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MAO ZEDONG THOUGHT AND THE THIRD WORLD/GLOBAL SOUTH

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Third World

This essay takes up the question of the influence of Mao Zedong on Third World societies. The discussion proceeds in three parts: first, consideration of elements in Mao Zedong Thought that would account for its appeal beyond the Chinese revolution; second, the influence of Mao Zedong Thought in the heyday of Third World struggles in the 1960s and 1970s; third, the lingering commitment to Mao's legacies in postcolonial societies when it has all but been abandoned in the People's Republic of China except for the militant nationalism that it fostered. While Mao's legacies continue to exert some influence especially in agrarian societies subjected to the devastating consequences of global capitalism (especially India and the Philippines), the discussion suggests that this influence should be understood within the context of native ideological dispositions in societies placed similarly to revolutionary China within a globalizing capitalism in the post-Second World War period.

When asked about the similarities of his 'Revolutionary Offensive' to the Cultural Revolution in China back in 1969, Fidel Castro responded, 'If we did something similar to the Chinese Communists, it was a historical

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accident' (Matthews 1975: 193).[1] While we might wish to reflect further on the term 'historical accident', the statement may well serve as a cautionary reminder, in any consideration, of the impact of Mao Zedong Thought on Third World revolutionary movements.[2] Mao's thought (and the inspiration of the Chinese Revolution in general) was present most conspicuously during the period of national liberation movements from the 1950s to the 1970s, movements that also produced a whole range of home-grown visions of revolutionary renovation across the breadth of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The appealing factors of Mao Zedong Thought lay in its resonance with the aspirations that accompanied decolonization in the Third World. *Decolonization* inspired visions of a new world in not only the Third World but in the First World as well. If this global movement suggests something more than a 'historical accident', it also calls for caution in the attribution of causative power to any of these visions and ideologies, including that of Mao Zedong.

The present discussion is intended to convey a sense of the appeals of Mao Zedong Thought in the Third World, with some reference to Maoism in ethnic liberation movements in the United States. It is illustrative rather than comprehensive in its mapping of Maoism. It is my contention here that if we look past abstract expressions of similarity, sympathy or solidarity, there is little evidence of any significant impact of Maoism (or, more generally, Mao Zedong Thought) on Third World revolutionary movements. For a while in the 1960s and 1970s, Mao seemed to be everywhere. The Cultural Revolution in China propagated his name far and wide, inspiring a proliferation around the world of movements that claimed Maoist inspiration or allegiance. And yet, it is not clear what this surge of interest in Mao and Maoist politics implied. With the notable exceptions of the Philippines, India and Peru, this tidal wave of Maoism was to recede as rapidly as it had surged, leaving behind little by way of social or political accomplishment. The foremost goal of this essay is to sort out some of the forces that went into the making and unmaking of Maoist politics.[3]

I argue that the transience of Maoist politics in the Third World is not a reflection on Mao as a revolutionary leader, his contributions to the analysis of revolution in the Third World, or his more abstract formulations on revolution, which had significant implications for Marxist theory in general. The very expectation of global relevance for Mao Zedong Thought already suggests that a political and theoretical status has been attributed to it over and above that of the ordinary Third World leader or Marxist theoretician. Mao's prestige is, no doubt, partly due to his status as leader of a successful revolution in one of the most powerful countries in the world. Nevertheless, it should be equally obvious that it is his political commitments to global revolutionary transformation and his contributions to revolutionary theory that largely account for his standing as a revolutionary leader of global

1 Quoted in Cheng and Manning (2003: 359).

2 Since the appearance of Mao Zedong Thought in the 1940s, it has been conventional in Chinese Communist thinking (and scholarship on China) to draw a distinction between Mao Zedong Thought and Mao Zedong's thought. The former refers to the collective production of a body of thought in the Communist Party in which many participated, and the latter refers to the thought of Mao, the individual leader. I recognize this distinction in my stress here on 'Mao Zedong Thought'. Nevertheless, since the two are almost impossible to separate in practice and in their presentation to the world outside, I use them interchangeably in this discussion. For a discussion of this problem, see Wylie (1980). For an in-depth study of the Party philosophers who contributed to the emergence of Mao Zedong Thought, see Knight (2005).

3 See, for example, *New Crisis* (1999), which lists Mao, along with Gandhi, Kwame Nkrumah,

Nelson and Winnie Mandela, and Che Guevara, as foremost Third World leaders of the twentieth century.

stature – which also distinguishes him from his successors in the People's Republic of China. Maoist politics in the Third World may have left behind little of substance. Nevertheless, the revolutionary politics that Mao represented lingers in political memory. Ironically, the very nature of those politics may be responsible for the ultimate irrelevance of the Maoist revolutionary model in the Third World. More relevant may be the premises that guided that model which, I will suggest, have had more staying power.

The Third World in Maoism

Chinese communists have claimed that Mao Zedong Thought was most relevant to societies placed similarly to China in global politics, societies that suffered from the twin oppressions of colonialism (or 'semi-colonialism') and 'feudalism'(or 'semi-feudalism'), which loosely refers to oppression by the West and by the past. By the 1950s, these were the societies that would come to be known as the Third World. In an essay that was a foundational text of Mao Zedong Thought, Mao (1940) himself referred to the political, economic and cultural strategy he laid out as one that was appropriate to such societies, that distinguished them from both advanced capitalist societies and the Soviet Union's socialist process.[4] Beginning with the Bandung Conference of 1955, the communist government of the newly founded People's Republic of China (PRC) sought to place itself with the non-aligned nations, distinguishing itself from both the capitalist 'West' and the Soviet Union. The same distinction would come to the fore three decades later, in the so-called 'Three Worlds Theory', when once again, Mao placed China in the category of Third World nations, against both capitalist imperialism represented by the United States and the 'Social Imperialism' of the Soviet Union (*Peking Review* 1977). This identification with the Third World (now the 'Global South') continues to this day: in their dealings with countries of Africa and Latin America, Chinese leaders still invoke memories of shared oppression at the hands of imperialism.

4 Mao Zedong (1940). An English translation is available in Mao Zedong (1965–7 II: 339–84).

Given that the PRC has made claims also to leadership in the Second World of socialism, as well as pursuing great power politics that carries its own hues of imperialism, the identification with the Third World has not always been convincing. Nevertheless, it is the case that for all its claims to a legacy of imperial glory, starting in the nineteenth century China was placed in a historical situation that gave it significant commonality with societies that would come to be known as the Third World. The identity of Mao's Marxism (and of Chinese Marxism), as well as its discursive structure, rests not upon some abstract notion of China conceived in isolation from its historical context, but upon this historical situation, which appears with the location within Chinese social structure and consciousness of unprecedented

historical forces that displaced Chinese society from its earlier historical context, and relocated it irretrievably within a new global economic, political and ideological process.

At this point, it is necessary to say a few words about my understanding of Mao, especially with reference to issues of the Third World. The irreducible point of departure in any analysis of Mao Zedong Thought is a recognition that it forms the articulation in the language of Marxism of a revolutionary guerrilla war in an agrarian society under attack from imperialism. If the revolution was to transform Chinese society, as Mao and his followers believed, it could do so successfully only by internalizing, in its structure, the political and cultural relationships that informed its social environment. Mao Zedong Thought is best viewed, therefore, as a reflection on (and of) such a revolutionary situation. Here, three aspects are especially pertinent in the issues they raise concerning Marxism in the Third World.

First, as the product of an overdetermined historical situation, Mao Zedong Thought was driven by contradictory goals that represented responses to that situation. In the twentieth century, three strategic dimensions of China's historical situation have been crucial in structuring Chinese Marxism. The first is the global dimension. Beginning in the nineteenth century, China was drawn inexorably into a global history of which the dominant motive force was capitalism. Whether or not China was completely incorporated into a capitalist world-system or became capitalist in the process are moot questions; indeed, a basic goal of most socialists in China was to counteract such incorporation.

The second is the 'Third World' dimension. The Chinese, unlike western European or North American societies, but like most Asian and African (and to some extent South American) societies, experienced the globalization of history and its motive force, capitalism, not as an internal development but as alien hegemony. Chinese history was conjoined to global history. In other words, the Chinese experienced the process as one of subjugation, as a Third World society. Under these circumstances, socialism was not merely an alternative to capitalism, but an alternative that promised national liberation from capitalist hegemony, and the possibility of entering global history not as its object but as an independent subject.

The third dimension is the national dimension: Chinese society itself, which, in spite of its Third World status in a capitalist world, remained the locus of its own history. The conjoining of China to a global history did not mean the dissolution of Chinese society into a global pool, any more than its identification as a Third World society implies its reduction to some homogeneous Third World configuration. While seemingly transparent, the national dimension is, in actuality, quite opaque. In a historical situation where the very conception of China is overdetermined by the incorporation of Chinese society into a global structure, it is difficult to distinguish what is

pristinely Chinese (which, as an idea, was itself a product of the historical situation; the Chinese did not think of China as a nation among others before this situation came into existence) from what is insistently Chinese – a response to global pressures for transformation. The historical situation, in other words, is characterized by mutual incorporation (and contradiction): the incorporation of China into a global structure and the incorporation into Chinese society of new global forces. It is in the structure of this mutual incorporation that we may discover the multiple dimensions of the historical situation. Likewise, our conception of China (as well as the Chinese conception of self) is, of necessity, overdetermined, a product of the moments in the conjuncture of historical forces that relocated China in a new world situation. Marxism, in its anti-capitalism, also promised the possibility of national self-discovery for a society that a capitalist world threatened to consume. In order for the promise to be fulfilled, however, Marxism itself had to be rephrased in a national voice. Marxism that could not account for a specifically national experience abdicated its claims to universality; worse, under the guise of universalism, it replicated another form of capitalism's hegemonism, of which it was historically a product.

These three dimensions were also the structuring moments of Chinese Marxism, which would find its most comprehensive articulation in Mao's 'sinification of Marxism'. If we are to grasp it in its structural complexity, Mao's Marxism is most properly conceived as a reflection upon this historical situation (which must be distinguished from reflection of the situation). As a discourse, it bears upon its discursive structure the imprint of the multidimensional historical situation from which it derived its problematic nature. It is at once a reflection upon Chinese society from a universalist Marxist perspective and a reflection upon Marxism from the perspective of China as a Third World society and a nation. The two procedures, while coextensive, are also contradictory. Nevertheless, with all their contradictions, they have structured the discourse that we may call Chinese Marxism. Informed by the circumstances of Chinese society, including its cultural characteristics at the ground level, Mao's Marxism is, indeed, particular to the historical situation of which it was the product. With other societies seeking to invent nations out of past legacies while overcoming the oppressive constraints imposed by imperialism, Mao's Marxism had much in common in the structural forces it confronted. The contradictions that structured Mao Zedong Thought also indicate, however, that despite its commonalities with Third World national liberation ideologies, its identity was shaped by forces of which 'Third Worldliness' was only one among others.

Mao's philosophical abstractions bore the imprint of this historical situation both in its basic concepts and in its mode of presentation. This is the second aspect of Mao Zedong Thought that is relevant here.

The oppositions in the historical situation, whether at the national level (between China and a hegemonic European culture, including a universalized European Marxism) or at the social level (where the oppositions were much more multifaceted and complex than class oppositions), were irreducible to one another and the theoretical categories of Marxism – to the point where the relationship between theory and practice itself appeared as an oppositional relationship. The concept of 'contradiction' (conceived dialectically as the 'unity of opposites') provided Mao with an intellectual instrument for integrating, within a structural totality, these oppositions between the whole and the parts (including theory and practice), as well as the numerous parts (themselves conceived as contradictory 'pairs') that constituted the historical situation that guerrilla struggle sought to transform. Mao's insistence on practice as the ultimate test of validity was also a product of the conjunctural and, therefore, contingent nature of causation in such a situation, which could not be based on predictions from theory but called for interpretation at every step.

For Mao, theory was not just a historical/structural account of society that guided revolutionary practice. Theory, and the concepts around which it was built, served more importantly as an instrument in the opening up of social realities that, in their complexity, inevitably exceeded the anticipations of theory and thus required the mediation of revolutionary practice in overcoming the gap between theory and reality. The revolutionary did not just read reality with the help of theory (or fit reality to the demands of theory). S/he also read theory with the demands of revolutionary necessity. The theorist and practitioner of revolution did not merely remake social reality with the help of theory; s/he also remade theory in the process.

This reading of Mao Zedong Thought is supported by Mao's 1937 lectures/essays. These lectures/essays provide the basis for his claims as a Marxist theorist and philosopher, as well as his life-long preoccupation with the concept of 'contradiction', which, while by no means his invention, nevertheless acquired in his thinking the status of a metaphysical principle. The French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser grasped this aspect of Mao's thought when he wrote of Mao's essay 'On Contradiction':

> Mao's essay, inspired by his struggle against dogmatism in the Chinese Party, remains generally *descriptive*, and in consequence it is in certain respects *abstract*. Descriptive: his concepts correspond to concrete experiences. In part abstract: the concepts, though new and rich in promise, are represented as specifications of the *dialectic* in general rather than as *necessary implications* of the Marxist conception of society and history. (Althusser 1970: 94n)[5]

What Althusser tells us is that while Mao's theoretical formulations remain incompletely theorized, they are, nevertheless, pathbreaking and significant

5 For 'On Contradiction', see Mao Zedong (1965–7 I: 311–47).

(and therefore are not reducible to descriptive abstractions). The former is evident. While Mao sought in the essay to theorize the particularity of revolutionary practice, he consciously demoted theory: 'in the contradiction between theory and practice, practice is the principal aspect' (Mao Zedong 1965–7 I: 335). This demotion of theory was also to lead to a restatement of the role of theory: Mao conceived of theory primarily as an abstraction of concrete revolutionary practice, and only secondarily as an abstract formulation of 'laws' of social movement. Mao did not repudiate theory or the necessity of understanding it. On one occasion, when responding to an imaginary audience who held that those who were 'instinctively' dialectical in their activity did not need to read books to understand theory, he reaffirmed the importance of studying theory because, without such study, there was no possibility of synthesizing the multifaceted phenomena that the revolutionary faced (Mao Zedong 1976: 302–3). 'Without revolutionary theory', he believed with Lenin, 'there can be no revolutionary movement' (Mao Zedong 1965–7 I: 304, 336).[6] Indeed, given his revolutionary hermeneutics, theory was to reappear in Mao's thinking as an essential guide to the revolutionary in determining the direction of revolution.

6 Mao quotes Lenin in both essays.

It was another matter, however, with the practice of revolution. The priority that Mao assigned to practice meant that, unlike Althusser, he was only marginally interested in theorizing his abstract formulations; it is also possible to suggest that 'On Contradiction' was only 'in part abstract' because Mao's historicism (by which I mean his emphasis on concreteness and particularity) did not allow theorization beyond a certain point. What it did produce was a hermeneutics: revolutionary practice was no longer predictable from theory; rather, the latter became a guide to 'reading' historical situations in the activity of making revolution. Mao's appreciation of theory was itself 'contradictory'. The double meaning he assigned to theory meant it was, at once, a guide and an instrument: 'guide' in the long-term direction of revolution, 'instrument' in immediate analysis. Theory, in other words, was part of the very contradictions that it was intended to unravel and to resolve. This was the key to Mao's restructuring of theory.

The world of 'On Contradiction' is a world of ceaseless and endless confrontation and conflict, where unity itself may be understood only in terms of the contradictoriness of its moments, where no entity is a constant because it has no existence outside its contradictions or a place of its own outside of its relationship to other contradictions. It may be that all Marxism is a conflict-based conceptualization of the world. But however differently Marxists may have structured conflict or organized the structure of society, conflict, in most interpretations of Marxism, is conceived of in terms of a limited number of social categories (production, relations of production, politics, ideology, etc.). There has been an urge to hierarchize these categories in terms of their effectivity in the social structure. Mao's multitude

of contradictions resist such hierarchization, and more significantly, resist reduction to a limited number of categories. When determining social structure or historical direction, some contradictions are obviously more significant than others. Nevertheless, Mao refuses to deny a role in social dynamics to what seem to be the most trivial contradictions (and thus, dissolve them into broader categories) or to hierarchize them except on a temporary basis. In their interactions, they are in a constant state of flux regarding their place in the structure. What he says of the primary categories of Marxist theory is revealing:

> For instance, in the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the productive forces are the principal aspect; in the contradiction between theory and practice, practice is the principal aspect; in the contradiction between the economic base and the superstructure, the economic base is the principal aspect; and there is no change in their respective positions. This is the mechanical materialist concept, not the dialectical materialist conception. True, the productive forces, practice and the economic base generally play the principal and decisive role; whoever denies this is not a materialist. But it must also be admitted that in certain conditions, such aspects as the relations of production, theory and the superstructure in turn manifest themselves in the principal and decisive role. (Mao Zedong 1965–7 I: 335–6)

This yields a conception of causation that may best be described in terms of Althusser's notion of 'structural effectivity' (or causation); that is, a notion of causation without hierarchy, where the structure is visible only in the interaction of its constitutive moments, which are mutually determinant through the intermediation of the structure as 'absent cause' (it is no coincidence that Althusser [1970] finds, in Mao's idea of contradiction, a point of departure for his own reflection on causation). Here, causation is conjunctural and overdetermined: social and historical events are products of the conjuncture of multiple contradictions. Mao differs from Althusser in that he conceived of conjunctures in more contingent (and historical) terms than Althusser was willing to pursue. His notion of causation, therefore, remains less theorized than Althusser's. More importantly, the role of the revolutionary subject was essential to Mao's idea of contradiction. First, an 'overdetermined conjuncture' points to a revolutionary alternative as one possibility among others because such a situation is, of its very nature, open-ended; in other words, open to interpretation. It is up to the revolutionary to interpret it in accordance with revolutionary goals. This is also where the importance of abstract theory as guide to action comes in; without the aid of theory, the revolutionary will be at a loss to make choices that are consistent with long-term goals. Second, while itself a product of contradictions, revolutionary practice is part of the structure of contradictions and thus

effective in aligning the contradictions in a manner most consistent with revolutionary goals. The role of revolutionary struggle in converting an unfavourable to a favourable situation was part of Mao's analysis of contradiction; it appears most prominently in other places in the context of his discussions of the military strategy of revolutionary struggle.[7]

7 See, for instance, 'On Tactics Against Japanese Imperialism' (1935), in Mao Zedong (1965–7 I: 152–254).

Mao's companion essay, 'On Practice', offers, in epistemological form, a more direct statement on interpretation as an essential component of revolutionary activity (or, if I may overstate the point, on revolutionary activity as interpretative activity). On the surface, the epistemology 'On Practice' offers is an empiricist one. As he presents it, cognition begins with perceptual cognition, which is 'the stage of sense perceptions and impressions' (Mao Zedong 1965–7 I: 297). As sense perceptions are repeated and accumulate, 'a sudden change (leap) takes place in the brain in the process of cognition, and concepts are formed. Concepts are no longer phenomena, the separate aspects and the external relations of things; they grasp the essence, the totality and the internal relations of things' (Mao also describes this as 'the stage of rational knowledge') (298). The knowledge acquired is then tested for its validity in actual practice, which leads to further perceptions, conceptual modifications and back to practice in an ongoing cycle of perception–conception–practice–perception.

If Mao's epistemology is empiricist, however, it is the empiricism of an activist who constructs knowledge in the process of reconstructing the world with revolutionary goals. While there is one illustration in the essay that suggests cognition may be a passive process of the accumulation of perceptions, the essay in its totality points to an activist epistemology. Mao believes that cognition has a class character, and he clearly elevates dialectical materialism over other possible methods in understanding the world (Mao Zedong 1965–7 I: 305). Mao begins his discussion of cognition at the stage of perception, but this does not imply that the mind is a blank sheet of paper upon which perceptions rewrite themselves into conceptions. This is because the mind already has a conceptual apparatus for organizing perceptions (implicit in the class character of knowledge) and a theoretical apparatus (dialectical materialism) for articulating them. Furthermore, his epistemology elevates certain activities over others in the acquisition of knowledge (the struggle for production and class struggle), and this knowledge also has a clear goal: 'making revolution' (296, 300). Most important is the place of practice, which Mao consistently uses in the sense of praxis, activity to change the world in cognition. In his discussion of cognition, Mao represents 'practice' as one stage of the process, but 'practice' clearly plays a much more important part in his thinking. It is practice, rather than perception, that stands at the beginning of the process of cognition (since different practices lead to different understandings of the world, and Mao elevates those perceptions that arise from the struggle for production and class above all

others). Practice also intermediates the transformation of perceptions into conceptions: 'The perceptual and the rational are qualitatively different, but are not divorced from each other; they are unified on the basis of practice' (299). The goal of 'On Practice' is not to argue for a vulgar empiricism ('seeking truth from facts'), but to assert the priority of practice in cognition against a theoretical dogmatism oblivious to the concrete circumstances of revolution. Quoting Stalin, Mao observes: 'Theory becomes purposeless if it is not connected with revolutionary practice; just as practice gropes in the dark if its path is not illumined by revolutionary theory' (305).

'On Practice' may be viewed as a call for the revolutionary hermeneutic which Mao further elaborates a month later in 'On Contradiction'. Composed as parts of a single project, the two discussions illuminate each other in their intertextuality. Mao's understanding of knowledge as interpretation, as well as his unwillingness to view it simply as interpretation, is expressed in the following statement:

> Fully to reflect a thing in its totality, to reflect its essence, to reflect its inherent laws, it is necessary through the exercise of thought to reconstruct the rich data of sense perception discarding the dross and selecting the essential, eliminating the false and retaining the true, proceeding from the one to the other and from the outside to the inside, in order to form a system of concepts and theories – it is necessary to make a leap from perceptual to rational knowledge. Such reconstructed knowledge is not more empty or more unreliable [than empiricism]; on the contrary, whatever has been scientifically reconstructed in the process of cognition, on the basis of practice, reflects objective reality. (Mao Zedong 1965–7 I: 303)

The last aspect of Mao Zedong Thought that is pertinent here is the vernacularization of theory: commonly described as the 'sinicization' (or 'sinification') of Marxism; more properly (and literally), 'making Marxism Chinese' (*Makesi zhuyide Zhongguohua*). In the view of the Communist Party of China, of all the innovations Mao's Marxism has claimed, none is as fundamental, or as far-reaching in its implications as 'making Marxism Chinese'. In its articulation of national to socialist goals, Mao's Marxism represented the epitome of a 'Chinese Marxism' (or, even more broadly, a 'Chinese socialism') that was simultaneously Chinese *and* Marxist. The same procedure lay at the root of Mao's restructuring of Marxism; not only would demanding a Chinese voice in a global Marxism have far-reaching implications for the Chinese Revolution, it would carry further implications for Marxism globally.

Following Mao, Chinese students of Mao have conventionally described the 'sinicization of Marxism' as 'the integration of the universal principles of Marxism with the concrete practice of the Chinese Revolution' (Shu Riping

1989: 6).[8] This seemingly straightforward formulation conceals the complexity of, and the contradictions presented by, the procedures of integrating universal principles (or theory) with revolutionary practice under particular circumstances. Stuart Schram has described 'sinification' as 'a complex and ambiguous' idea, which is evident in the conflicting interpretations to which 'sinification' has been subject (Schram 1971: 112). At the one extreme, 'sinification' appears simply as the 'application' (*yunyong*) of Marxism to the revolution in China, with no further implications for theory – or even as the ultimate fulfilment of the fundamental practice orientation of Marxism. At the other extreme, it represents the absorption of Marxism into a Chinese national or cultural space, irrevocably alienated from its origins in Europe. Between these extremes are a variety of interpretations that hold that while 'sinification' left Marxism untouched in its basics, it brought a Chinese 'air' or 'style' to Marxism.[9]

Mao did not come to Marxism as a 'blank sheet of paper', and there are tantalizing traces in his philosophy of various traditions in Chinese thought. There is, for instance, a parallel between his emphasis on 'practice' and the practical orientation of Confucian philosophy; Frederic Wakeman, Jr has pointed to parallels between Mao's thought and the emphasis on the 'unity of thought and action' in the Wang Yangming school of Confucianism in which Mao was interested as a young radical (Wakeman 1973: 238–58). Thomas Metzger suggests, even more directly, that 'The Sinification of Marxism . . . came to express and implement the traditional ethos of interdependence' (Metzger 1977: 233). Benjamin Schwartz (1968) has observed a continuity with Confucian tradition in Mao's preoccupation with morality in politics. At a more obscure level, it may be possible to perceive in Mao's assertion of the ceaselessness of change traces of more esoteric currents in Chinese thought going back to the *Yijing* (Book of Changes) and *yin-yang* naturalism, which held that change was the only constant in the universe (Liu 1971: esp. 78–81). At times, even Mao's dialectic, with its insistence on everything containing everything else, is more reminiscent of certain currents in Buddhist dialectic than the dialectic of Hegel and Marx. These ideas and their traces were part of the political and cultural discourse in Mao's environment, and the possibility of their presence in Mao's discourse on Marxism is not to be denied. Nevertheless, it is important that such presence, if possible, is informal (that is, Mao made no formal effort to integrate his Marxism with any of these traditions); any parallels drawn between his Marxism and native traditions is, of necessity, speculative.

More importantly, if Mao's thinking indeed contained traces of these intellectual traditions, these were mediated by and refracted through the problematic of revolutionary practice. The direct relationship between Mao's Marxism and the immediate experience of the Chinese Revolution

8 Shu Riping also offers a useful survey of discussions of Mao's thought over the preceding ten years; such discussions achieved an unprecedented intensity in the early 1980s but have declined in recent years.

9 For differences among Chinese interpretations, see Shu Riping (1989: 6). For different interpretations among Euro-American analysts, see *Modern China* (1976–7).

contains little ambiguity. Not only did this relationship produce a reinterpretation of Marxism to answer to the particular structural characteristics of Chinese society, it also called forth its rephrasing in a Chinese vernacular. Mao's vernacularization of Marxism may be viewed at two levels. What has attracted the greatest attention is how it has been viewed at the first level, the national level; that is, his effort to render Marxism relevant to China as a nation, a nation with a problematic identity in a new historical situation. While this already implies a localization of Marxism, what made Mao's Marxism authentically radical (and not just an excuse for nationalism) was his insistence on integrating Marxism into the language of the masses, which he believed should reconstitute China as a nation. In other words, Mao sought to localize it *within* the nation at the level of everyday life (this is the major difference between Mao's Marxism and the post-Mao 'socialism with Chinese characteristics'). Mao's vernacularization of Marxism was bound up at its most profound (and comprehensive) level with the experience of revolution in China as guerrilla warfare; it is not surprising that the first calls for translating Marxism into the language of the masses coincided with the appearance of a guerrilla strategy of revolution (and not by Mao but by others in the Party).

Mao's mode of presentation of his ideas was an elaboration of the simultaneously integrative and dispersive implications of relationships characterized by contradiction: integrative because everything depends for its existence on everything else and is therefore in a state of identity; dispersive because everything has its own irreducible particularity and is therefore in a state of difference and opposition. Analysis, including the analysis of the relationship between universal Marxist theory and the practice of revolution in China, must at all points remain cognizant of this basic relationship. Moreover, the relationship is not extrinsic but intrinsic: both identity and difference are intrinsic qualities of things that at once exclude and include one another. The whole and the parts, as well as the parts and the parts, may not be reducible to one another. As Althusser (1970: esp. 90–4) suggested, it is possible at one level to read these abstractions as a description of guerrilla warfare: for its success, guerrilla struggle demands that guerrillas remain part of a unity even as they disperse into different terrains as they respond to local conditions. The vernacularization of Marxism appears here as the abstraction to a paradigmatic level of a guerrilla socialism. At its most comprehensive level, this was the significance of the 'sinification' of Marxism.

What are the implications of this procedure for the relationship between Marxism and Mao's Marxism? Mao did not reduce Marxism to a Chinese version of it, nor view China merely as another illustration of universal Marxist principles. In its rhetorical trope, his exposition of the relationship is at once metonymic (reducing the Chinese Revolution to 'the status of an

aspect or function' of Marxism in general, from which nevertheless it differs in a relationship that is extrinsic) and synecdochic (in construing the relationship 'in the manner of an intrinsic relationship of shared qualities').[10] The result was a conception of the relationship that insisted on China's difference and yet represented Chinese Marxism as an embodiment of Marxism. Al Siqi, one of Mao's close collaborators in the project of 'sinification', put it as follows (in an essay that followed Mao's 'On New Democracy', in the journal *Chinese Culture*, which started publication in January 1940 as an organ of a 'sinified' Marxism):

10 For a discussion of these rhetorical tropes, see White (1973: 31–8).

> Marxism is a universal truth (*yibande zhengquexing*) not only because it is a scientific theory and method, but because it is the compass of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat . . . That is to say, every country or nation that has a proletariat or a proletarian movement has the possibility (*keneng xing*) and necessity (*biran xing*) of giving rise to and developing Marxism. Marxism can be made Chinese (*Zhongguohua*) because China has produced a Marxist movement in actuality (*shiji*); Chinese Marxism has a foundation in the internal development of Chinese economy and society, has internal sources, it is not a surface phenomenon . . . The Chinese proletariat has a high level of organization and awareness, has its own strong Party, has twenty years of experience in struggle, has model achievements in the national and democratic struggle. Hence there is Chinese Marxism. If Marxism is a foreign import, our answer is that Marxism gives practice (*shijian*) the primary place. If people wonder whether or not China has its own Marxism, we must first ask whether or not the Chinese proletariat and its Party have moved the heavens and shaken the earth, impelled the masses of the Chinese nation to progressive undertakings. The Chinese proletariat has accomplished this. Moreover, it has on this basis of practice developed Marxist theory. Hence it has its own Marxism. These are the real writings of Chinese Marxism, the texts (*shujue*) of Chinese Marxism . . . Marxism cannot but assume different forms depending on the different conditions *of* development *of* each nation; it cannot assume an international form globally. Presently, Marxism must be realized through national forms (*minzu xingshi*). There is no such thing as abstract Marxism, there is only concrete Marxism. The so-called concrete Marxism is Marxism that has taken national form. (Ai Siqi 1940)

The Marxism (Marxism-Leninism) that the Chinese communists inherited was a Marxism that had already been 'deterritorialized' from its original terrain in European history. Ai Siqi's statement metonymically recognizes the difference of Chinese Marxism from an international Marxism, but in the process also restates the relationship between Chinese and European (or any other) Marxism as a part–part relationship within a Marxism that, as a whole, has now been removed from any territorial associations.

Synecdochically, he 'reterritorializes' Marxism upon a Chinese terrain by asserting that Chinese Marxism is as 'intrinsically' representative of a whole Marxism as any other.[11] This simultaneous recognition of a global Marxist discourse as a pervasive unity and the discursive appropriation of Marxism in a Chinese terrain expressed the fundamental essence and the contradictoriness of the structure of Mao's Marxism and the procedure of sinification of which it was the product.

11 For 'deterritorialization' and 'reterritorialization,' see Deleuze and Guattari (1983).

These same contradictions suggest a degree of ambivalence with regard to the relevance of Mao Zedong Thought to Third World revolutions. On the one hand, as a nationalized Marxism, Mao's Marxism, with its particular structures and contradictions, could have little bearing on revolutions in other national situations. On the other hand, the procedures of analysis indicated by Mao's approach to theory – theory as a revolutionary hermeneutic that also liberated theory from its origins in European Marxism – claimed its universality as method that was available for deployment in any situation, regardless of particular characteristics. This ambivalence has not always been recognized in Third World 'Maoisms', which produces deleterious consequences for Mao Zedong Thought as revolutionary practice.

Maoism in the Third World

Maoism flourished globally during the 1960s and early 1970s, a long decade of postcolonial national liberation movements that began with the Cuban Revolution and reached its conclusion with the Vietnamese victory over the United States in 1975. The year 1968 was pivotal. I have argued elsewhere (Dirlik 1998) that 1968 was, among other things, the Year of the Third World. Not only did Third World national liberation movements hold centre-stage in world politics in the years surrounding 1968, but the student uprisings of that year also took those movements, as paradigmatic guides, to a new kind of future. China, in the throes of the Cultural Revolution, and largely cut off from the world, occupied a special place.[12]

12 For a recollection, and continued reaffirmation, see Badiou (2005).

The events in China from the early 1960s would have a worldwide impact, first with regard to the Sino-Soviet split and then, when the Cultural Revolution (officially, 1966–9) brought the People's Republic to the centre of world radicalism and turned the Chinese revolutionary experience, embodied in Mao Zedong Thought, into a paradigm not only in the Third World – from the Philippines to Peru and Mexico, to India, Nepal and Turkey, as well as ethnic minorities in the United States who identified with the Third World and a Third World minority, such as the Kurdish population in Turkey – but also in the First – the United States, France,

Germany, Italy, Australia and Japan, to cite some prominent examples.[13] Mao Zedong's Marxism and the practices of the Cultural Revolution came to be identified with authentic radicalism and were to play a significant part in the making of 1968. The attraction of Maoism 'arose not only for its "organizational model" but because it seemed to provide a ready revolutionary answer to the deformations of Russian-style Communism and Western Communist Parties. Since the Sino-Soviet split of the early 1960s, China came to provide an alternative revolutionary model that, for many students, was given additional weight by the Cultural Revolution of 1965–69' (Fraser 1988: 322–3). The 1960s were revolutionary years, and the Maoist 'revolution within the revolution' stood out for its uncompromising commitment to revolution, even in a post-revolutionary socialist state.

Maoism exerted the greatest attraction for urban intellectuals who provided both the leadership and the rank-and-file of Maoist movements. Some of the intellectuals who played leadership roles in Maoist movements continue to have international visibility, as in the case of Rafael Sebastian Guillen Vicente, or Subcomandante Marcos of Chiapas Zapatista fame; Jose Maria Sison, founder of the New People's Army in the Philippines in 1969, and established poet; Abimael Guzman of the Shining Path guerrillas in Peru; and Abdullah Ocalan of the Kurdish Communist Party. Others, such as Charu Mazumdar of the Naxalite movement in India and Ibrahim Kaypakkaya in Turkey, were murdered by the police in the 1970s, as government authorities suppressed Maoist uprisings that threatened to get out of hand. Although they are maligned in official historiography, their successors in Maoist movements remember them as martyrs to the cause.

The emphasis on the revolutionary authenticity of Cultural Revolution Maoism was no doubt an important element in the attraction of these intellectuals to Maoism, as is suggested by their uncompromising (and in some cases fanatical) moralism, another aspect that also came to characterize the movements they led. Nevertheless, the 'existential appeals' of Maoist ideology should not be understood in narrowly reductionist psychological terms, as Rabindra Ray does when he writes of the Naxalite leader Charu Mazumdar in India that 'the "class hatred" that Charu Mazumdar ensconced at the heart of the revolutionary process was the central experience of self-hatred of the Naxalite terrorist' (Ray 1988: 225). Whether or not one approves of their activities, their frequently dogmatic authoritarianism and slavish adherence to Maoist slogans, these intellectuals have displayed great courage and devotion in the pursuit of the cause they upheld.[14] It does not matter much, except to those who seek to discredit them, what satisfaction they may have derived personally or what psychological 'lack' they may have fulfilled when they sought to realize a political, social and psychological union with the 'masses' or the 'people'; the desire for such union is ultimately indistinguishable from a conviction in

13 For the impact of Maoism in France and the United States, see Fields (1989) and Wolin (2010). Discussions of Maoism in Japan, the Philippines, India, Peru, etc. are to be found in Dirlik et al. (1997). Important insights into Maoism in Turkey may be found in Baydar and Ulagay (2011). One of the most interesting facts may be that Turkish Maoists learned their Maoism from Charu Mazumdar in India. The importance of Maoism for African Americans is discussed in Frazier (2006). For Maoism among Asian Americans, see Wei (1993).

14 An example of such devotion and the courage it inspired is the Turkish Maoist Melek Ulagay (see

Baydar and Ulagay 2011). Needless to say, this does not apply to all, or even most, of those who moved in and out of these movements. See, for example, Sri Krishna (2007) for recollections on urban Maoists in India, many of whom came from upper-class families and elite universities. Some of the former Naxalites were to gain recognition in 'postcolonial criticism' and *Subaltern Studies* in later years.

the responsibility of intellectuals to respond to the very real social and political demands of their societies.

An additional factor in the 1960s was the struggle against 'revisionism'. Intellectuals such as Sison, Guzman and Mazumdar had had their initiation to Marxist politics through their participation in communist parties loyal to the Soviet Union, which had turned increasingly towards conservative reformism in the 1950s and 1960s. Their insistence on revolutionary authenticity represented a criticism of conventional communist politics, and their repudiation of their own former allegiances. Not only did Maoism provide an alternative to Soviet communism, it also served as an alternative to revisionist/reformist Marxism in general (including that of the Communist Party of China), as well as a strategy that promised to restore revolution to Marxism – just as the Leninist alternative to social democracy had done half a century earlier.

This is especially important at the present moment, when revolution has been declared illegal, and revolutionaries are made into terrorists and terrorists into psychologically deranged perverts. The manner in which revolution is presented says less about terrorists and revolutionaries than it does about the effort to discredit any serious and fundamental challenge to the existing system of oppression; even the government of the PRC that claims the legacy of Mao Zedong offered its help to the Nepalese monarchy (now gone and replaced by a government that includes Maoists) to suppress Maoists there! (Pan 2002).[15]

15 Since 2006, the monarchy has been overthrown, and Maoists have entered the coalition government as respectable members dedicated to peaceful change. At the time, the Beijing government, while still under the neoliberal Jiang Zemin leadership in 2002, paid only lip service to the legacy of Mao Zedong and was anxious after 9/11 to join the United States in the condemnation of terrorism. In their case, terrorism signified activists of national minorities seeking liberation from the PRC. The

The incoherence in the appeals of Maoism is another difficulty that makes generalization somewhat risky. Nigel Harris has observed, 'Identifying the doctrine does not allow us to comprehend the sheer diversity among the supporters of Mao Tse-tung Thought. All do not conform equally to the scheme . . . A claim to support the Great Helmsman does not indicate any predictable political behavior' (Harris 1978: 245). For many among the rank-and-file of these movements, including rank-and-file intellectuals, it is possible that adherence to Maoism did not go beyond sloganeering.

Nevertheless, it is possible to identify some common themes in Maoist movements, even if it is only at the ideological level. In a discussion of Shining Path ideology in Peru, Orin Starn writes that there were four important aspects to Abimael Guzman's thought, otherwise known as 'Gonzalo Thought': the primacy of class struggle, the necessity of combating imperialism, the importance of the vanguard party, and the elevation of violence to the status of 'universal law' (Starn 1997: 273–5). With local variations in their understanding and content, these four elements were characteristic of the ideologies of all Maoist movements, which is not very surprising, given that they represent important aspects of revolutionary Marxism going back to V. I. Lenin, if not to Karl Marx himself. However, the particular spin Mao had placed on them was what made them

support of Nepalese Maoists for ethnic minorities may have been a factor in their condemnation. See Boquerat (2006).

particularly relevant to the world situation in the 1960s and 1970s. In the words of the Naxalite leader Charu Mazumdar:

> The People's Democratic Revolution in our country can be led to a victorious end only on the basis of the thought of Chairman Mao. The extent to which one assimilates and applies the thought of the Chairman will determine whether one is a revolutionary or not. Moreover, the extent of the revolutionary upsurge will depend on how widely we can spread and propagate the Chairman's thought among the peasants and workers. This is because the Chairman's thought is not merely the Marxism-Leninism of the present era, the Chairman has advanced Marxism-Leninism itself to a completely new stage. That is why the present era has become the era of the Chairman's thought. (Mazumdar 2006)

The Maoist spin pertained primarily to issues of class struggle under conditions of imperialism, and the role of the peasantry in the revolution. As discussed in the last section, the struggle for revolution under 'semi-colonial semi-feudal' conditions changed the nature of class struggle from one between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, to a 'people's war', a war of all the patriotic classes (proletariat and peasantry, the petit-bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie) in a 'united front' for national liberation against imperialism and its internal allies – landlords and the comprador bourgeoisie. For the immediate future, the People's War and the National Democratic Revolution were to be the means through which class struggles were to be conducted. In Maoist movements in the Third World, as in the Chinese Revolution, class struggle was linked inextricably to issues of national independence and development. If nationalism qualified class struggle, the attention paid to class introduced a social dimension to nationalism, distinguishing Maoist from bourgeois nationalism. The peasantry was especially important here.

The Communist Revolution in China had succeeded through a rural strategy.[16] Though urban in origins, the Communist Revolution achieved victory on the shoulders of a peasantry mobilized through a combination of economic reform and peasant participation in the revolutionary process. In Third World societies with large agrarian populations that also experienced some measure of urban–rural bifurcation in the course of modernization, the strategy had a great deal of appeal because their economies were incorporated into a globalizing capitalist system. As Jose Maria Sison observes:

> The peasantry is the most numerous class in the predominantly agrarian East. It is a class that cries out for the democratic revolution to solve the land problem. The proletariat and its revolutionary party can and must bring about the

16 While the term 'peasant' is used widely by Maoist revolutionaries, 'agrarian' or 'rural' may describe the situation better, both because not all who live in the countryside are peasants and, more importantly, because in most of the cases that this discussion draws upon, the

mobilization also included ethnic and tribal groups.

> worker–peasant alliance in order to win the bourgeois-democratic and socialist stages of the revolution. Stalin spoke of the peasantry as the reserve of the proletariat. Mao went further. He spoke of the peasantry as the main force, actively following the working class as the leading force. (Sison 2003)

There was, however, an additional dimension to the inclusion of the peasantry in the revolutionary struggle. In the Chinese Revolution the peasants provided the armies that surrounded cities from the countryside and carried the Communist Party to victory, thus completing the tasks of national unification and liberation from imperialism. This national strategy was rendered into a grand global strategy of revolution in the mid-1960s, when Defence Minister and Second in Command of the Cultural Revolution, Marshall Lin Biao, brought it together with the struggle against imperialism in his widely disseminated text, 'Long Live the Victory of People's War' (Lin 1965). Even if Maoist revolutionaries, as good Marxists, continued to speak of proletarian internationalism, if Maoism made sense as a global revolutionary model, it was in this guise of agrarian anti-imperialism, which also rendered it in the eyes of many a Marxism appropriate to the age. The shift in the constituency and strategy of revolution also signalled a shift in the centre of gravity of revolution from the First and Second to the Third World.

The third theme of the vanguard party, a Leninist rather than Maoist idea, does not require much comment, except to note the transformations it went through from Lenin to Mao to Third World Maoisms. Lenin's conception of the vanguard party was a response to a realization that the proletariat, left on its own, was more likely to pursue economic gain ('economism') than revolution. As a result, it was up to committed revolutionaries, organized in a revolutionary party, to carry out the revolution and to carry the proletariat with them. The agrarian revolution in China made the vanguard party even more important, as peasants, while given to spontaneous acts of rebellion, were even less revolutionary than the proletariat when it came to a socialist revolution. On the other hand, the sheer exigencies of survival in the countryside led to two important shifts. First, there was mass mobilization and inclusion of the agrarian population in the revolutionary process, which required closer cooperation between the Party and the people and led to the modification of Bolshevik 'democratic centralism' with the addition to it of a 'mass line'. Second was the near-integration of Party and military in response to the exigencies of guerrilla and mobile warfare, the success of which played a major part in the victory of the Communist Party. The successful politicization of the military was accompanied by the militarization of the Party itself, giving the Chinese Communist Party its special colouring.

Maoist movements abroad have sought to emulate these characteristics of the Communist Party of China with varying degrees of success. It is quite obvious in the case of China that the success of the strategy depended on

circumstances, including the strength of the forces of 'order' aligned against it. Whatever the virtues of the strategy, the anti-Japanese war (1937–45) had created the propitious circumstances that had enabled the Communist Party to overcome its enemies. Where such circumstances did not exist, mass mobilization could easily give way to conspiratorial action, and armed class struggle could degenerate into vengeful acts of violence against 'class enemies'. At least in the short run, this was to be the fate of Maoist movements in India, Turkey and Peru. The Naxalites in India had been born out of a peasant uprising in Naxalbari in West Bengal in 1967, but in the face of repression (by a government that included pro-Moscow communists), turned increasingly to the 'annihilation' of class enemies – individual acts of violence against landlords reminiscent of anarchist 'propaganda by the deed' – until they were suppressed by the authorities in 1972; Charu Mazumdar died at the hands of the police. In the short-lived Maoist uprising in Turkey in the early 1970s and the much longer Shining Path uprising in Peru, 'guerrilla warfare' could survive only by responding to state terrorism by counter-acts of terrorism, which in the end could not but undermine the goals of the revolution. Turkish Maoists were suppressed by the late 1970s, the Shining Path in the 1990s.[17] Needless to say, the most tragic instance of Maoist revolution degenerating into mindless violence is the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, which ended up by visiting genocidal policies against its own population.

On the other hand, where circumstances were more favourable, Maoist movements have been able to survive state terrorism without degenerating into terrorist organizations (regardless of labels placed on them by the US government and its allies). Such is the case with Maoism in the Philippines, which claims the longest history of any of the Maoist movements that came into existence in the 1960s. While the movement has faced difficulties, and splintered, the New People's Army, established in 1969, is still engaged in struggle against the repressive regimes that have succeeded one another, emboldened in their acts of state terrorism with active support from the United States (Distor 1997). Nepalese and Indian Maoists provide other examples. Nepalese Maoists were late to the revolutionary scene and did not unfurl their banner of revolution until 1996. Much to the chagrin of PRC authorities, however, they are also the most successful instance of Maoist revolution outside of the PRC. Drawing support from tribals and rural women, Nepalese Maoists played a key role in the overthrow of the monarchy and are presently part of the new Nepalese federal democratic republic.[18] Women and tribals have also been a major source of support for the Maoists in India. Despite official hysteria about 'extreme leftist' violence, Maoists have been most notable for their mobilization and defence of the tribal populations against government malfeasance and corporate depredation, especially mining companies. To be sure, Maoists have rhetorically

17 The discussion here draws on Starn (1997), Seth (1997) and Gungor (2005). I am grateful to Mr Gungor for sharing his thesis with me.

18 In addition to Boquerat (2006), see Rajmohan (n.d.) and Gyawali and Sharma (2005).

fetishized 'armed struggle' and have engaged in acts of terror, but if they are, as the government claims, more dangerous than terrorists, it is because they have dramatized the violence against nature and marginalized populations of the developmentalist agenda of a state in alliance with corporate capital (Roy 2011).

The politics of Maoist movements also provide the context for the issue of violence. The Chinese Revolution achieved success through armed struggle, and Mao's 1938 statement, 'political power grows out of the barrel of a gun', was to travel far and wide in the 1960s, from the Naxalites in India to Naxalite-inspired revolutionaries in Turkey to the Shining Path in Peru and the Black Panthers in Oakland. Contrary to its commonplace interpretations, such a statement (along with many similar ones to be found in Mao's writings and speeches) was a response to the concrete circumstances of the revolution: rather than representing a generalized glorification of violence, it spoke as much to state violence as the violence of the revolutionaries. Nevertheless, in the 1960s, the violent rhetoric of the Cultural Revolution endowed all such statements with a generalized significance, rendering violence into a principle that overshadowed the more prosaic tasks of revolution that demanded patience and long-term government. When evaluating the problem of violence, it is necessary to remember the context of the 1960s and 1970s and the use of violence by colonial powers and their allies against anti-colonial movements from Central America to Algeria to Vietnam, actions that played a far more important part in the global routinization of violence than the activities of largely marginal Maoist groups. Maoists, in their advocacy of violence, were speaking to the same circumstances that were dramatically analysed by Frantz Fanon (1963). Years later, the importance of the barrel of the gun to political power would, once again, be symbolized dramatically by former Maoists turned peaceful defenders of grassroots right to existence – the Zapatistas in Chiapas.

There is little question that the glorification of violence opened the way to mindless acts of violence and needs to be evaluated critically for its degenerative consequences for revolutionary goals. On the other hand, it is necessary to note another important dimension to the issue of violence: the deployment of violence in the creation of a revolutionary culture. Part of the Chinese communist strategy in mass mobilization was to involve the masses in the purge of their former oppressors. As has been captured in the monumental works of William Hinton, rather than simply eliminate 'class enemies', the communists made purges into public affairs, directing the 'masses' into the confrontation and elimination of those at whose hands they had suffered (Hinton 1997). The hoped-for result was to overcome the cultural and psychological legacies of oppression, to instil a new revolutionary subjectivity in the people and to release energies that lay dormant

under layers of oppression. This may also have been a consideration in at least some of the Maoist movements (Seth 1997).

The Present

Ironically, while Maoism is dead (so far) in its birthplace, the movements it inspired in the 1960s have refused to go away, and it continues to inspire new generations. Abimael Guzman is in a Peruvian jail, but it seems that neither his spirit nor the movement he led has been extinguished. In Nepal, Maoists have won an important victory. Jose Mari Sison has been subjected to persecution in exile in the Netherlands, where he took up residence after escaping from the military in the Philippines, but he continues to be active, as does the New People's Army. The Naxalite movement in India is back in the news and can now claim to match the Philippine insurrection in longevity. In the meantime, a Maoist Communist Party was established in Turkey in 2003, while South Asia has witnessed the formation of a 'Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organizations of South Asia.'[19]

The revived Naxalite movement holds a special place in these movements by its size but more importantly by pointing once again to the fundamental social problems that have kept Maoism alive. While the *Economist*, with its usual disdain for anything that smacks of a search for social justice, can dismiss the revived Naxalism as 'a crude, violent ideology, promising land and liberation' (*Economist* 2006), it constitutes the revival 'of a political movement that had been born from the wound of the bleeding Indian countryside' (Banerjee 1967). And it is the continued bleeding of the countryside from which the Naxalites draw their appeal and their constituencies. As another author writes:

> These men and women are Communists with absolute belief and commitment to the Maoist ideology of revolution. You cannot change their mindset. The only thing you can attempt, is to try and wean away their following. These are people who believe that the state has failed them and that their only hope lies in following the Naxals . . . Unless something radical is done in terms of a structural revolution in rural areas, you will see a continuous expansion of Maoist insurrection. (Pais 2006)[20]

The form such a structural transformation might take is another problem. As was and is the case with the People's Republic of China, India is presently in the process of incorporation in global capitalism, which has led to further marginalization of rural areas, especially of the *Adivasi* or the indigenous 'tribals'. If this marginalization nourishes attraction to radical solutions, the 'globalization' of the national economy makes it more difficult than ever

19 *Revolutionary Worker* (2003). For South Asia, see 'Declaration of CCOMPOSA', which was adopted by the Second Annual Conference of Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organizations of South Asia (2002). The participants included several groups each from India and Bangladesh, as well as Nepalese and Sri Lankan Maoist organizations.

20 For six years, Pais served as head of the National Labour Institute in New Delhi. See also Roy (2011) for in-depth interviews with the Maoists.

before to halt the slide of rural areas to marginality. Armed struggle dramatizes the Naxalite cause. On the other hand, despite the enthusiasm of distinguished public figures like Arundhati Roy, their appeal would appear to be overshadowed by far by other movements directed at the resolution of problems of governance and corruption in India, such as that of the Gandhi-ites represented by Anna Hazare.

In its time, the Maoist strategy of self-reliant development – the promise to put an end to the economic dependency the legacy of colonialism has left to the developed world – was another source of attraction to Third World radicals. As has been most insistently propagated by Samir Amin, the Maoist strategy of development promised to 'delink' national economies from globalizing capitalism and reconstruct them to serve local needs rather than the demands of global capital.[21] This is no longer a possibility, as nation-states, including formerly socialist states, increasingly seek economic salvation and power in 'globalization', which has served to enhance the power of native elites.

21 Amin is the author of many works on the subject. Most directly relevant here may be Amin (1990).

There has been some talk in the PRC over the last few years about reviving Maoist insights in the reevaluation of current policies of economic globalization, which briefly found an important, if unlikely, champion in Bo Xilai, the former Party Secretary of Chongqing municipality. The revival of Maoist cultural activity that dramatized the so-called 'Chongqing Model' enjoyed national popularity during the celebrations of the ninetieth anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China in 2011. It was problematic all along whether the song-and-dance routines Bo sponsored would lead to anything more substantial by way of improving the lot of the people. The experiment was to be short-lived. Whatever it might have promised is now buried irretrievably in the layers of corruption and scandal that brought Bo to an ignominious end. Its legacy may be the further degradation of memories of Mao and Maoism. It is unlikely that Maoist ideas of development can gain a hearing of any significance at the state level – except perhaps to further strengthen the security apparatus Bo reputedly aspired to lead. Nevertheless, some of those policies may still have relevance at local levels of development, where self-reliance may indeed offer a way out for communities abandoned by the states. Ironically, the legacies of Maoism may have greater staying power in locations such as India than in the PRC itself. Banerjee writes:

> Most of the progressive trends in Indian social activism today (like the growth of voluntary organizations working among the underprivileged and powerless, or the role of the media in exposing atrocities on the depressed castes and the landless, or the affirmative actions by human rights activists as agents of entitlement, acting on behalf of the dispersed social groups) can be traced indirectly to the issues raised by, or associated with, the Naxalite movement. (Banerjee 1967: 7)

However, in India, the political, economic and cultural elite are also far more impressed with the economic development of post-Mao China than with any radical legacies of the Chinese Revolution. The next location for Maoist social and economic practice may not be at the level of states, where they have left a dubious legacy, but at the level of community formations that are the goals of contemporary social movements, where they may lend themselves to more democratic approaches when answering the question of human survival and development.

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