

## Marx or Rostow?

Reading John Sender's glowing introduction to Bill Warren's 'Imperialism, Pioneer of Capitalism', I thought I could recognize several of the themes broached in my article on 'Towards Global Fordism'.<sup>1</sup> But unfortunately, although Warren's book has the great merit of identifying many weighty issues for Marxists in the dominated countries, his conclusions and even his method of confronting these 'facts' have made my hair stand on end. Yes, there is a lot of truth in Warren's book. It is true that we must have done with a certain Romantic critique of 'development' which falls short of the necessary precision, balance, autonomy, and so on. It is true that, since 'the living soul of Marxism is concrete analysis of a concrete situation' (Lenin), the priority task is to study the Third World countries as they are, before dreaming of what they should be—although Warren himself scarcely brings this project nearer to completion. It is true that Lenin's own 'bestseller', *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, was already a poor book, containing a quite erroneous analysis of the tendencies of imperialism. Indeed, capitalism itself has cheerfully given the lie to Lenin's thesis, rising from one stage to another until the glorious 1960s—although Warren does not mention the wars and other monstrosities integral to this process. It is true that a moral critique of imperialism is not necessarily a critique of capitalism, and that anti-imperialism has too long served as a demagogic cover for the development plans of a modernist local bourgeoisie, whether liberal or statist in orientation—although it would have been nice to see an equally rigorous critique of the 'lackeys' of foreign capital. It is right to stress that domestic causes are paramount, that the local elites bear the main responsibility for their country's plight, and that 'dependence' only perpetuates itself on the ground of an internal situation—although Warren could have mentioned the military interventions which, after all, have provided enough of the headlines over the last thirty-five years. It is true that capitalism and industrialization are rapidly developing in the dominated countries—although not in all of them, and not in the carefree way suggested by Warren. It is true that the Third World can no longer be grasped as a single, homogeneous entity, susceptible to uniform criticism of 'dependent development' or *a fortiori* 'the development of underdevelopment'.

Yes, in spite of the 'oversights' that might be put down to polemical zeal, Warren's theses would make an excellent pamphlet. Unfortunately, *Imperialism, Pioneer of Capitalism* is not a pamphlet but a book based on

<sup>1</sup> In breaking with traditional theories of dependency, I am basically indebted to the work of two Latin American writers, Carlos Ominami and Ricardo Hausmann. See the references attached to my article; and C. Ominami, 'Aperçu critique des théories du développement en Amérique Latine', *Revue Tiers-Monde* No. 80, October-December 1979.

documentary evidence and reasoned argument: it excoriates opposite points of view, presenting a new approach and claiming to ground it on considerable erudition. In reality, however, it is the Marxist approach in all its purity which he claims to offer us. Since the work threatens to have a major impact, it should be judged according to rigorous theoretical and political criteria. We cannot content ourselves with knowing smiles at a few 'verbal excesses' or 'needless provocations'. Warren's book should be read word by word, for his arguments will be used word for word.

### The Concept of the Third World and Pre-Capitalist Residues

Alas, when we examine his detailed arguments, all the positive features of his position 'turn into their opposite'. He may grasp the Third World's heterogeneity, but he treats the Third World as a 'corpus' of homogeneous figures. He may recognize its industrial development, but he does not pay the slightest attention to the character of such industrialization. He may prioritize internal causes, but he quite simply refuses to analyse the specificity of the socio-economic structures in question. He may avoid confusion of anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism, but at the price of a veritable apology for capitalism. He may do away with normative criticism, but only in order to restore the hold of the latter-day Moloch and its high-priest Adam Smith: 'Accumulate, accumulate! That is Moses and all the prophets!' Warren's return to 'original Marxism' is, in fact, a return to the nineteenth-century Marxism of Struve and Kautsky, which continued to flourish in the Third International, particularly in Stalin's writings. For Stalin declared his faith in limitless development of the productive forces, understanding by this a one-way, linear, quantitative growth in the mass of machinery and the flow of commodities.

Such a religion, however, stands in no need of Marx. It has other high-priests in such traditional bourgeois growth-theorists as Walt Rostow,<sup>2</sup> and all the modern apostles of 'industrialization' and 'supply-side' policies. If it now finds succour among Marxists seeking to revive the most questionable of the Old Man's ideas—for example, his trust in the Promethean virtues of capitalist technical progress—this says a great deal about the ideological defeat suffered by anti-capitalist forces in the seventies.<sup>3</sup> We shall return to this point below, but let us first examine some key areas of Warren's argument. To what does he refer when he seeks to prove 'the illusion of underdevelopment'? What does he have to say about it? What criteria does he use? Well, he refers to the 'non-existence' of underdevelopment, to the hollowness of the concept of neo-colonialism. Building around us his first redoubtable paradox, Warren has the facts and figures to demonstrate that the dominated countries are not so underdeveloped after all. Unfortunately, he has to base himself upon a sample of countries, if only to prove that the sample growth-rates are not at all out of the ordinary. However, his very choice of countries shows that Warren implicitly recognizes what he seeks to disprove: namely, the existence of problem-countries, prudently termed

<sup>2</sup> Walt Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, Cambridge 1980.

<sup>3</sup> Arghiri Emmanuel has gone over to a position fairly similar to that of Bill Warren. See *Technologie appropriée ou technologie sous-développée*, Paris 1981.

'the Third World', which do not, of course, include the Eastern bloc, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and so on.

In fact, Warren does not even define the object of his analysis—a fine method for a Marxist theoretician! For if we leave aside self-proclamation by a particular country, we are offered no criteria with which to delimit this 'Third World'. Should a common colonial history perhaps be the defining feature? But then we could count on the fingers of one hand the non-West-European countries that have never borne any kind of colonial yoke: Japan, Thailand, Afghanistan, and which others? Curiously, Warren seems to overlook that every country in the Americas is the product of colonization. Perhaps the missing criterion lies in the specificity of internal socio-economic structures—the true root of 'underdevelopment' in most Marxist thinking. Even Lenin saw this as the basis of a 'democratic and anti-imperialist' stage of the revolution, at least in those countries where, for reasons bound up with colonization, there had been no capitalist agrarian reform. It is, indeed, hard to grasp the different fates of two ex-colonies such as Argentina and Australia without taking into account the history of their agrarian structures.<sup>4</sup> Warren, however, objects to this approach in the name of a supposedly Marxist dogma that pre-capitalist forms are bound to dissolve. Any analysis which refers to the survival or consolidation of particular semi-feudal or latifundist forms of production is swept aside without any concrete investigation. We are a long way from Lenin's patient study of the development of capitalism in Russia. What would be the point? After all, capitalism inevitably dissolves everything other than itself!

Now, all Marxist historical analysis proves exactly the opposite. After Spanish colonization of Central and South America, every serviceable Maya, Aztec or Inca structure was consolidated and mobilized for the extraction of minerals,<sup>5</sup> while slavery was 'reinvented' for the purposes of colonial agriculture. In the seventeenth century in Eastern Europe, the capitalism of Amsterdam and then London imposed the 'second serfdom',<sup>6</sup> whose final, more or less debased forms were only abolished in 1918 (after the fall of the Turkish, Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires), or even in 1945 by the 'people's democracies'. In France, itself, the history of agriculture refutes Kautsky's thesis: for petty commodity production, much more profitable than capitalist farming for the agro-food companies, is still the basic form of the exploitation of peasant labour.<sup>7</sup>

#### The Social Relations of Third World Industrialization

Given that Warren sees a case for the 'importation' of capitalist relations ('Imperialism, *Pioneer of Capitalism*'), it might appear that external structural dependence is the defining characteristic of his object of study.

<sup>4</sup> Of course, it is possible to embrace 'psychologist' explanations à la Weber, counterposing the Protestant capitalist ethic to the Catholic ethic. See F. Braudel, *Civilisation matérielle: Économie et Capitalisme*, Paris 1980, and A. G. Frank, *L'Accumulation primitive, 1500-1800*, which have both correctly demolished such absurd positions.

<sup>5</sup> See Frank, *op. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> See Braudel, *op. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> See A. Lipietz, *La Capital et son Espace*, Paris 1977.

Strangely, however, he invokes the two reasons why this is not so: the minor, and declining, importance of direct foreign investment; and the modification of the productive structure away from primary towards manufacturing activity. These are certainly crushing arguments against the 'old theory' of dependence which, in the 1960s, beguiled our own childhood as anti-imperialist militants, as well as feeding the dreams of the national bourgeoisies. Although it is easy in 1980 to 'demolish' the conceptions of yesteryear, the task does have to be fulfilled. Still, there should have been a concrete analysis of precisely *what* has replaced such dependence. It is strictly impossible to understand contemporary imperialism if no attention is paid to the two essential changes which took place in the seventies: namely, the turn to an 'international credit economy', and 'export substitution'.<sup>8</sup> True, Anaconda and United Fruit were big bad wolves, simpler to identify, although people in Chile and the Dominican Republic can remember that they were not paper tigers. Nowadays, there are other 'outside controls' weighing on the Third World and siphoning off the value added by its workers: they are called the Euromarket, the IMF, sub-contracting, engineering royalties, technological dependence. They do not, I admit, so readily spark off popular mobilizations. But that is one more reason why Marxists should analyse and denounce such mechanisms.

It is not enough to hail the lightning industrialization of certain Third World countries, long ago diagnosed in Rostow's theory of 'take-off'. It is necessary to define the *socio-economic relations* expressed in this process—something I have myself attempted at a still very superficial level. Only in this way can we grasp, behind the flat, uniform language of statistics, what used to differentiate, and what now differentiates, the centre from the periphery: not only the United States from Uganda, but also, rather more subtly, Australia from Argentina. Here the key factor is the type of relations which arise between social classes in the establishment of a system of accumulation. In the centre, a basic cohesion developed between the different sections of production, between the reproduction of labour-power and the realization of surplus-value, culminating in the 'virtuous circle' of post-war intensive and auto-centred accumulation. In the periphery, attempts were made, with a greater or lesser degree of success, to mimic this 'virtuous circle' and to hook on to centre-based accumulation by taking advantage of its requirements and its crises. In the profoundly changed domestic conditions of today, such an attempt leads to a fragmentation of the 'periphery' and the appearance of 'New Industrial Countries'. Bill Warren is happy to accept their provisional technological dependence, seeing it as merely a growth of interdependence. What a strange 'interdependence' of sub-contractor upon contractor, performer upon decision-maker, manual upon intellectual, debtor upon creditor! Technology is not a primary product growing on the trees of Northern forests. It is the materialization of relations of production whose mode of establishment and reproduction varies according to the social formation that adopts them, or has them imposed.

We can see why Marx himself made the huge mistake of believing that the

<sup>8</sup> See my article on Fordism, above.

railway would revolutionize Indian society. A century later, of course, the caste system is still in place, and India is not even classed as a New Industrial Country. But at least Marx offered the tools which allow us to account for his error of prognosis.<sup>9</sup> Warren has only retained the prophecy, ignoring both the reality and the tools. Thus he prolepticizes against Samir Amin and various Latin American Marxists who at least have the merit of knowing the facts and manipulating the tools; but he does not even make any reference to the fundamental concepts of Marxism: the relations of production, surplus-value, accumulation, reproduction, realization, and so forth.<sup>10</sup> The result is a complete incapacity to analyse 'facts' empirically, apprehended through the quite peculiar and highly distorting lens of statistics. In the light of certain statistics, it might be said of these dominated countries—which Warren is quite able to denote, even if he refuses to define them as such—that they 'profit' from imperialism. But let us look at things more closely.

#### Economic Statistics and Social Truth

First, we should mention in passing a few incredibly naive (or disingenuous) arguments. In chapter six, it is stated that colonization drove back hunger and led to progress in health care. Obviously, Warren has never heard of the near-genocide of the Amerindian peoples, now being consummated in Amazonia, or of the outbreak and causes of the 1973-76 Sahel famine.<sup>11</sup> He credits capitalism with medical advances,<sup>12</sup> but does not debit it with the massively unequal level of provision. In the Brazilian Nordeste one out of every two children dies in the first year of life, while in the Third World as a whole some 50 million children die every year. But, after all, the population is growing all the time!

We should also mention the short-sighted character of the book's predictions (chapter 7, section 4). Since Bill Warren died in January 1978, his most recent figures dating from 1975, it would be too easy to blame him for the fact that he did not foresee the huge level of Third

<sup>9</sup> In a paper written in 1972, my friend H. Rouilleault and myself used the passage from Marx on the colonization of India as an example of erroneous prophecy. (See 'Sur les pratiques et les concepts prospectifs du matérialisme historique', duplicated paper, Paris University I.) Contrasting it with Marx's far-sighted predictions on assembly-line labour, we attributed his error to an unwarranted projection of an abstract tendency of capitalism to the concrete reality of colonized India which overdetermines it. In this work, we based ourselves on the Marxist theories of imperialism. But curiously, Warren is content to counterpose Marx to these later Marxists, without mentioning that the facts of the last century (quite a long time even for a 'historical tendency') have refuted Marx's position.

<sup>10</sup> Notwithstanding a certain Northern or Euro-centric self-complacency, Warren is actually a whole war behind the discussion among Latin American Marxists. See, for instance, the debate on Brazil which opposed R. M. Marini to F. M. Cardoso and J. Serra in the pages of *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* (special issue), 1978.

<sup>11</sup> See Comité Information Sahel, *Qui se nourrit de la famine en Afrique?* Paris 1975.

<sup>12</sup> There is, of course, a link between the two, and the rather belated discoveries of Pasteur and Fleming are, in a sense, the by-product of bourgeois rationalism and the industrialist perspective. However, there is nothing automatic about this link. Although mercantile and manufacturing capitalism were much more developed in fourteenth- or fifteenth-century Europe than they are in Uganda today, they could not prevent the plague from wiping out two-thirds of the population. Conversely, China's health policy during the Cultural Revolution was much more effective than those of dominated capitalist countries at an equivalent level of 'quantitative development'.

World debt in 1981, the stifling of the Brazilian 'miracle' in 1980, and so on. Still, the Marxist dialectic ought to have inspired him with a certain sense of caution. Most dangerous for scientific and ideological debate, however, is Warren's acritical manner of apprehending 'the facts', and the criteria he uses to evaluate them. Amassing statistics on the GNP, trade patterns, income distribution and other aspects of Third World countries as a whole, he argues in chapter eight ('The Illusion of Underdevelopment: Facts of Post-War Progress') that neither a cross-section nor a longitudinal series displays the traditional 'profile' of 'underdevelopment'.

First, we should note that this method lumps together countries openly fighting the ugly sores of underdevelopment and those which bear its full brunt, 'New Industrial Countries' and 'Less Developed Countries' (LDCs), OPEC member-states and countries with no raw materials. If everything is jumbled in this way, it is not surprising that the laws of statistics will yield a rather monotone picture. Warren does ask us to appreciate the heterogeneity of the Third World, yet he takes no heed of it whatsoever. Indeed, he disowns any inclination to separate off the OPEC countries, since 'it amounts to claiming that the LDCs are all doing badly except for those that are doing well'. Surely, however, we must not only take into account that the dominated countries are not uniformly 'successful', but also examine, for example, how and in what respect the oil-revenue earners are still dominated countries.<sup>13</sup>

Now, it is an excellent thing that Marxists should confront the statistics, and most of the writers I quote in my article are virtuosi in this regard. In the words of Bachelard, however, we must 'understand in order to calculate, not calculate in order to understand'. If we take the example of 'per capita GNP', Warren is filled with wonder that this indicator is now growing more rapidly in the dominated countries than it was a century ago in the industrial countries. In reality, this ratio is based upon complex and debatable procedures of aggregation and evaluation—procedures which Warren does not even dream of questioning. It measures, in current local value or 'international value', the changing relationship between the *gross market product* and the *total population*. Thus in Marxist terms, its evolution expresses at least three different trends:

1. The change in the ratio of 'market (or capitalist) economy to natural economy'. If colonization breaks up the communal relations of an African village, so that its inhabitants are reduced to begging in shanty-towns or, in a few cases, to wage-labour, then per capita GNP will sharply rise even if production techniques remain unchanged. In this case, the introduction of wage-labour is clearly the principal factor behind the rising ratio.
2. The change in the relationship between 'net product' and 'amortization

<sup>13</sup> Throughout history, the colonized or dominated countries have experienced similar 'booms' (coffee, sugar, diamonds, and so on, in the case of Brazil) without being turned into developed countries. On the Venezuelan oil boom, see R. Hausmann and C. Ominami, 'The realization of the oil rent: a preliminary study of the Venezuelan example, 1946-1979', CEPREMAP paper no. 8101, Paris 1981.

of fixed capital'. If peasants or craftsmen who used to work by hand or with rudimentary tools are made to work on costly yet poorly utilized machinery, then per capita GNP will again rise even if labour productivity remains the same. 'Mechanization' of the Third World, requiring the purchase of equipment goods whose volume rises more than proportionately to GNP,<sup>14</sup> is clearly the second cause of the rising ratio.

3. The increase in labour productivity (i.e., a fall in the labour-value of use-values), if GNP is calculated in terms of volume. This is the only trend which would really justify talk of the 'progressive' character of the two preceding phenomena. However, numerous field studies suggest that Fordism in the dominated countries does not lead to anything like the gains in hourly labour productivity achieved in the dominating countries.

A similar critique could be made of all the other statistical indicators used by Warren. But let us rather examine the *criteria* with which he evaluates his 'facts'. (The sense of 'criterion' is given, for example, by my recognition that a rise in hourly labour productivity would be a good thing.) Now, I must say that Warren's 'criterion' leaves me flabbergasted: 'Is the situation better or worse (in terms of per capita GNP) than it would have been in the absence of colonization or any other outside intervention?' For how can Warren possibly imagine, not to say calculate, what the present standard of living would be in the Aztec or Inca empire, Ghana or Benin if colonization had not destroyed them in past centuries, and if they had developed only through internal class struggles? After all, the Muslim empire had a comfortable lead in culture and economy at the end of the Middle Ages; and, conversely, nothing suggested in 1850, on the eve of the Meiji Restoration, that the Japanese feudal system was about to launch into a Prussian-style 'revolution from above'.<sup>15</sup>

One foot in the past and another in the present—such comparative science-fiction is, of course, highly questionable from a scientific point of view.<sup>16</sup> But Warren's approach is also of extreme political gravity: not only does it resemble the traditional ethnocentrist argument and, above all, the social-chauvinist position of the European Social-Democratic and Communist parties on national liberation struggles (e.g., the post-1946 line of the PFC on the Algerian revolution); it is also strikingly similar to capital's apologetic response when faced with a critique of wage-labour

<sup>14</sup> In my view, this is the main problem affecting the trade balance of dominated countries. There has been so much discussion on the 'worsening of the terms of trade' that Niep was able to tabulate the conflicting conclusions of more than eighty writers! (See T. H. Niep, 'Trends in the terms of trade of LDCs', working paper no. 8106, Laval University, Quebec.) The real problem involves not so much relative prices as volume-effects.

<sup>15</sup> Samir Amin at least suggests some reasons why 'decentralized tributary modes of production' turned towards capitalism in a more spontaneously way than the centralized tributary empires. See S. Amin, *La dévlopement inégal*, Paris 1973.

<sup>16</sup> When he plunges into these retrospective ventures, Warren has recourse to some rather odd testimony. Thus he quotes a settler who explains with some satisfaction that a Ghanaian village family earned enough in 1946 to buy 'all the food it needed'. A Romanian peasant, he suggests by way of contrast, lived in near-prehistoric conditions at the beginning of the twentieth century, and was still much worse off in 1946. (Warren, p. 132.) One would, of course, have preferred a more impartial account of Ghana in 1946 and in its pre-colonial empire. But one can only note the worsening of the Ghanaian peasant's lot in relation both to 1946 and to the present situation of the Romanian peasant.

('it's always better to have a wage than to be unemployed'). Evidently, a Renault worker in 1981 has a higher standard of living than a peasant at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution. But is that a reason not to fight against capitalist exploitation? The worker does, of course, receive a wage, but that is no reason to surrender the surplus-value to capital. Thus, beneath all Warren's talk of 'reciprocal advantage' and the 'interdependence' of dominators and dominated within imperialist relations, one finds not only the classical pro-imperialist discourse, but also *mutatis mutandis* the pro-capitalist discourse in its entirety.

#### Warren's Acceptance of Capitalist Exploitation

Let us now look more closely at 'the drain of surplus', without arguing over Warren's awkward specifications that betray his inability to distinguish between the primary and the secondary phenomenon.<sup>17</sup> The main point is that Warren admits the *legitimacy* of a 'drain of surplus' (relative or absolute, it hardly matters): 'But since investment is generally value-creating . . ., it does not follow that an excess of repatriated profits over the original investment necessarily represents an absolute drain: the value-added will have also increased wages, salaries, and government revenues—a net gain compared to the situation if there had been no foreign investment.'<sup>18</sup> There is no mistake: that really is the argument of a man who, in the name of the original Marx, seeks to condemn most of Marxism since Lenin! In point of fact, even though Marx had not discovered surplus-value in 1844, he would already have dismissed such an argument, typical of the most vulgar apologetics. For, contrary to the 'factor-remuneration' theory, in which profit accrues to capital and wages to labour, it is not 'investment' but the exploitation of labour that actually creates value.<sup>19</sup> However 'fair', the wage *always* involves exploitation (at a rate of more than 100 per cent in Warren's example!). Whether the outlay of variable capital is of national or external origin, there is no change in the *capitalist* relationship. But this is not at all the case with regard to international or inter-regional relations: if the surplus-value extracted in a particular country is systematically exported to a 'centre', then the rate of accumulation will be lower than in the centre; the 'development' of capital will be retarded (that is, fewer jobs will be created than in the case of national capital investment); and the 'virtuous circle' of intensive accumulation, with its positive effects even for the exploited classes, will be unable to establish itself.

It follows that there is as much, if not more, reason to fight against external capital than against capital *tout court*. Yet this is precisely the

<sup>17</sup> 'For such a drain of surplus to *retard* economic development, it must be an *absolute* drain.' Talk of 'retarded' development evokes a secondary drain in which development takes place at a rate higher than before but still *lower* than in the dominant countries. Thus may be explained by an 'unequal transaction', such that *positive* accumulation occurs on both sides, but *more slowly* on the dominated side. (Warren, p. 141.)

<sup>18</sup> Warren, p. 142.

<sup>19</sup> Capitalists will reply that if they had not advanced constant and variable capital the wage-labourer would have been unable to work. In reality, however, it is not they who 'give work' to the wage-labourer, but the worker who 'gives' surplus-value to the capitalists, thereby reproducing his or her condition as a proletarian divorced from the means of production and compelled to sell labour-power in order to live.

conclusion that Warren's theory seeks to capsize. He may have seemed to be telling us: Don't fight imperialism because it introduces *foreign* exploitation, just fight it as exploitation. As we have just seen, however, Warren precisely finds capitalist exploitation to be legitimate. In essence, he is saying: Don't fight imperialism, since it helps to spread capitalism, and capitalism itself is all right, 'functional', 'appropriate to economic growth'. Such is the thesis, worn thin by so many writers from Adam Smith to Walt Rostow yet still hegemonic today,<sup>20</sup> which Warren's final chapter trumpets forth in every key. So much the better if inequality is on the rise: it will promote 'the necessary diversification of skills and occupations'; it will kindle 'energies previously dormant'; and it will mobilize 'scarce or underutilized entrepreneurial talents'.<sup>21</sup> This side of things is 'likely to be most severe in the earliest stages', but eventually, with the generalization of the modern sector, the gates will open on the post-industrial paradise promised by Colin Clark and Walt Rostow. So much the better if the teeming humanity of the shanty-towns has to survive through the informal economy: this permits very cheap production of basic consumer goods, and is therefore entirely functional to the development of the modern sector—which leads us (see above) to paradise. Indeed, should not the activity of prostitutes 'be regarded as socially beneficial in cities with large male immigrant populations'?<sup>22</sup> Can such a deplorable observation be redeemed by any intended irony?

At this point, Warren's supporters will break into a smile, remarking that these poor anti-imperialist (and probably Latin) romantics do not have much of a sense of humour. We shall return in a moment to the question of moral indignation. Still at the level of the economy, however, Warren's argument is quite clear: every apparent deformity in the underdeveloped countries is not a *synchronic* counterpart of imperialist-capitalist development, but merely the delayed or temporally displaced realization of primitive capitalist accumulation in these countries. The *underdeveloped* countries are simply 'behind', and external domination does no more than speed up their advance. This is the basic liberal position which, long ago theorized by Rostow et al., is now hegemonic in the press, the universities and various international bodies. It underpins the argument that, in spite of everything, deformities, inequalities and social marginalization are 'functional'.

#### Marxism and the Damned of the Earth

The battle around the couplet, 'integration/disintegration (or marginalization)', is itself highly revealing, and prostitution really is an excellent example. 'In fact,' Warren argues, 'so-called marginalization is a way of referring to the anarchic, chaotic, unplanned, sometimes brutal, but nevertheless vigorous fashion in which urbanization expands the market, stimulates commercialization of the whole of society (especially the agricultural sector), and thereby increases the division of labour and thus

<sup>20</sup> Verso Editions present Warren's book as 'original and iconoclastic'. Maybe it is iconoclastic for the small circles of the western New Left, but it conforms perfectly to what is said and written in most of the press and the academic world.

<sup>21</sup> Warren, p. 208.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 216.

the *integration* of society, as Adam Smith noted long ago.<sup>23</sup> Warren here seems, like Smith, Marx and Lenin, to place himself on the ground of the conditions for primitive accumulation: dissolution of the natural economy, development of a mercantile and manufacturing capitalism, and so on. In reality, however, one need only turn to the extreme case of Saigon's 'brothel economy', living entirely upon the redistribution of dollars of *external* origin, in order to understand that the 'dissolution of particular natural ties' in no way entails the reconstruction of a higher-level social, economic and cultural *cohesion*. Such dissolution was, to be sure, the historical condition for the 'Fordist' logic that gave rise to the social-democratic welfare-state in the OECD countries. But the way in which it now develops on the periphery of world production and redistribution circuits endows it with precisely that significance which distinguishes a centre from a periphery.

When Warren notes that the informal sector provides 'a wide variety of essential goods and services . . . at relatively low cost',<sup>24</sup> this means that the awesome superexploitation of women—the exploited class of the informal economy—allows the production of labour-power at a cost incomparably lower than that of its reproduction within the 'virtuous circle' of intensive accumulation. Such labour-power, reproduced almost entirely outside capitalism, will nevertheless find work in some export-farm or in the 'delocalized' premises of a Fordist branch circuit. Thus 'integration' (understood as 'functionality' to imperialist-capitalist super-exploitation) really does exist together with 'marginalization' (understood as a loss of that 'autocentred' character of socio-economic reproduction which is, in a sense, common to the village economy and the central system of intensive accumulation). Even in Rostow's and Warren's terms, therefore, the deformed growth of capitalist market relations in the dominated countries does not necessarily point to a rosy future. But even if it did? As the dominated peoples or nations and the exploited classes await this radiant future, what right or norm could prohibit their rebellion. Yet the *political* conclusion of Rostow's books, as of Warren's book, is that 'populist' attempts to resist imperialism and wrong development are 'inappropriate, unjust, undemocratic', an obstacle to the capitalist mission of developing the productive forces. For Warren, it would be 'moralism' to condemn this mode of growth by referring to the injustice and misery that it brings in its wake. True scientists (like Warren) have only one aim in mind: growth of the productive forces, 'the unification of humanity'! From these lofty heights, how petty seems the revolt of peasants, workers and women (women in the home, factory-workers, prostitutes)! How surprising that such a clear-headed thinker as Marx should have wasted his time in organizing the world workers' movement, and in supporting the Irish national liberation movement even *against* the British labour organizations.

Warren may justly lay claim, however, to that aspect of Marx's work which involved fascinated contemplation of the historical march of capitalism 'though blood and dirt'. Above all, he may lay claim to the worst facet of later Marxism: namely, the mechanistic, economist,

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 223.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 216.

productivist and, at bottom, cynical Marxism of the Second International. Lenin would make a *political* break from such Marxism, but it then moved to new heights in Stalin's and Deng Xiaoping's 'primitive socialist accumulation'. In this optic, 'development of the productive forces' gauges the advance of History's tank while flesh-and-blood generations are just fossil-fuel to be sacrificed to the God of Progress in the name of a heavenly future that will conclude our valley of tears.<sup>25</sup> Through such Marxism, the workers' movement simply internalizes the positivist myths of the nineteenth-century Euro-centric bourgeoisie.<sup>26</sup> All practical revolutionaries have had to break with it: from Lenin through Gramsci (who extolled 'the revolution against Capital') to Mao Tse-tung. Conversely, this 'left' variant of productivist mythology has been used to justify all the capitulations of social-democracy, and all the abominations of Stalinism.

It is to this that people refer when they talk of 'the crisis of Marxism'. A growing number of workers both East and West, as well as the new feminist, ecological and other social movements, feel so disgusted with it that they are turning away from any reference to Marxism. In many Third World countries—Iran or Egypt, for instance—the identification of such Marxism with the bourgeois project of limitless industrialization has turned the revolutionary masses and intellectuals away from 'secular' ideologies and Marxism, shifting their revolt into the ambit of reactionary clerical ideologies. In this sense, Warren's book is a slap in the face for the *mozavifim*—the outcasts of capitalist 'progress'—and the best present which 'Western Marxism' has made of late to the Muslim Brotherhood.

<sup>25</sup> In chapter two, Warren inflicts upon us a veritable catechism that owes more to Auguste Comte than to Karl Marx. At the end of the last century Labriola was, despite his doubts, still clinging to this catechism, but then the grim course of the twentieth century provided the final refutation.

<sup>26</sup> Warren openly recognizes this kin-relationship (p. 137): 'If we say, with Emerson, that "imperialism scattered the revolutionary seeds of Western civilization in haphazard fashion over the surface of the globe and started them on the first flowers of their growth," then as Marxists, products of that civilization who aspire to carry it to new heights, we must accept the view that the epochal imperialist sweep was indeed a titanic step towards human unity (on the basis of the greatest cultural and material achievements so far attained by humanity).'

# The Socialist Society

7 Carlisle Street, London W.V.I. (01-734 8501)

At a Conference in London on January 23rd and 24th attended by 1,200 people it was decided to establish a new Socialist Society. For information on the purposes of this Society and its initial programme of activities write with SAE to the above address.