise under the Tsarist regime and in view of the persistence of the hangover from serfdom. [Again, capitalism's work has been left undone.] The task that the Soviet government must set all the people in its scope is — learn to work. The Taylor System, the last word in capitalism in this respect, like all capitalist progress, is a combination of the refined brutality of bourgeois exploitation and a number of the greatest scientific achievements in the field of analysing mechanical motions [sic] during work... The Soviet republic must at all costs adopt all that is valuable in the achievements of science and technology in this field.³⁰



STUCK AND BOUND. *The achievements of science are to be used for squeezing the maximum productivity out of workers.*

"The achievements of science and technology" are not only to be used for squeezing maximum productivity out of the individual worker; they are also to be employed in planning the development of the society as a whole. Lenin's famous remark that socialism meant "soviets plus electrification" is frequently quoted. There is a kind of charm in the seeming simplicity and straightforwardness of the formula. But it is often forgotten that for Lenin "electrification" was no simple matter at all. It was a shorthand expression for the planned reorganization of society according to the logic of "large-scale machine production." The link can be found in the February, 1920 resolution of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, which Lenin was fond of quoting and presumably wrote:

Lenin, "Once Again on the Trade Unions," (orig. pub. in a pamphlet of the same title dated Jan., 1921) in *Lenin Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 84.

²⁷ *Op. cit.*, Lenin, "The Immediate Tasks..." p. 271. Emphasis in original.

Lenin, "Report on the Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government," (orig. pub. in "Minutes of the Sessions of the All-Russian C.E.C. 4th Convention," held April 29, 1918. Verbatim Report, Moscow, 1920.) in *Lenin Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 300.

³⁰ *Op. cit.*, Lenin, "The Immediate Tasks..." p. 259.

...Soviet Russia now has, for the first time, an opportunity of starting on more balanced economic development, and working out a nation-wide state economic plan on scientific lines and consistently implementing it. In view of the prime importance of electrification ...the Committee resolves: to authorise the Supreme Economic Council to work out...a project for the construction of a system of electric power stations.³¹

Lenin believed that this was history's first comprehensive, scientific, written plan for national economic development. The weight he gave to it can be seen in the fact that he had the congress resolve that a study of this plan must be an item in the curricula of *all educational establishments of the Republic, without exception.*³²

The massive uprooting of humanity from traditional community life and work, the rendering extinct of ancient skills, values, and ways of thinking and feeling to make society into an instrument of efficient factory production -- a process of which, Marx said, "world history offers no spectacle more frightful"³³ -- were for Lenin the "new tasks" on which "we must...concentrate our forces, with the utmost effort and with ruthless, military determination."³⁴

All of this must be seen, of course, in the context of the position of the fledgling Soviet government at the time. Ravaged by the war, surrounded by enemies, plagued by food shortages, trains which never ran on time, and factories only sporadically producing, Russia was in a desperate situation, and Lenin's furious calls for sacrifice and discipline are perfectly understandable.



WARFARE WELFARE. Colonialists, at least, understood the

At the same time, the expression "ruthless, military determination" should be taken seriously: the imagery and ideology of development, as well as the actual organizational form it takes in factories and bureaucracies, owe much to the military model. Years later, Karl Deutsch proposed the term "social mobilization" to capture the phenomenon of reorganizing a society for industrial production, saying that the expression came to him as a "poetic image" suggested by "the historical experience of the French *levée en masse* in 1793, and of the German 'total mobilization' of 1914-1918."³⁵ And many post-Second World War modernization theorists have pointed out the key role of the military in the "modernization" of Third World countries.

31. "Resolution of All-Russian Central Executive Committee," Feb. 2-7, 1920, quoted by Lenin in "Integrated Economic Plan," (orig. pub. in *Pravda* No. 32, Feb. 22, 1921) in *Lenin Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 138.

32. "Resolution on Electrification Adopted by the Eighth All-Russian Congress of Soviets," Dec. 29, 1920, quoted by Lenin in *ibid.*, "Integrated Economic Plan," in *Lenin Collected Works*, p. 141. The editors of the *Collected Works* note: "The resolution was written by Lenin," p. 534, n. 38. Emphasis in original.

33. *Op. cit.*, *Capital*, Vol. 1, p. 557. Marx is referring here specifically to the "extinction of the English hand-loom weavers."

34. Lenin, "Speech Delivered at the Third All-Russian Congress of Economic Councils," Jan. 27, 1920 (orig. pub. in *Pravda* No. 19, Jan. 29, 1920) in *Lenin Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 312.

35. Karl W. Deutsch, "Social Mobilization and Political Development," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 55, No. 3, Sept. 1961, p. 494.



character of development.

with in serving as "modernizing elites" and in giving the people their first experience in modern forms of organization.³⁶

Another peculiarity of Lenin's position is that the reorganization of the society which is to be carried out with ruthless determination using the deliberate power of the state, is at the same time still the unfolding of a historically-determined process. The iron laws of history become positive law, to be enforced under the iron discipline of the state. This peculiar combination, in which state power is seen as the medium for the carrying out of some metahistorical process, has often been noted as a characteristic of twentieth century totalitarian rule, and was identified by Hannah Arendt as a crucial factor in totalitarianism.³⁷ It is a kind of contemporary version of divine right theory, depoliticizing political power by placing its alleged source outside of the realm of human choice. It puts the power holder in the position of being

responsible for carrying out the iron laws of the process, while not being responsible for the consequences of doing so.

Consider this extraordinary method of reasoning: "In every socialist revolution...— and consequently in the socialist revolution in Russia which we began on October 25, 1917 — the principal task of the proletariat..."³⁸ Lenin wrote this in April, 1918. According to this way of thinking, one learns one's task by reasoning deductively from the principle to the particular instance, of which at the time of writing there had been only one in all history.

This "task" then is not a choice made by fallibly human political leaders, grounded in past experience and a reading of the present situation. Rather, it is a fixed universal that existed before they came into power. The contribution of this strange form of duty-without-responsibility to what came to be known as Stalinism is well known. What is less often noticed is that the key to this mode of thinking — the very content of this "task" which is commanded as a superhistorical duty — is the reorganization of the society for "large-scale machine production" and for mass distribution, i.e., development.

Developing Other Peoples: Capitalist and Non-Capitalist Paths

With the Russian Revolution, development was transformed from a process to a project; grammatically the word "develop" was transformed from an intransitive to a transitive verb. However, at the initial stage described above, it remained a domestic project: the state and Party leaders were to develop their own country, not some other one. At what point did it come to be used transnationally?

³⁶ "In some relatively nonmodernized societies the armed force organization may be the major historical precedent for a bureaucratic or semibureaucratic experience." Marion J. Levy, *Modernization and the Structure of Societies* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966), Vol. II, pp. 588-9. "The problems of creating coherent political organizations are more difficult but not fundamentally different from those involved in the creation of coherent military organizations." Samuel Huntington, "Political Development and Political Decay," *World Politics*, Vol. 17, No. 3, April, 1965, p. 403-404.

³⁷ "Totalitarian lawfulness, defying legality and pretending to establish the direct reign of justice on earth, executes the law of History or of Nature without translating it into standards of right and wrong for individual behavior. It applies the law directly to mankind without bothering with the behavior of men.... Totalitarian policy claims to transform the human species into an inflexible carrier of a law to which human beings would only passively and reluctantly be subjected." Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Meridian, 1959), p. 462.

³⁸ Lenin, *op. cit.*, "The Immediate Tasks..." p. 241.

Before the Second World War, one can find two areas in which the notion is so employed. The first is in the expression, "colonial development." The term, however, as used by European colonialists was purely pragmatic, containing none of the superhistorical or vaguely ethical overtones that it has both in Marxist theory and in contemporary development theory. It meant, simply, development of resources, i.e., organization of people and equipment in such a way that resources could be extracted at a profit. It was understood that this had nothing to do with improving the welfare of the people who lived in the area where the resources were. Thus in 1939, when the British government was forced to enact a program for the welfare of colonized peoples, it replaced the 1929 Colonial Development Act

ment, by people who knew exactly what they were doing.

A second use of development to indicate a transnational process, not often mentioned in Western development writings, appears in the Stalinist period in the Soviet Union. It has been hard enough for the Bolsheviks to argue that Russia had become sufficiently capitalist that Marxist revolutionary theory could be applied to it; it was quite impossible in the case of the peoples in the Eastern Empire, to describe the industrialization of these indigenous peoples under Soviet rule, the notion of the Non-capitalist Path of Development was formulated. "[T]he idea of the non-capitalist path of development found definite expression in the transition to socialism under the new socialist state of the backward peoples of the Russian Empire (the peoples of Middle Asia, Kazakhstan, the Northern Caucasus, and the European and Asiatic North)."⁴⁰

Here "socialism" is no longer a rebellion against, or a solution to, capitalism; there is no capitalism to which it is a solution to. Moreover, it is no longer an ideal. To say that it is a "path" is to say that it is a means. Development is the end; socialism is a method of achieving it.

Cold War Development : Truman

In 1947, in the conclusion to his now embarrassing *Lenin and the Russian Revolution*, Christopher Hill wrote: "[S]oviet experience in the bringing of modern civilization to backward peoples, and especially the development of the soviet system and collective farms as a means of self-government for agrarian peoples -- this is bound to have enormous influence in Eastern



ITAK SA PUSO NI MANG JUAN
(MACHETE IN THE HEART OF MANG JUAN). *Call a spade a diamond.*

with the Colonial Development and Welfare Act.³⁹ This way of seeing development and welfare as separate questions could be taken as evidence of the impoverished historico-philosophical vision of insensitive British pragmatists. It may also be seen as based on an honest, straight-forward, non-ideological understanding of the true character of develop-

39. H.W. Arndt, "Economic Development: A Semantic History," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, Vol. 29, No. 1, April, 1981, p. 463.

40. "Noncapitalist Path of Development," *The Great Soviet Encyclopedia* (New York and London: Macmillan [A translation of the third edition of *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*, Moscow, 1974]), Vol 17, p. 584.

Europe, Asia, and perhaps ultimately in Africa and South America.⁴¹

Hill did not, of course, think up this idea. It was in the air, and had an extremely important influence on the formulation of the vocabulary of Cold War discourse which was taking place at that time. It formed the specific background against which the United States government became suddenly and unprecedently got interested in "developing" countries other than the U.S. Two years after Hill's book, President Harry S. Truman announced that this was now U.S. government policy, and introduced the newly-coined term "underdevelopment" into public discourse. We must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas.⁴²

Truman's speech was delivered at one of modern history's major turning points. This was the moment at which the U.S. had emerged as a historically unprecedented superpower, inheriting proprietorship over the collapsed Japanese and collapsing European empires. (A proprietorship that could no longer be exercised in the old colonial mode.) And it was the moment of the beginning of the Cold War. And it was a time when the U.S. badly needed outlets for capital investment. Truman's "bold new program" to develop the "underdeveloped countries" brilliantly combined all these elements.

He described the program as a splendid venture "aimed at enabling millions of people to raise themselves from the level of colonialism to self-support and ultimate

prosperity."⁴³ At the same time, it "was consistent with our policies of preventing the expansion of Communism..."⁴⁴ And it was a good way to put to use "some of the capital which had accumulated in the United States. If the investment of capital from the United States could be protected and not confiscated, and if we could persuade the capitalists that they were not working in foreign countries to exploit them but to develop them, it would be to the mutual benefit of everybody concerned."⁴⁵

Hidden in Truman's muddled prose, one can see the basic outlines of the newly emerging ideology of development. Of course, Truman is not seriously proposing that the functioning of capitalism can be changed by persuading capitalists to develop instead of exploit. In fact, he does not say that the



And call exploitation development.

capitalists should do something different; he says that we should stop calling what they do as "exploitation" and start calling it "development." And of course, it is not the capitalists who need to be convinced of this (they know for what purpose they are working for in foreign countries) but the people of those

1. Christopher Hill, *Lenin and the Russian Revolution* (Penguin, 1971 [Orig. The English University Press, 1947]), p. 167. Twenty years later, in a description of the violence that accompanied the industrial revolution in England, Hill permits himself the joke: "It would be nice if it had been otherwise; but even the most liberal historians cannot have their cake without breaking eggs." One wonders how Lenin would have taken the use of the word "even" in this application of his famous remark. Hill, *Reformation to Industrial Revolution* (*The Pelican Economic History of Britain*, Vol. 2: 1530-1780) (Penguin 1969 [Orig. Wadsworth and Nicolson, 1967]), p. 232.

2. Harry S. Truman, "Inaugural Address," 1949, *A Decade of American Foreign Policy* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950) p. 1366.

3. _____, *Memoirs*, Vol. 2: *Years of Trial and Hope* (New York: Doubleday, 1956), p. 232.

4. Hill,

5. Hill, p. 230.

countries, and anti-colonialists in the United Nations and among U.S. citizens. (One wonders if that is not what the sentence originally said, before it was caught by some careful editor.)

In his biography, Truman described the program as "an adventurous idea such as has never been proposed by any country in the history of the world."⁴⁶ This boast should be taken seriously. It does not mean, as we have seen, that Truman and his advisors invented the idea of development as a national project, or were the first to use the term as a transitive verb. But it was with the Point Four Program that "development" took its full post-Second World War definition: a conscious project of the industrial capitalist countries aimed at the total transformation of societies, primarily in the Third World, allegedly directed at curing a malaise called "underdevelopment."

Before Truman's speech, the only thing the dictionaries listed as possibly subject to underdevelopment was camera film. Only after his speech did "development," in the sense of the specific remedy for the disease called "underdevelopment," come to be established as a

The announcement of this new government policy gave birth, in the U.S., to an entire new paradigm for the social sciences, within which such fields as development economics appeared. Millions of dollars from such sources as the Ford Foundation and the U.S. Department of Defense were poured into "modernization" and "development" research. Hundreds and perhaps thousands of books and articles were paid for by this money. Hundreds and perhaps thousands of promising young scholars were brought from Third World countries to the U.S. on fellowships for the purpose of converting them to the new gospel (Truman called experts sent abroad under Point Four, "technical missionaries") and making them into "modernizing elites." In short, just when U.S. social scientists were trumpeting the superiority of their "value-free" methodology, the combination of a government policy decision and big money succeeded in conjuring up an entire new field of social science out of thin air.

The ideology of development has been immensely successful, not in actually raising the poor people of the world to the level of "ultimate prosperity," but in convincing millions that this is what capitalist activities in the Third



FOR SALE: DEVELOPMENT IDEOLOGY. *Development delivers the rhetoric not the goods.*

technical term in the social sciences in the capitalist countries.

World are intended to do. In fact, the expression "development of underdeveloped countries" refers to a set of activities that from

46. *Ibid.*

another value perspective can be described as "neo-colonialism."

Under this ideology was launched the most massive systematic project of human exploitation, and the most massive assault on culture and nature, that history had ever known. It was the extraordinary achievement of development ideology to render the imperialism of the countries and corporations carrying out this project an arguable question. It has enabled development economists to write about all of this without using any of the old vocabulary of colonialism and imperialism, as if the two not only no longer exist but never did, or if both did, did not matter.⁴⁷

Not that the scholars themselves were innocently unaware that they were turning their scholarship to the purposes of capitalist profiteering and government strategy. As one such academic put it,

Internationally known figures have said that competition between the two powerful opposing camps will increasingly shift from the military phase to the economic, and that success will hinge on their ability to develop the underdeveloped areas. It might be remarked, with tongue in cheek, that so much attention has been focused on underdeveloped areas and their problems that social scientists, if they could deliver, will gain increased prestige and status at the expense of the military.⁴⁸



This professor who dreams of winning a medal for his academic heroics is not some Low Intensity Conflict (LIC) theorist of the 1980s. This was written in 1957, which should help us to remember that LIC is neither a new idea, nor a bizarre set of schemes advocated by some group of adventurers at the margins of U.S. policy.

The insight on which LIC is based -- that military activity is more effective when it is sup-

"The concept of development, then, came to its present form in the context of the long dialogue between Marxism and liberalism."

plemented by economic and social activity (technical assistance, development aid, peace corps volunteers, etc.) -- has been the mainstream of U.S. foreign policy since Truman's speech. From the standpoint of U.S. policy, there is no distinction between LIC and development. From the beginning, development has been seen as a form of LIC.

The concept of development, then, came to its present form in the context of the long dialogue between Marxism and liberalism. In the Cold War period, the version put together by Truman and his advisers, backed by U.S. power, was successful in dominating this discourse in most of the world. At the same time, Truman development theory owes a debt to Marxism-Leninism that has never, so far as I know, been properly acknowledged. It is, in effect, a kind of liberal historical materialism, with the same mixture of voluntarism and inevitability (shifting from one to the other as the situation demands), and the same notion of duty-without-responsibility. It is also a kind of economic determinism-made-simple, so that positivist social scientists can understand it: *"[I]n industrializing societies it is the economic*

47. Charles Douglas Lummis, "American Modernization Theory as Ideology," *Kokusai Kankeigaku Kenkyu* (Research in International Relations), Tsuda College, Japan, No. 7, March 1981, pp. 113-129.

48. W. Shannon, "Preface," in Shannon, ed., *Underdeveloped Areas* (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1957), p. x.

variable that is independent. The political system is the dependent variable.⁴⁹

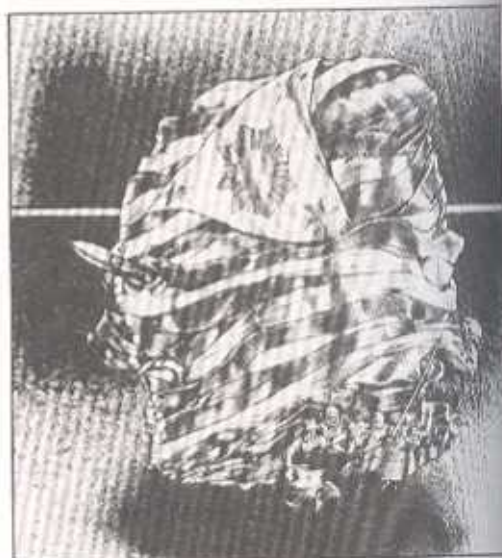
The point is that the "economic variable" is no longer seen here as developing according to its own laws, except in the prefaces to books where the question is dealt with at the metahistorical level. As a practical matter, the "economic variable" is precisely the thing economic development is designed to bring under domination. To abbreviate the story somewhat: economic determinism was set in motion unconsciously by the capitalists, was discovered and analyzed by Marx, and then taken up consciously by capitalism again in the form of economic development theory. The message is now: you control the economy, and you control all.

The next stage in the dialogue was the rebuttal from the Marxist side beginning with Paul Baran's *The Political Economy of Growth* -- the first Marxist work to use "underdevelopment" as a technical term.⁵⁰ Again, in the act of rebutting liberal development we can see a further convergence of the two theories, as now some of the liberal terminology enter the Marxist discourse.

Truman's picture of the world as divided between "developed" and "underdeveloped" countries is the presupposition which produces the shock effect of Andre Gunder Frank's famous paradox, "the development of underdevelopment." It was the very important work of Frank and other dependency theorists to show that U.S. development theory was a fraud. The condition called "underdeveloped" came about not because it was traditional but because of the disfiguring effects of decades or centuries of colonialism and neocolonialism.⁵¹

Thus, development (in this context, industrialization leading to prosperity in the poor countries) could not happen so long as this dependency relationship continued. The

point is well taken, but from the standpoint of development theory itself, it is a kind of an insider critique. The critique, "capitalism can never put an end to underdevelopment" is true and important; the trouble comes with the implied conclusion, "and that is what is wrong with it." And this leads to the next trouble



OUT OF ENVELOPMENT. The pre-ideological meaning of development is the unwrapping and revelation of a form.

implication: "whereas socialism can -- and that is what is good about it."

Liberalism and Marxism are set side by side as middle-level hypotheses within the general paradigm of development economics. The choice between them is no longer a matter of commitment or value, but is pragmatic and empirical, depending on which turns out to serve best as the means to shared economic development. Victory, in short, goes to Harry Truman. And the way is fully prepared for a Marxist economist to state that the criterion for a revolutionary government to use in its choice of land policy is the "optimization" of resource use.

49. David Apter, *The Politics of Modernization* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 460. Emphasis original.

50. Paul A. Baran, *The Political Economy of Growth* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1957.) "Although many of its notions are present in earlier Marxist debates on colonialism and imperialism, Underdevelopment Theory first emerged in the 1950s as a critique of Keynesian and neo-classical approaches to the problems of economic development of post-colonial societies... Its major concepts, formulated by Paul Baran, were later extended by a number of authors, notably Celso Furtado and Andre Gunder Frank." Tom Bottomore, ed., *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 498.

51. Andre Gunder Frank, *Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969).

The Development Metaphor

To understand the particular ideological power of the notion of development it is necessary to take careful note of the fact that it contains a half-hidden metaphor. In its original, non-metaphorical meaning, its opposite was not "decline" or "stagnation," but "development." "Velop" is not a word in English, but the same root appears in the Italian word, *viluppare*, meaning "to enwrap, to bundle, to fold, to roll up." To develop something meant to unfold it or unroll it, to take it out of something in which it was wrapped. In this obsolete usage, one could say, "He developed the contents of the package," meaning he unwrapped the package and took out the contents. The same image can be found hidden in the Italian *sviluppare*, the French *developper*, the Spanish *desarrollo*, the German *entwicklung*.

From this beginning, the word was applied metaphorically to two kinds of situation. First, the growth of living organisms is called development, calling up an image of a form which had been "wrapped up" inside the immature organism (e.g., a seed) being "unwrapped" and revealed. And second, the progression of a story is called development, calling up an image of a meaning hidden in the original situation gradually "unfolding" and becoming evident to the reader or listener. Combining and abstracting from these two processes, development took on a third meaning, that of a certain structure of change. Developmental change is change which takes a given entity through stages, in which a form that is latent in the earlier stage becomes manifest in the later stage. (This means that, at least in the European languages, the distinction that is sometimes made between exogenous and endogenous development is linguistically inappropriate. Strictly speaking, it is incorrect to use development to describe any exogenous change.)

In this still pre-ideological sense, development does not necessarily mean change for the better. That depends on what is developing. Fires and floods develop, enemy attacks develop, and, as the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) carefully reminds us, diseases develop; the example OED offers is influenza.

In the ideology of development, the power of the metaphor is that it gives the impression that the projects being carried out under that ideology are natural, inevitable, and bring about the proper and predestined future of the entity being developed. Development is portrayed as something that will happen by itself as soon as the "obstacles to development" are removed.

In fact, virtually all of the changes that take place under the ideology of development are of an entirely different sort. Villagers are driven out and dams are built; forests are cut down and replaced by plantations; whole cultures are smashed and people are recruited into quite different cultures; the people's local means of subsistence is taken away and the people are placed under the power of the world market. It is incorrect usage to apply the term "development" to the process of knocking down one thing and building something else in its place. Calling such activities "development" conceals the fact that they are human choices, that is, activities which human beings are *free not to do*.



"DEVELOPMENT BARBARIANS". *The height of arrogance and the depth of ignorance of the development discourse is its dismissal of cultures rich in human ways and relations as impoverished.*

This intentional misapplication of the metaphor of development is what gives rise to the semi-mystical notion, found both in liberal and Marxist development theory, that when political and economic leaders use their

power to reorganize the natural and social world for maximum industrial productivity, they are only acting as agents of a vast historical force beyond human power to question or change, and so are not morally responsible for the consequences of doing this.

An additional message hidden inside the development metaphor (though hardly believed any longer by thoughtful people in the overdeveloped countries) is that the industrialization of the economy corresponds in the long run to the development of the human spirit in some Hegelian or providential fashion. Put simply, that economic development is good for people and makes them better. This is a wonderfully satisfying thought for people who live in what are considered to be developed countries, but a slander against those who don't.

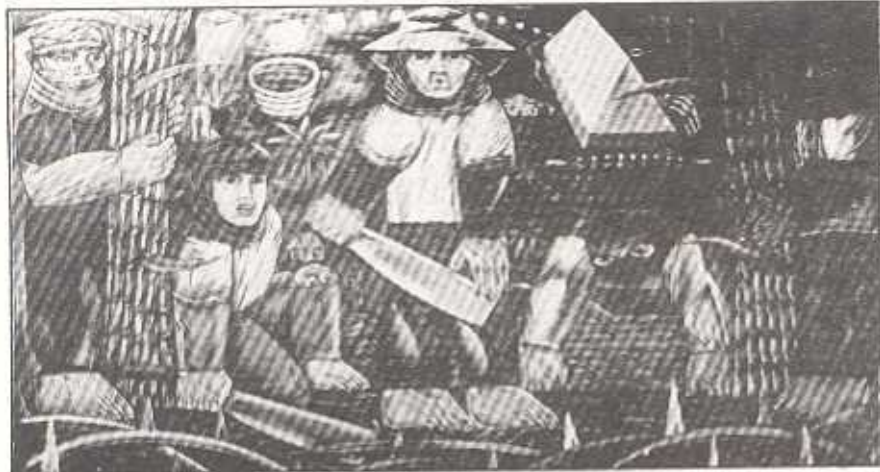
Underdevelopment, on the other hand, is a truly remarkable concept. It succeeds in placing the vast majority of the world's cultures into a single category, the sole characteristic of which is the *absence* of certain characteristics of the industrialized countries. Is it proper social science procedure to describe the absence of an efficient telephone system in, say, the town of Bereku in the Masai Steppe, in the ancient city of Cairo, and in the

Republic of Belau, as a 'common characteristic?'

But this was not the first time that Europe gave a single name to all who did not display some characteristics of European culture. Holders of civilizations other than European had from ancient times been called 'barbarian;' believers in any religion other than Christianity had been called 'pagan;' the original inhabitants of any country that Europeans colonized were called 'natives;' and races any color other than white were called 'colored.'

'Underdeveloped' was only the latest in the long series of labels for 'The Others.' However it was in this form, Gustavo Esteva has argued, that the categorization acquired 'its most virulent colonizing force,'⁵² because the time, millions of people were somehow convinced to accept it as their self-definition. Peoples whose cultures had for millennia taught them that the overt ('disembodied') and unlimited pursuit of material gain was offensive and dishonorable, now began to reject this way of thinking as ignorant and backward: '[O]ur culturally imposed limitation of economic ends has been constantly dis-qualified; it was seen as apathy, conformism, and especially as a serious 'obstacle to development,' characteristic of a 'pre-modern mentality.' We ourselves came to see it like this.⁵³

The development metaphor, teaching people to see themselves as 'obstacles to development,' promotes a colonization of consciousness of the deepest sort, and is profoundly anti-democratic: it 'took away from the hands of people the possibility of defining their own ways of social life.'⁵⁴



TUNOK SA DAHON (THORN IN THE LEAVES). *Most Third World languages did not have a word for development until the developers came?*

52. Gustavo Esteva, "The Archeology of Development: Metaphor, Myth, Threat," Proposal presented before the 11th Conference of the Society for International Development (SID), Rome, July 1-4, 1985 (Typed Manuscript), p. 7.

53. *Ibid.*

54. Esteva, "Cease Aid and Stop Development: An Answer to Hunger," paper presented to the International Seminar of Total Self-Sufficiency, CESTEM-UNESCO, Aug. 6-9, 1985, (Typed Manuscript), p. 11.



PAGSULONG. Development as motion through space with no particular notion of improvement.

Development is Not a Universal Concept

Esteva is from Mexico, a Third World country where a European language is spoken. Development there is *desarollo*, and contains about the same metaphorical and rhetorical baggage as the English word. But most of the languages of the Third World presumably never had a word for development until the developers came. So they had either coin a new word or find some similar word in their language to which this new meaning could be given. How successful are these new words in capturing the overtones and implications of "development," one wonders. I am not qualified to answer this question, but I can report what some native speakers told me while I was in the Philippines.

"Development" is translated into Tagalog (or Filipino) as *pag-unlad* or as the Spanish-derived word *progreso*. It is translated into Ilongo as *pag-uswag* or *asenso*. In Ilocano, it becomes *progreso* if you live in a town or *rang-ay* if you live in a barrio. I asked a native speaker of Ilocano what would be the most ordinary use of the word *rang-ay*. His first answer was that if someone asked you how you are, you might answer, "*Awan ti pinag-*

rang-ay," which means, "No development," and may be close to the English, "Oh, about the same." The implication is that *rang-ay* suggests getting ahead of your fellows in the world, and that this is frowned on, so that to disclaim it for yourself is considered good manners, and is a good way to get along with people in your town.

I asked a native speaker of Ilongo what would be an ordinary use of the word, *pag-uswag*. His first answer was, "When a barrio becomes a town." He said it could also be used to describe a pig or a plant growing to maturity, or a house being built. What these examples

share is that in none of them is something hitherto unknown introduced into the world. From old times there have been towns, and from old times barrios have sometimes become towns, as there is peace, health, and a series of good harvests.

To learn the meaning of the Tagalog (or Filipino) word, I chose the following passage on development written in English by a Filipino scholar.

The intensification of poverty should be analytically dissociated from the advance of the forces of production...it has often been taken as an assumption in the popularized version of political economy that intensifying poverty is the result of "backwardness." If "backwardness" connotes the underdeveloped character of the forces of production, then this line of analysis is inaccurate. The rapid intensification of poverty during the last decade results directly from the *advance* of the monopoly capitalist forces of production. The decisive factor in this development...³⁵

I asked this author what Tagalog word could be used to translate "development" as described in it, and in particular whether *pag-unlad* would work. His first answer was that it would not, and that perhaps no other word in Tagalog would either. His second answer was that perhaps one could use *pagsulong*, which means to advance as down a road. Here the

Alexander R. Magno, "Authoritarianism and Underdevelopment: Notes on the Political Order of a Dependent-Capitalist Filipino Mode," in *Feudalism and Capitalism in the Philippines* (Quezon City, Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1982), pp. 101-102.

figure is of motion through space, with no particular notion of improvement attached to it. His third answer was that you have to make a distinction between the Tagalog of Manila, where it takes the form of the national language Filipino, and the Tagalog of the surrounding countryside, where it takes the form of a local dialect. In the urban language, especially when it is spoken by people who know the English "development," *pag-unlad* could



DOUBLETHINK. Modern buildings plus equally "modern" slums.

be used -- which only means that here *pag-unlad* has taken on the meaning of the English word.

This is by no means a case of Philippine words being sophistically inferior to English. On the contrary, in all cases the Philippine words are clear and precise. *Pag-unlad* means "to prosper." One uses it when things prosper, but not when people are starving or pigs have swine fever. What the Philippine dialects lack is a word which tells one that things are getting better when you can see with your eyes that they are getting worse. In short, they lack the ability for what George Orwell called "doublethink."

Modern Architecture: The Slum

For what else can we call the development metaphor but doublethink? Consider its hyp-

notic power. We stand at the end of what may go down in history as the "Century of Development." If we can tear our gaze away from the fantasies of futurology and look at the real world around us, what we see are unprecedented forms of mass poverty; unprecedented forms of mass killing; unprecedented methods of regimentation; unprecedented pollution, destruction, and uglification of the earth; and unprecedented concentration of wealth and power in the hands of the few.

Knowing all this, and having understood Andre Gunder Frank's paradox, still we refuse to give the idea up, and tell ourselves that all of this must have been some kind of deception, an impostor, a false development, and that surely there must still be a "true development" yet to come.⁵⁶

To demystify the gospel of development, a good starting place is to take the insights of world systems theory seriously -- one degree more seriously than they are usually taken. In discourses on development, one sometimes encounters the assertion that development follows a certain "law of motion." This course is a metaphor drawn from Newtonian physics, but it is never mentioned which of Newton's three laws is being referred to. Frank and Wallerstein are correct that development should be seen as a world-scale phenomenon and not just as a local or national one, then the answer is clear. The law of motion that development has faithfully followed in this century is Newton's Third: "For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction." For everyone who has been enriched, someone has been impoverished. I would be pushing the metaphor too far to insist that the numbers are just the same. In fact, they are not: the impoverished far outnumber the enriched.

When we think of modernization and development, we tend to think of the International Style of the Bauhaus, high steel and glass buildings, quiet-running engines, airports, computers, and so on. We must recog-

56. In *Unequal Development* Samir Amin writes, "Whereas at the center growth means development...in the periphery growth does not mean development" (p. 295). On a different page he writes that the underdeveloped economy is characterized by "...the impossibility, whatever the level of production per head may be attained, of going over to autocentric and autonomous growth" (p. 202). In one formulation growth is unsatisfactory when it doesn't bring "growth." That is, one or the other term is held in reserve to symbolize an imaginary condition where economic development does not somewhere generate mass poverty. Must we conclude that even Amin has stopped short of accepting the full implications of world systems theory? Samir Amin, *Unequal Development* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press).

ize this as a self-deception if we are to truly look at things *scientifically*, and in a world-systems perspective. If development is a worldwide phenomenon, then *everything that it has produced*, and not just those parts that are pleasing to the eye or to the moral sense, must equally be called modern and developed.

"Modern architecture" must be seen as precisely what virtually every majority in the Third World actually has today: steel-and-concrete high-rise buildings *plus* slums built by squatters. For the slums are just as new as the high-rises, or newer. Moreover, they are largely made of modern building materials: plywood, corrugated iron, fiberboard, plastic sheets, cement blocks. Or take Smokey Mountain, Manila's famous garbage dump: anyone who has ever walked over it knows that it is made up of very developed garbage: automobile tires, broken machine parts, rubber sandals, polyester cloth, and lots of plastic bags. (For that matter "garbage" itself is modern; subsistence economies did not produce "garbage.") The work of the thousands of Smokey Mountain squatters, which is mainly collecting these bags, washing them in the river, and selling them to a



DOUBLE. Not poverty against modernization but the modernization of poverty.

company that reprocesses them into paint plastic bags, has become technologically viable only in the last few decades. We could think of it as a sunrise industry, like the outer chip business.

From a world systems perspective, we could never fall into the sentimental error of

talking about "poverty vs. modernization" or "slum vs. development," since this takes our attention away from the very thing that needs to be studied, namely, the modernization of poverty and the development of slums.

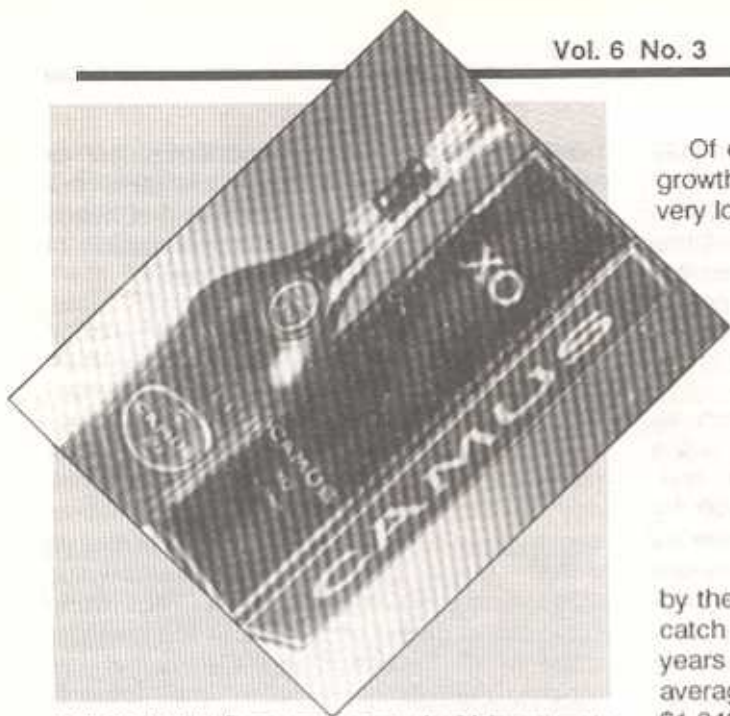
Modernization and development never meant the elimination of poverty, but rather the rationalization of the relationship between the rich and the poor. In this sense, development not only includes the development of poverty, but the development of the technology of management and oppression necessary to keep people in their position of relative poverty, quietly generating the surplus value that keeps the rich people rich. Thus world scale development also includes the development of the police state, the martial law regime, the company union, the strategic hamlet, scientific management, thought control, high-technology torture, the international network of the Central Intelligence Agency -- the list is as long as the history of the twentieth century.

Why Development is a Losing Strategy

For democrats then, to place their hopes on development, or to think of democracy as an eventual outcome of development, is to adopt a losing strategy. It is to embrace a strategy that has already lost, one that has from the outset abandoned the vocabulary in which victory could be conceived or expressed.

Democracy is a political state, which can only be conceived in political language, and can only be achieved through political struggle. You cannot talk your way to democracy in the language of development economics: "liberty" and "justice" do not exist as technical terms in economic science. And you cannot ride to democracy on the back of development. Development is not going there, and anyway, to get to democracy you have to walk.

It is a losing strategy because "genuine development" dreamed of by good-hearted democratic developers will never happen. When Harry Truman promised all the peoples of the world "ultimate prosperity" he meant, and everybody understood him to mean, life at the consumption levels of the U.S. middle class at least. This is a hopeless illusion. A second illusion is the notion that economic



OUT OF REACH. Poor countries cannot be rich in a system that runs on their marginalization.

development can eventually bring the peoples of the world to a rough economic equality -- that the poor countries can "catch up." That these illusions still exist is a measure of how far we are from grasping the nature of the situation in which we find ourselves at the close of the twentieth century. It is worth mentioning some of the more obvious reasons why neither of these illusions can ever become reality.

Development Equality as a Statistical Absurdity

First, consider the gross statistics. According to the World Bank's 1988 World Development Report, the per capita GNP for what it calls Industrial Market Economies (i.e., the twenty richest capitalist countries) was US\$12,960 for 1986, with an average annual growth rate (1965-1986) of 2.3 percent. A simple calculation gives a yearly increase in per capita income of \$298.08.

The average per capita income for the poorest thirty-three countries was \$270, with a growth rate of 3.1 percent. The same calculation gives a one-year increase in per capita income of \$8.37.

For these countries to equal the \$298.08 increase in the per capita income of the rich countries, per capita income would require an annual growth rate of 110.4 percent.

Of course, if the poor countries maintain a growth rate higher than the rich countries for a very long time, theoretically they can eventually catch up. How long would they take?

Supposing the average growth figures in the World Development Report to remain unchanged, we can calculate that the poor countries will achieve the 1986 income level of the rich countries in 127 years. But of course like the harefooted Achilles, the rich countries will have become richer by then, so the poor countries will not actually catch up with them for half a millenium, 497 years to be exact. At that time, the world average per capita income will be \$1,049,000,000.

If we assume the impossible, a sustained growth rate for all the poor countries of 5 percent, we can calculate that they will catch up in 149 years, at an average world per capita income of just under \$400,000 per year.

But in fact, the growth rate for these countries excluding India and China (it is mainly China's reported growth rate of 5 percent and vast population that skews the figures) is 0.5 percent. At this rate, they will never catch up. And twelve of these countries have "negative growth rates."

Development Equality as a Structural Impossibility

These simple figures should help us avoid being unnecessarily surprised when we hear that after all the efforts that have gone into "development," the gap between the rich and poor countries continues to widen. But at the same time the figures are fanciful and misleading, in that they are not rooted in the reality of the economic system.

That is, the World Development Report depicts the world as a collection of separate national economies, rather than as a single world economic system. The world economic system does not produce inequality accidentally, but generates it systematically. It operates to transfer wealth from poor countries to rich countries. A big part of the "economic development," i.e., the wealth of the rich countries is wealth imported from the

poor countries. From where could wealth be extracted to create the same condition for all?

The world economic system *generates* inequality and it *runs* on inequality. Just as the internal combustion engine is propelled by the difference in pressure above and below the piston, the world economy is propelled by the difference between the rich and the poor. So when we can fantasize statistics like a 5 percent growth rate for the poor and a 2.3 percent growth rate for the rich, we will not (under the rules of this game) see them in reality. It's like supposing a 5 percent growth rate for the winnings of the customers in a casino, with the house take remaining the same. The system is not built to do that.

Any doubt remains we can refer to the authority of the former president of the World Bank, who in his celebrated speech to the Bank's Board of Governors in 1973 said that the rich to oppose development is shortsighted, of course, for in the long term they, as well as the poor, can benefit.⁵⁷ We can be sure that any development that makes the poor a little better off will make the rich a little better off.

Ultimate Prosperity as an Ecological Impossibility

It is not only the world economic system that will not allow "ultimate prosperity" for all; the earth itself will not sustain it. It is not clear whether the earth will be able to sustain even the minority rich living at the consumption levels they do today.

For example, it has been estimated that for the world population to live at the present per capita energy consumption of the people of Los Angeles, five earths would be required. The statistic is dubious, but give or take a few earths either way, it amounts to the same thing. It cannot happen, it will not happen and we should stop talking as if it will.⁵⁸

The *myth* that it will is of course "functional": it is fuel for the great engine that drives development forward; it is the spectacle that enraptures and transfixes the world's peoples,

drawing their attention from the real inequality generated by the world economy; it legitimizes the vast development industry and keeps many good-hearted people in it along with the development carpetbaggers. But the fact remains that in this or any other economic system, the consumption levels of the rich, if extended to all, would consume the world.

Why We Cannot All Be Rich

Development is a losing strategy for democrats because the sort of enrichment which it holds out as bait is impossible to share equally, and in fact has a positive principle of inequality structurally within it. What, after all, is "rich"?

The OED tells us that before it became an economic word, "rich" was political. It comes from the Latin *rex*, "king," and its oldest English definition, now obsolete, was "powerful, mighty, exalted, noble, great." Another obsolete form of the word is "riche," which meant "A kingdom, realm, royal domain," and is cousin to the German *Reich*. Originally to be



BEAT THE BAIT. *The myth of future prosperity lures the hungry and legitimizes the onslaught of the development army.*

rich meant to have power of the sort a king has, that is, power over other people. This is the kind of power you can have only when

⁵⁷ Robert S. McNamara, "Address to the Board of Governors," Nairobi, Kenya, September 24, 1973.

⁵⁸ And it is important to remember that this consumption level has not produced economic equality, or eliminated poverty, in that city. There are fabulously rich and desperately poor people in Los Angeles.

other people do not: where there are no subjects, there is no king. Only later was the word specialized to mean the particular kind of power you have over people by having more money than they do.

Being rich does not mean controlling wealth, but controlling people through wealth. Or rather, the very "wealthiness" of this form of wealth is its capacity to control people. The value of money is not, after all, some magical property, but what economists call its "purchasing power."⁵⁹ The point was made incisively a century ago by John Ruskin:

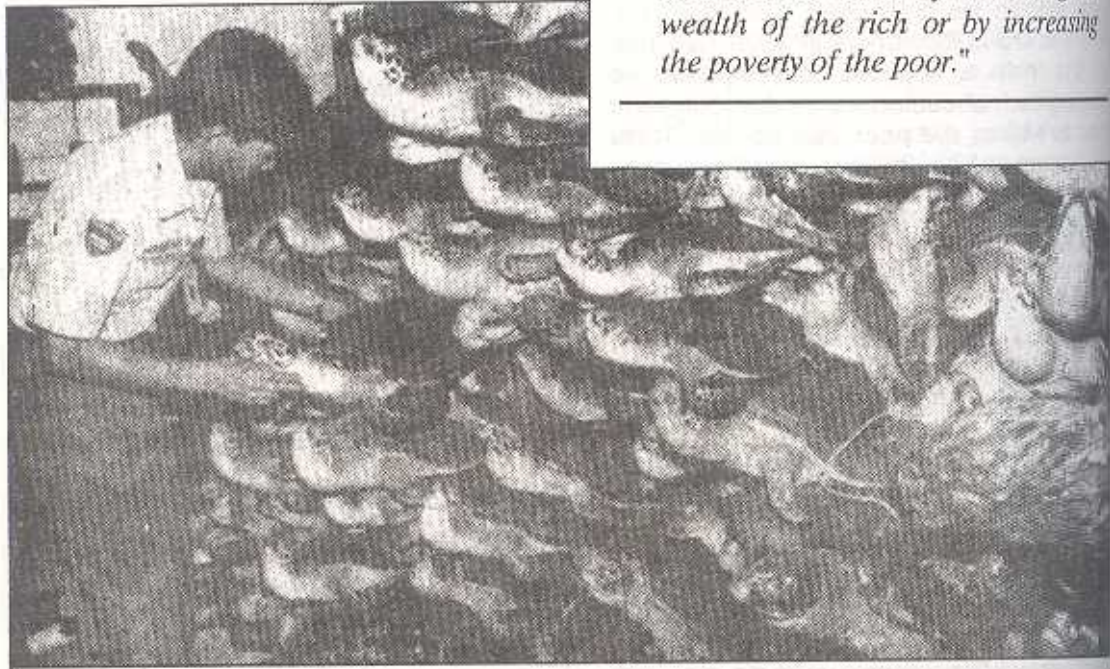
...I observe that men of business rarely know the meaning of the word "rich." At least, if they know, they do not in their reasonings allow for the fact, that it is a relative word, implying its opposite "poor" as positively as the word "north" implies the word "south." Men nearly always speak and write as if riches were ab-

power it possesses depends accurately upon the need or desire he has for it -- and the art of making yourself rich is therefore equally and necessarily the art of keeping your neighbor poor.

We think a person rich when he has enough purchasing power to control the labor of a large number of other people. This can take the form of directly hiring workers and servants, or of arranging through the "service" industry to have other people do your work for you. We think a country rich when it has enough purchasing power to have a portion of its work done in other countries by "cheap labor."

As Ruskin pointed out, this kind of purchas-

"This kind of purchasing power can be increased either by increasing the wealth of the rich or by increasing the poverty of the poor."



ECOLOGICAL TRAGEDY. Hundreds of stuffed pawikan (*giant tortoises*) confiscated from novelty shops that sell them for up to \$20,000 (\$720). The obsession to get ahead in the world drives many to destroy that very world.

solute, and it was possible, by following certain scientific precepts, for everybody to be rich. Whereas riches are a power like that of electricity, acting only through the inequalities or negations of itself. The force of a guinea in your pocket depends wholly on the default of a guinea in your neighbor's pocket. If he did not want it, it would be of no use to you; the degree of the

ing power can be increased either by increasing the wealth of the rich or by increasing the poverty of the poor. Increasing the purchasing power of everyone increases the purchasing power of no one; this is not enrichment, but

59. Many "economic" terms originally had non-economic meanings indicating naked power relations that are now hidden in the "free contract" mythology of economics. "Purchase" (Latin *pro capiare*, to catch, hunt, chase) originally meant "seizing or taking forcibly or with violence; pillage, plunder, robbery, capture." "Finance" meant "A payment for release from captivity or imprisonment." "Pay" is from the Latin *pacere*, to appease, pacify, reduce to peace (Source: *Oxford English Dictionary*).

60. John Ruskin, *Unto This Last* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1967; orig. pub. 1860), p. 30.

tion. So the old saying, "The rich get richer and the poor get poorer," is not some kind of ironic paradox, but an economic law as trim and tidy as Newton's Third Law of Motion: the rich get richer when the poor get poorer, and vice versa.

Economic development mythology is fraud in that it pretends to offer to *all* a kind of affluence that presupposes the relative poverty of *some*. Movies, television, and advertising originating in the overdeveloped countries idealize the lives of people who do less than their share of the world's work (because others do more), who consume more than their share of the world's goods (so that others must do with less), and whose lives are made pleasant and enjoyable by an army of servants and slaves (directly or indirectly employed). If the economy is structured as a pyramid, it is understandable that everyone would want to stand on top. But there is no top that can be arranged. With everyone on top, there is no pyramid, and no top.⁶¹

Thus *a priori* inequality is also inherent in the temporary consumption. As we were told a century ago by Thorstein Veblen, much of the consumption that we associate with affluence is "conspicuous consumption," a specific pleasure derived from knowing there are others who cannot afford it. Nor is conspicuous consumption limited to the establishment of a mental association between a product and upper class living is how essential goods are sold to the poor -- as an advertising agency knows. Nor is it unknown in poor countries: the implantation of a desire for conspicuous consumption is a part of what modernization theorists have called the "revolution of rising expectations." In 1988, on Quezon Avenue in Metro Manila there was a huge, gross billboard advertising "Richgirl bras and girdles." The brand



CUTTING DOWN THE FUTURE. Some 10,000 board feet of illegally cut logs seized in the province of Rizal. Seventy percent of the country's cut logs is exported to the First World. Environmentalists warn that without a total logging ban, the Philippines' virgin rainforest would disappear in twelve years.

tells it all: how else do you convince people in tropical countries to buy girdles?

By implanting in people the longing for elite status, and by convincing them that bits and pieces of that status are infused in various consumer goods, the salesmen hope to guarantee infinite consumer demand, and keep the development squirrel mill turning forever. Veblen's words take on an added significance today, when we know that endless growth can only lead to ecocatastrophe: "If...the incentive to accumulation were the want of subsistence or physical comfort, then the aggregate economic wants of a community might conceivably be satisfied at some point...; but since the struggle is substantially a race for reputability on the basis of an invidious comparison, no approach to a definitive statement is possible."⁶²

It is by a relentless logic, then, that socialist countries aspiring to achieve the standard of living of the overdeveloped capitalist countries

Aristotle's *Politics* (1253b-1254a) there is a famous passage in which the philosopher toys with the idea that perhaps slavery could be abolished if tools could be made to work by themselves, like the mythical statues of Daedalus. (Liberation through automation is a very old dream.) He quickly dismisses the idea, however, pointing out that tools are instruments of production (*poiesis*), whereas slaves, like garments and beds, are instruments of action (*praxis*). Aristotle is reminding us of the mythology that the particular good attached to being served by others is being served by others. The master wears his clothes like garments, he walks around in them like shoes, he lies in them like a bed. They are not replaceable by moving things, for without them the master is no master. So for the rich today, there is no way the attention of a top-class waiter (for example) can be replaced by the efficiency of a cafeteria or an automat.

Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (Mentor, 1953), p. 39.

break up into class structures in the process. That standard of living has class built into it. It is, as American slang accurately tells us, "classy."

The Modernization of Poverty

Economists say there are two types of poverty, absolute and relative. But the phenomenon can be further subdivided. Here I will suggest that at least four distinct types of poverty can be differentiated.

First there is absolute, material poverty: you are poor when you don't have enough food, shelter, clothing, and medicine to maintain healthy life. This is the way poverty is usually depicted, and needs no elaboration.

Second, there is the situation where people are called poor by outsiders, but do not consider themselves to be so. A subsistence economy may appear impoverished to people from a different culture, but may provide everything the people in it want or need, according to the standards of their own culture. Here it is important not to fall into the temptation of laying down a universal principle as to whether such outside judgments are always right or always wrong.

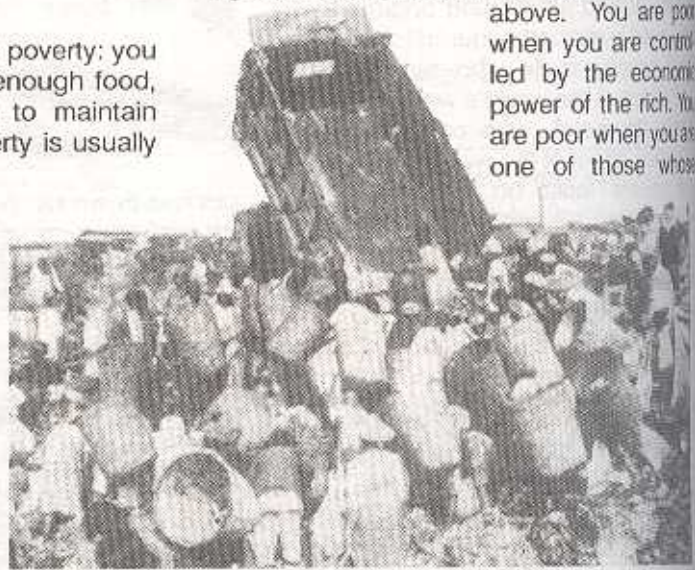
The extreme cultural relativist position, that such outside judgments are always improper, may be logically flawless in the abstract, but is impossible to maintain in all concrete cases. People sometimes resign themselves to terrible situations and abolish from their cultures the language of criticism or protest. The fact that a culture may be arranged to accept chronic war or hunger or brutal suppression as fated does not mean that the pain is not felt and the human spirit is not maimed. On the other hand, there are cases where the outside judgment is clearly absurd, as when indigenous peoples, for example, are declared impoverished by the absence of girdles, leather shoes, concrete buildings, street lights, or the like.

How can the validity of such outside judgments be determined? Only through a dialogue between the peoples of the different

cultures on the basis of an equality and human respect that has been made almost impossible by the history of Western colonialism, chauvinism, and racism.

Third, there is social poverty. This is a relative poverty, but I do not mean here simply poverty as possessing less wealth than others, as measured by some absolute standard (e.g. money income). I mean poverty as an economic and social *relation*, corresponding to the phenomenon of "rich" as described

above. You are poor when you are controlled by the economic power of the rich. You are poor when you are one of those whose



ABSOLUTE POVERTY. *A poverty that needs no elaboration.*

poverty generates the rich people's richness, whose labor generates their leisure, whose humiliation generates their pride, whose dependency generates their autonomy, whose namelessness generates their "good names." You are socially poor when you are organized as poor in the economic system.

A fourth kind of poverty is that produced by what Ivan Illich has called "radical monopolies." This occurs when people are impoverished of things which they had never needed or wanted until they were invented. Somebody invents the refrigerator, or the automobile, and succeeds in having it established as a minimum condition for ordinary living. This is not a case of meeting an existing need, but of restructuring a society so as to establish a need where there had been none before. Now the people who cannot buy these things, including those who had never before dreamed of owning them, are to that degree impoverished.

Through this process, people whose absolute standard of living does not change are driven deeper and deeper into poverty. Changes that occur in distant places and for which they have no control. It is easy to see the deeply anti-democratic nature of this process. And it is also easy to see that this kind of poverty is not reduced by industrial development, but generated by it, and perpetuated by it endlessly. Development does not bring people "freedom from want;" rather, it operates to keep people in a state of perpetual domination by the rich.

Absolute poverty is not eliminated, but where it exists...



ORGANIZED POVERTY. Organized as poor in the economic system.

by itself -- where all are equally poor -- it is not. Only poverty as a social relation raises the question of justice and therefore becomes a political matter, a proper subject for reform and revolution. We often hear from development economists that the poor do not care about social poverty but only about material deprivation. ("The poor are not interested in politics and ideologies, what they want are roofs over their heads and food and clothing for themselves and their children.") This is a cruel slander against the poor, made by their self-appointed middle class spokesmen. It is true that when you are poor you will sometimes accept terrible humiliation to feed yourself and your family, but this is not because you don't care about humiliation. Although they are often

forced to conceal it from the people on whom they are economically dependent, poor people care very much about their pride, and also about justice and decency in human relations. Surely they care more about these things than the rich do.

Speaking roughly and taken on the whole, we can say that what "economic development" has done (not in some hypothetical future, but in real times and places up to now) is to transform the second kind of poverty into the third and fourth -- while greatly increasing the number of people in absolute poverty in the world.

Of course, one cannot make a generalization that works everywhere: the situation was very different in different places before the developers came. Where there had been subsistence economies, one could say that development transformed austerity into social poverty. Where there had been class-based traditional societies, economic development transformed one kind of social poverty into another.

In all cases, what economic development did was to shatter whatever economic system had been there and to recruit the resulting development refugees into the world economic system mainly as organized poor -- organized in the sense of being under the increasingly systematic, rationalized control of the rich. This is what is meant by "the modernization of poverty."

The Political Substructure for Prosperity: Commonwealth

Economic development is an anti-democratic force. In its capitalist form it generates, and must generate, economic inequality.⁶³ In its socialist form, it is economically egalitarian in theory (though not in practice), but it produces the inequalities inherent in a command economy. Again, "economic

The appearance of the so-called Newly Industrialized Economies (NIEs) does not refute this generalization, any more than the rise of Andrew Carnegie from rags to riches proved the wealth of the proletariat in the 19th century. The question here is not whether individuals or groups of people can get rich in this system (of course they can) but whether social poverty can be abolished in it. And today as we hear that the NIEs are subcontracting work to and importing guest workers from poor countries, we can see that their economic rise is business-as-usual.



BUKAS ANG WELGA (TOMORROW IS THE STRIKE). *A democratic struggle is possible at any technological level.*

development" does not mean any form of growing prosperity, but refers to the expansion of a particular political economic organization. Economic development means mobilizing more and more people into hierarchical organizations where their work is disciplined under the rule of maximum efficiency. And it means mobilizing more and more people as consumers, that is, people whose livelihood is dependent on the things produced by those big organizations. Both trends are anti-democratic. So even in a society with a "democratic" constitution, elections, free speech, and guaranteed human rights, economic development places a kind of anti-democratic black hole at the center of each person's life.

To say this is different from taking a stand "against" economic development, a reader may want to protest: "But look at all the good things economic development has brought us! Why, think of the automobile, the airplane, the washing machine, the wireless telephone ... everyone knows the list." The objection is irrelevant. It would be nice if the various good things in the world came all connected together, but they don't.

The goods of economic development are what they are. The good of a washing machine is that it washes clothes. Whether its manufacture by mass production tends to generate democratic workplaces is a separate question. The argument that economic development is anti-democratic is present

here as a fact, not as a value position. Knowing this fact, one may make a choice. It is possible to choose economic development over democracy. This is precisely what scientific managers, technocrats, development economists, and development dictators are doing all over the world.

But suppose we opt for democracy; does this mean that we have to abandon all the good things development has brought? If democracy means we must "go back" to the pre-industrial form of society, would not this not only mean an economic catastrophe, but the collapse of the whole world in which our lives are imbedded, and to which we have become accustomed?

This question is also beside the point. Democracy is not a level of economic or technological development, either past or future. It is a way in which people order their lives together, through discussion and common action, on the principles of justice and equality. There is no democracy where people desire it, struggle for it, and win the struggle. People are free to open a democratic struggle in any economic system, at any technological "level."

In fact, this is exactly what is happening all over the world today. How to democratize any particular anti-democratic organization -- a kingdom in south Asia, a communist country in East Europe, a banana plantation in the Third World, a multinational corporation in a capitalist country -- is a question that can be answered in concrete form only through the process of an actual democratic struggle within each such organization.

In this sense, radical democracy is different from utopianism. It

does not seek to impose a preconceived model; such imposition always turn out to be anti-democratic, however "democratic" the model itself maybe. It means the beginning of a struggle on democratic principles, a process from which new forms of organization emerge. Such a struggle can be started in any organization, at any economic or technological level.

Radical democracy does, however, require a concept of wealth other than the condition of being "rich." Richness, as described above, is undemocratic in its nature, and the desire for it is an undemocratic desire. Richness means, exactly, economic power over other people. But there are other forms of wealth, which can be shared in common. And these forms of wealth are not purely economic, but have an important political aspect.

The expression "commonwealth" is a translation into English of the Latin *res publica*, public thing, i.e., republic. The existence of common wealth in a society is not something achieved by economic development but by the political ordering of that society. This idea has been known to most of the world's peoples, including -- perhaps especially -- those with subsistence economies. And the idea is known even in the most fiercely competitive capitalist societies. Common wealth

may take its physical expression in such things as public roads, bridges, libraries, parks, schools, churches, temples, or works of art that enrich the lives of all. It may take the form of "commons:" shared agricultural land, forests, or fisheries. It may take the form of shared ceremonies, feast days, festivals, dances, public entertainments.

The development ideology,



"WEALTHY BUT NOT RICH." Radical democracy is in search of a concept of wealth different from the condition of being rich.



placing the whole world under a single yardstick so that all forms of community life but one are devalued as underdeveloped, unequal, and wretched has made us sociologically blind. By eliminating this stupefying category from our minds, we should be able to look at the world and see not just two possibilities -- development or its absence -- but a multiplicity of actual and possible ways of ordering communities.

This ability to see a plurality of values is also in accord with the democratic spirit. Rediscovering the values in these communities does not mean discovering a value in being "poor," but seeing that many of the things that have been called "poor" were, in fact, different forms of prosperity. "Prosper" (Latin *pro sperere*) originally means "according to hope." How and when a people prospers depends on what they hope, and prosperity becomes a strictly economic term only when we abandon or destroy all hopes but the economic one.

If wealth is economic surplus, different communities may make different choices as to what form that surplus is to take. Surplus can be turned toward private consumption or public works. It can take the form of reducing work time and setting aside surplus leisure time for art, learning, festivals, ceremonies, sport, or simple play. These are not inevitabilities determined by "iron laws," but political choices, if, by political, we mean the fundamental decision-making process in a community as to how its work is to be shared and its goods distributed.

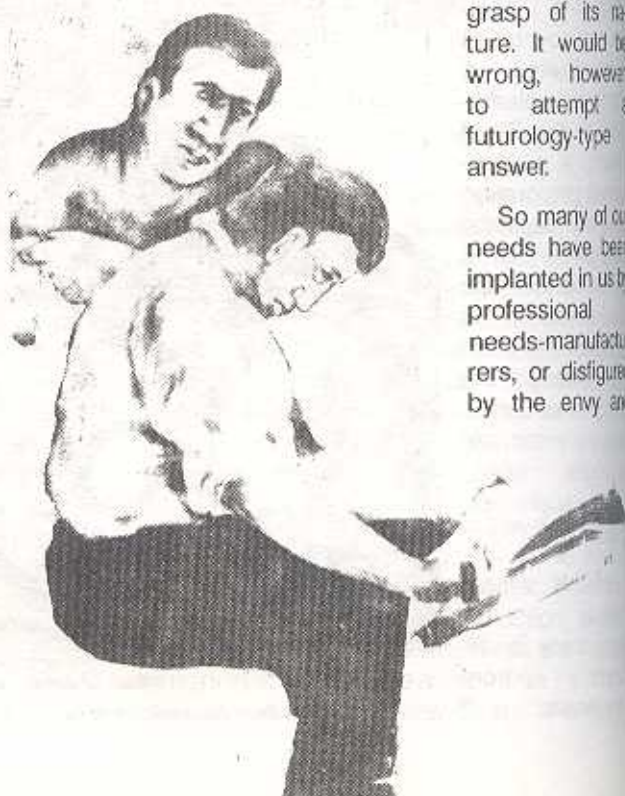
And if the rule of just distribution is to give to each his or her own due, we also need to understand that there are communities in the world which have organized themselves so as to give the land its due, the forest its due, the fishes, birds, and animals their due. These communities, defined by development economics as at the absolute extremity of poverty, actually maintain in this way a vast "surplus" -- the great common wealth

that is the natural environment in which they live. A marriage of the ancient idea of *commonwealth* with our presently emerging (or reemerging) understanding of environment could give birth to a promising new notion of what the "wealth" of this planet really is.

We may ask, what would happen if economic development if genuine peace and democracy were established in the world? This is a notion perfectly accessible to common sense. But at the same time, paradoxically, it is almost unimaginable. What would it really be like in a world where each society was free from the danger of military or economic invasion? A world where the rich-poor relationship had been abolished? Where there had been a successful consciousness-decolonizing cultural revolution, so that the spectre of "western capitalist middle class life" no longer held the world in its spell, and the pride and integrity of all the world's peoples were firmly grounded in their own cultures? Where both local and international society were founded on trust, and we were no longer afraid of each other?

The point of asking these questions is not to suggest that these conditions are easy to attain, but only to perform a mental experiment. By asking what would happen if economic development in such a world we can get a clearer grasp of its nature. It would be wrong, however, to attempt a futurology-type answer.

So many of our needs have been implanted in us by professional needs-manufacturers, or disfigured by the envy and



helpfulness of class society, or by the desire for enough power to protect ourselves from or revenge ourselves against our enemies, that it is difficult to know what would remain were these extraneous factors removed.

Hobbes is right that our desire for "power over power, ending only in death," is grounded in our fear of our neighbors, what would happen to that desire if the fear were removed? Without the unnatural factors disfiguring economic activity, we can suppose it would return to its natural form. There is no reason this should mean that we would be thrown back into some dark age of abject poverty. It means simply that we would be free to decide for ourselves what we need and what we want, balanced against how much work we want to do and how much leisure time we want to have. What is extraordinary is how far this common sense image of democracy is from the "common sense" of our time.

"To say that economic development is anti-democratic is to say that it is a political problem, and admits only a political solution."

In such a "natural economy" (ironically, Lenin's term) we can suppose that people could still have needs -- if "needs" continued to be the proper word -- and also wants, including wants for such "useless" things as toys, pretty clothes, music, pleasant rooms, and decorations for their hair. But this is not the kind of thing that should be decided in advance, or which ruling parties should decide for the people by imposition of sumptuary laws (e.g. banning of certain types of clothing or music) as we have seen in some socialist or democratic countries.

The sorting out of our true needs from those that are the maimed consequences of the fear and envy of class society is something that would happen slowly and naturally in a society that is genuinely just, egalitarian, and safe. Quite probably after this process of "counterdevelopment" had continued long enough, "prosperity" would turn out to mean



something quite similar to what *pag-unlad* once meant to the Tagalog people of the Philippines.

It may be worth noting that this amounts to claiming that Marx needs to be turned on his head, making politics again the "substructure" (Aristotle's *master science*) and economic-technological activity the "superstructure." (This does not necessarily mean that Marx was wrong in his time to turn Hegel on his head; perhaps a theory is like an hourglass, that must be periodically turned on its head to keep it running.)

To say that economic development is anti-democratic is to say that it is a political problem, and admits only a political solution. The economic disfigurement of the world is generated by economic activity within a disfigured political-economic structure. It cannot be remedied by further economic activity

within that structure, but only by the radical democratization of that structure. On the basis of a radically democratized political-economic substructure, economic activity (production, exchange, and consumption) would take on an entirely different character. Shall we call this "the withering away of development?"

