

Showcases – because of the language used, style and design – has a limited outreach. The middle class will benefit by this book. But it is unfortunate if the findings and conclusions of this study will remain available only to those who can read English and have the patience to read this type of book. The urgent need is to find ways to bring these findings to the grassroots level through populist-oriented materials.

Across the front cover of the book is emblazoned the words: VOLUME 1. The reader is made to understand that VOLUME 2 is coming out in the future. One hopes that its content will further deepen our understanding of the reason why Mindanao's promise remains unfulfilled. One looks forward to viewing showcases of the other resources in this region. One hopes there will be more photographs and artwork, as well as more creative graphics for the charts and maps. And may the birthing of VOLUME 2 occur as scheduled.

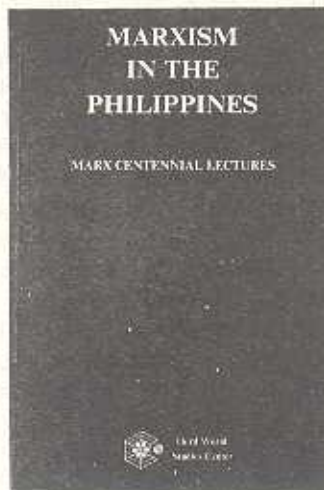
Meanwhile we take **Showcases** into our hearts and minds.

BOOK REVIEW

Through the Eyes of the Left

by Alexander R. Magno

Marxism in the Philippines – Marx Centennial Lectures. Edited and published by the Third World Studies Center. 1984. 242 pp.



It has been fashionable to caricature Marxist intellectuals as a quarrelsome lot. And although the caricaturists have often been guided by nothing more earthshaking than plain ignorance, the caricature itself is not entirely without basis. It was Marx himself who, after all, exhorted his readers to engage in a "ruthless criticism of everything existing" – the analytical method guiding the critical disposition not to be, itself, spared the scalpel of analytical practice.

There is an insidious irony plaguing the entire sphere of academic social science. All the major social theoreticians lionized by bourgeois academics were either directly or indirectly reacting to the categories and concepts advanced by Marx. The elitist theories of Pareto and Mosca sought to confront the Marxist theory of social classes. Max Weber sought to construct an alternative explanation for the historical emergence of capitalism different from that outlined by Marx. Karl Popper sought to invalidate the Marxist theory of knowledge. The ideas of Robert Michels, Emile Durkheim and Karl Mannheim have been described by an authoritative scholar of intellectual history as a "debate with Marx's ghost". Pluralist political theory attempts to sidestep the Marxist assertion that

the apparatuses of State power serve, in the last analysis, to mediate the hegemony of the ruling class. Daniel Bell, among other proponents of the "behavioral revolution", proclaimed the "end of ideology" and contested the Marxist assertion that all forms of knowledge in class-divided societies are ideological by virtue of their being drawn into the arena of the class struggle. The economic ideas of Alfred Marshall and John Maynard Keynes are conscious efforts to refute the compelling assertions of Marxist political economy, particularly those concerning the invariable tendency of capitalist societies to move from one crisis to the next graver one.

Yet, in spite of the above, the bourgeois academic community has conspired to maintain a cultivated ignorance of Marxist theory, dismissing it simply as "unscientific" and "ideological" – in the process suggesting that bourgeois theories possess the opposite characteristics.

The political tensions and intellectual stringencies of the Cold War did much to constrain the critical dynamism of the Marxist theoretical perspective. In the established socialist states, Marxist theory tended to become a schematic and formalized world view affirmative of the status quo. It became the state ideology and creative inquiries into its theoretical composition and analytical application that did not echo official tenets were perceived as threatening the legitimacy of the political establishment and weakening the unanimity that was equated with its political capability to withstand "imperialist aggression". These questionings were condemned as "revisionism". Numerous Marxist theoreticians of great significance in Eastern Europe, such as Georg Lukacs, were either suppressed or forced to retract.

In the capitalist states, Marxist analysis was perceived as subverting the capitalist status quo and thus strengthening Soviet influence. Marxist intellectuals were therefore treated as witting or unwitting "Soviet agents" and their intellectual activity taken as a form of political subversion. The ideological paranoia of hysterical anti-communism was most severe in the United States where policy and opinion-makers assigned American society the vanguard role in the salvation of the "free world". This ideological paranoia spread throughout the American sphere of influence where client regimes hunted and persecuted Marxist intellectuals with great severity and colonial academics glorified the most mediocre American theoreticians while assiduously ignoring the major conceptual breakthroughs in the Marxist tradition.

It is not coincidental that the major theoretical progressions and analytical refinements in the Marxist tradition were done mostly by intellectuals in countries like France and India most insulated from the degenerative dynamics of Cold War politics. Similarly, major contributions were made by theoreticians from the socialist state who chose to defy orthodoxy in spite of great political inconvenience. In the Third World where social contradictions were sharpest and repression greatest, Marxist theorizing tended to be concentrated in the hands of practical revolutionaries who, because they had chosen to engage in direct revolutionary intervention, were beyond the constraints imposed by the establishment. Their ideas, although undoubtedly rich in insight and benefitted by great experience, tended, however, to be focused in the immediacies of revolutionary struggle.

In the Philippines, as in most of the Third World, popular interest in, and access to, the rich categories of analytical instruments of the Marxist theoretical tradition have been mediated by state repression spearheaded by military and police hierarchies trained by American Cold War ideologues. A culture of misinterpretation regarding the content and quality of Marxist analysis has been sustained by such Cold War publications as the *Reader's Digest* and by the incessant

campaigns of right-wing clerics led by the fascist-inclined Opus Dei. Persecution of progressive, including non-Marxist intellectuals was given official sanction in the fifties with the formation of the Congressional Committee on Un-Filipino Activities (CUFA). Chaired by Leonardo Perez, the CUFA was a carbon copy of the US Congress' Committee on Anti-American Activities headed by the witchhunting Senator McCarthy. The present political dispensation has anti-communism as one of its ideological *raison d'être* and top government ministers who have obviously not read a single Marxist text find the temerity to preach the evils of Marxism.

In spite of the fact that Marxist ideas have been attracting Filipino intellectuals since the turn of the century and that a left-inclined working class movement developed in the first decades of the American colonial rule, Marxist scholarship has been meager. This is due primarily to state repression and conservative reaction against Marxism. However, the immediate factor responsible for the paucity of left-wing scholarship is the fact that a large number of Filipino academics were trained in the United States at a time when the intellectual climate was rendered barren by McCarthyite witchhunting.

In commemoration of the one hundredth death anniversary of Karl Marx, the Third World Studies Center of the UP sponsored the Karl Marx Centennial Lecture Series. The five lectures delivered at various times in 1983 have been compiled into a volume titled *Marxism in the Philippines* along with the transcripts of the open fora that followed each lecture.

The introductory essay by editor Randolph S. David quite aptly situates the lectures in their academic context:

The lectures were launched against a background of uninformed hostility to and fear of Marxist ideas, on one hand, and a general awakening of interest in Marxism as a consequence of the ongoing political ferment in our society, on the other.

While Marxism constitutes the core of the national ideology of a large segment of humanity . . . Marxist writings have remained taboo in many other countries. In these places, Marxist ideas are dismissed as "unscientific", "unscholarly", and "ideological", and therefore, unworthy of being taken seriously by academics. Even in those universities where Marxism is taught, Marx is safely relegated to obscure courses in the history of ideas or sociological theory, while relatively inferior minds like those of Talcott Parsons, Samuel Huntington or Paul Samuelson are virtually apotheosized and placed in a commanding position in the major social science disciplines. . .

Today, so much ideological nonsense masquerading as science and systematic theory fills university lecture halls. Much of it is simply immune from falsifiability because of its complete detachment from objective reality. We encounter it in the countless pompous models conjured and made to stand for reality by so-called social scientists. In actual fact, these models and actual depictions of society are nothing but mendacious mystifications of the social structures that surround us, whose principal function is to reconcile us to the logic of prevailing social structures.

The first three lectures in the series are critical assessments of the deployment of Marxist analysis by various political tendencies and social movements. The last two are examinations on the usefulness of Marxist analytical categories in clarifying concrete problems in the Philippine economy.

In his lecture on "The Millenarian-Populist Aspects of Filipino Marxism", Francisco Nemenzo analyzes the Philippine revolutionary movement from 1932 — 1972 from the standpoint of Marxist theory. Although the lecture involves only some aspects of an on-going research on the subject, it advances a number of propositions that have since generated a lot of controversy. The focus of controversy has been Nemenzo's assessment that the *Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas* (the traditional Party, to be distinguished from the "re-established" CPP) failed to comprehensively develop and widely popularize a scientific socialist standpoint among its membership and followers. Such failure left it vulnerable to the encroachment of "millenarian-populist" tendencies that were deeply imbedded in the culture and consciousness of the Filipino peasantry. Nemenzo asserts that:

... The PKP was Marxist in self-image, but Marxism was never its governing ideology. Marxism was no more than a means to justify, legitimize or rationalize policy-decisions pragmatically arrived at. Hence the discrepancy between avowed ideology and political practice, between writings of the theoreticians and the outlook of its members.

Such sharp and unmitigated assessment, quite expectedly, drew furious reaction from PKP members and sympathizers in the open forum that followed. In addition, the PKP recently circulated an essay by party theoretician, William Pomeroy, that sought to affirm the PKP as a "Marxist-Leninist party". Although Pomeroy's essay made no direct reference to the Nemenzo lecture, it quotes from it. The essay attempts to belie criticism that the PKP was permeated by anti-intellectual tendencies and tries to demonstrate that Marxism-Leninism was grasped by the party's membership down to the lowest organs making the extent of millenarian influence insignificant.

In a manner that betrays a Stalinist predisposition to equate uncritical unanimity with political vigor, Pomeroy charges that "the revising of Marxism or the 'updating' of Marxism have (sic) always been given the maximum support and circulation by capitalist institutions and their defenders, out of a hope that these might divide and weaken revolutionary movements and Communist Parties". Rather than confront charges of "dogmatism", Pomeroy, in effect, affirmed a doctrinaire approach to Marxist theory: "This unity of thought and action is not an expression of dogmatism but thought and action is not an expression of dogmatism but is simply a recognition of general principles, in the same way that the laws of physics and chemistry remain intact when one crosses national borders."

Simultaneously attacking the "non-party Marxists" and the "Maoists", Pomeroy makes this assessment whose logical coherence the reader has yet to discover:

The attempt by the academics to dismiss the PKP as a Marxist party is actually a device for making the claim that the "real" Marxists are the so-called Communist Party of the Philippines (Mao Tse-tung Thought) and the "non-party Marxists". As far as the latter are concerned, described as "heretics and renegades who, unbound by party discipline, explored hitherto neglected dimensions of contemporary reality", they are the splitters of movements, the faction-creators who divert sections of popular movements into disputatious alleyways. In some western countries they have so fragmented the Left, to the applause of imperialism, that they have greatly weakened the ability of the working class to defend

itself against right-wing offensives, to say nothing of being able to fight for socialism .

Pomeroy fails to note, however, that no doctrinaire party ever seized power in the whole history of the socialist movements (this aspect distinguished from the tendency of parties to become doctrinaire after the seizure of power). Lenin broke from the mainstream of the European Left to define an urgent revolutionary agenda for Russia prior to 1917. Mao was, in one instance, expelled from the Chinese Communist Party for his "heretical" ideas concerning the peasantry as the mass base for revolution. In Cuba, the traditional communist party condemned Fidel Castro's guerilla movement as a band of petit-bourgeois adventurers. In Nicaragua, the traditional party was not a part of the Sandinista coalition that overthrew the Somoza dictatorship. All the winners were revolutionaries who engaged in the "creative application" of Marxist theory to suit the specificities of the social conditions wherein they waged struggles.

Armando Malay, Jr., in his lecture, makes a critical assessment of Maoist influence on the Filipino Left and tries to arrive at an explanation of why, in spite of the declining popularity of "Mao Tse-tung Thought" internationally (and the tragic collapse of several Maoist revolutionary parties elsewhere), its influence remains distinct in the Philippine revolutionary movement. He looks into a number of factors that are better read than enumerated. In spite of his own critical view of "Mao Tse-tung Thought", Malay concedes that the "insertion of the Maoist element into the mainstream of the Philippine Left hastened the ripening of several latent or long-festering contradictions in Philippine society".

Mario Bolasco's lecture on "Marxism and Christianity in the Philippines: 1930-1983" looks at the development of the "Christian Left" from an interesting angle. He looks into the long involvement of clergymen in social activism. At the onset, the progressive tendency within the church involved in social activism almost instinctively maintained a shrill anti-communist posture to insulate their activities from criticism by the more orthodox tendencies within the church who did not look too kindly on the immersion of churchmen into the daily lives of the people. This immersion took on its own dialectic. The involvement of churchmen in the lives of the poor required that they develop more cogent analyses of the social condition. Within such dialectic, Marxist concepts and categories found easy acceptance.

In her lecture, Cynthia Banzon-Bautista looks into an important problematic in Marxist analysis: the case of the peasantry in underdeveloped societies. Because of the historical characteristics of underdeveloping societies, the mode of production encompassing the rural population does not easily fit into standard Marxist class categories. Bautista looks into the various theoretical approaches developed by Marxist and non-Marxist theoreticians as well as significant developments in the Philippine rural economy. She concludes, on the basis of findings by both Marxist and non-Marxist researchers, that "the development of capitalism in agriculture has not led to the dissolution of the peasantry. Nor has it speeded up the process of polarization."

Economist Ricardo Ferrer presents an interesting summation of the major analytical concepts in Marxist political economy and deploys them in an effort to explain why pre-capitalist ("semi-feudal") relations have been preserved in the Philippine countryside. He focuses on the inability of capitalism to enter into a process of "expanded reproduction" in an

economy such as ours that is subordinated to the neocolonial logic of international capitalism. The debate that followed Ferrer's discussion opened up a wide range of unresolved issues that constitutes an agenda for more research and theoretical refinement.

The five lectures do not, of course, cover the entire breadth of issues on the theory and practice of Marxist analysis of the Philippine experience. However, the Centennial Lectures seems to indicate a breakthrough of great significance.

Marxist intellectuals have too long been under tremendous pressure from literally the Left and the Right. On one hand, they have often been forced to contort their theoretical language and diminish the sharpness of their analysis so as not to depart too noticeably from the implicit ideological limits enforced by the establishment. On the other hand, there is pressure on Marxist scholars to accept prior lines of analysis and interpretation embodied in established leftwing movements, reducing their roles to that of apologists or articulators of prefabricated analysis.

The Centennial Lectures, hopefully, indicates that Marxist scholars have achieved a new level of confidence that allows them to freely discuss and debate as a distinct community of intellectuals, to reinvestigate their social reality in new and more fruitful ways.

Andre Gunder Frank has advised that it is a waste of time debating with bourgeois theoreticians. Intellectuals on the Left might do well to take that advice. For too long they have had to defend themselves from mediocre critics of the Right. It would be vastly more productive for progressive intellectuals to debate among themselves and advance the theoretical capabilities of what is, after all, a rich and sophisticated philosophical and analytical standpoint.

