

GLOBAL DOMINANCE / GLOBAL RESISTANCE

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1. INTRODUCTION

We do not want your charity, we do not want your loans. Those in the North have to understand our struggle and to realise it is also part of their own. Everywhere the rich are getting richer, the poor poorer, and the environment is being plundered. Whether in the North or South, we face the same future..... Globalisation should mean we want to globalise human society, not business. Life is not business.¹

Globalisation has become a buzzword that is being used by everyone - from politicians to priests, from sociologists to speculators, from economists to environmentalists and from revolutionaries to reactionaries. So many different interpretations are given to this word that perhaps it is losing its meaning. However, one would be naïve if one were to ignore the fact that globalisation - whatever one thinks of it - is indeed a social reality.

In this essay I shall analyse the validity of the globalisation thesis put forward by Karl Marx and Fredreich Engels in the Communist Manifesto which they presented in 1848. I shall argue that much of the economic changes which they predicted are have taken place or are taking place in the contemporary world. I shall also amplify the argument that globalisation includes other aspects - such as the environmental and the political - which should be taken into account in a multidimensional analysis of the theme. Indeed, I shall argue that the political aspect can be, and indeed is, a powerful tool that can oppose the capitalist global dominance of the world. Green Politics shall be used as an example of political globalisation that is resisting environmental destruction and social injustices resulting from global capitalist dominance.

2. MARX, ENGELS AND ECONOMIC GLOBALISATION

The Communist Manifesto on Globalisation

150 years ago, in the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels put forward a thesis in which they proclaimed the world dominance by the bourgeois class and by the capitalist mode of production.

Marx and Engels state that the development of manufacturing industry together with the discovery of new markets and the colonisation of vast areas around the world results in an increase in commerce, communication and development, by means of which feudal society becomes outdated. In Marx's and Engels's words, the "bourgeoisie developed,

¹ A farmer from Karnataka, India. (2000) *Peoples Global Action*, p.1.

increased its capital, and pushed into the background every class handed down from the Middle Ages.” (Marx, K. & Engels, F., 1998: 3) This is not all, for in addition:

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his ‘natural superiors’ and has left no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous ‘cash payment’……. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom - Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation. (Ibid: 3)

Hence Marx and Engels maintain that through the exploitation of the world market in the name of free trade, great social changes are brought about, by means of which production and consumption around the world become cosmopolitan. Local industries are driven out of the market by newer industries that act transnationally. Such industries work up raw material, which is drawn from different areas around the world. Their products are sold on the international markets, thus resulting in the interdependence of nations, not only economic but also cultural. In fact “national one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures there arises a world literature”. (Marx, K. & Engels, F., 1998: 4)

The picture is now complete. Marx and Engels give a vivid description of the capitalist world-dominance:

The bourgeois, by the rapid improvement of the instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilisation. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians’ intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilisation into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image. (Ibid.: 4-5)

Marx and Engels therefore assume that the international economic dominance of the bourgeoisie brings about revolutionary changes in the spheres of politics and culture. Globalisation comes about, destroying everything that stands in its way in the name of free trade.

The analysis of Marx and Engels does not stop here. They predict that the bourgeoisie world dominance will result in an intensification of exploitation and therefore in class struggle between the ruling class and the proletariat. The class struggle could result in a communist revolution against the existing social and political order of things, something that is vehemently supported by Marx and Engels:

Let the ruling classes tremble at a communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Workingmen of all countries, unite! (Marx, K. & Engels, F., 1998: 29)

The Communist Manifesto: 150 years later

Although there have been various criticisms regarding the validity of the *Communist Manifesto* in the analysis of contemporary societies, various social theorists disagree with such criticisms. Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm, commenting on the *Communist Manifesto*, states that what Marx and Engels wrote “150 years ago about the nature and tendencies of global capitalism, rings amazingly true today!” (Hobsbawm, 1998: 4)

There are various other social theorists who agree on the validity of what Marx and Engels predicted in the *Manifesto*. David Edgar, for example, states that not only does the *Manifesto* go beyond predicting globalisation: “it predicts a number of consequences of it which may now seem self-evident but certainly would not have done so in 1848.” (Edgar, 1988: 64). These include, firstly the ability of capitalism to establish new industries and to destroy the same industries only to replace them by transnational ones; secondly, the homogenisation of world-wide production and consumption; thirdly, the cosmopolitanisation of intellectual production. And, fourthly, that the vast majority of the world’s population would become poorer by means of this process. (Ibid.: 64)

Edgar maintains that the strongest point of the *Manifesto* is its analysis of capitalism’s bulldozer-like ability to remove “all fixed, fast frozen relations’ in society, the undermining of the traditional professions and the traditional family, and the creation in its place, of a condition of ‘uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation’.” (Ibid.: 64)

It would now be useful to briefly analyse various globalisation processes that are characterising contemporary societies. These processes include not only economic globalisation but also a variety of other forms of globalisation. I shall verify whether such globalisation patterns fit within the theoretical framework put forward by Marx and Engels.

Economic Globalisation in the Contemporary World: The Global Dominance of the Bourgeoisie

Today, after a quarter century of declining profit rates - despite brutal ‘cost-cutting’ drives against the wages and living standards of working people in all sectors of the world - the world capitalist economy is in the midst of a long-term deflationary crisis, marked by growing instability, financial volatility, and mercurial giddiness underlying bourgeois opinion. (Waters, 1998: 10)

Contemporary capitalism is characterised by the internationalisation of economic processes such as production and financial transactions. Various contemporary social theorists argue that due to this internationalisation, national governments, both North and South, have become subordinate to the dictates of supra-national economic organisations with apparently limitless power.

The internationalisation - or globalisation - of economic processes, is to a very high extent promoted by multinational corporations, which, turn, are responsible for global production and distribution, the creation of employment, and the diffusion of technology. Together with multinational corporations, various financial organisations, ranging from

the International Monetary Fund to the World Trade Organisation are also progressively becoming more global in scale and orientation, influencing the economic policies of an ever-increasing number of countries around the world.

David Held argues that as from the late 1970s there has been an international consensus, among various economic giants such as the US government, the G7, the OECD, the IMF, the World Bank, and so on:

on the necessity and desirability of a public policy and political strategy shaped by, on the one hand, the institutions and principles of liberal democracy, and, on the other, macro-economic policies aimed at low inflation, balanced budgets, the removal of trade barriers and exchange controls, maximum liberty for capital, minimum regulation of labour markets, privatisation and, in general, a streamlined adaptive welfare state to propel citizens into work. (Held, 1998: 25)

Held states that due to the fact that economic processes are becoming ever more competitive and globalised, national Keynesianism may be outdated, as national states are losing much of their economic sovereignty. Harvard economist Jeffrey Sachs gives an example of such a fact by stating in *The Financial Times* that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) now dictates economic policy for 1.4 billion people or nearly 60 per cent of the developing world - outside China and India which are not under its programmes. (Ellwood, 2000: 10) Other global institutions, such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) have tremendous influence over national economies, and even have the power to impose sanctions on member-countries that do not follow the rules.

The economic sovereignty of many countries is also threatened by the economic strength of multinational corporations, which are becoming ever more powerful. Some of these corporations enjoy monopolistic power and total sales, which supersede the GDP of various nations. Others are joining forces by means of mergers and acquisitions. At the same time speculation on global currency markets is rife - more than \$1.5 trillion change hands daily on global currency markets (New Internationalist, 2000a:25). Currency speculation is so massive that the annual global trade in merchandise and services during 1998 was equivalent of just 4.3 days trading on foreign exchange (forex) markets. (Ibid.). Such speculation can destroy whole national economies at one blow. Some examples shall follow.

An analysis of the market share of the top ten corporations by sector around the world (as at 1997) would include the following statistics: Telecommunications 86%, Pesticides 85%, Computers 70%. Veterinary medicine 60%, Pharmaceuticals 35%, Commercial seed 32%. (UNDP: 1999)

A comparison of the total sales of multinational corporations with the GDP of nation states (as at 1997), would bring about the following data:

<u>Country or Corporation</u>	<u>GDP or total sales (US\$ billion)</u>
General Motors	164
Thailand	154

Norway	153
Ford Motor Co	147
Mitsui & Co	145
Saudi Arabia	140
Mitsubishi	140
Poland	136
South Africa	129
Royal Dutch Shell	128
Marubeni	124
Greece	123
Sumitomo	119
Exxon	117
Toyota Motor	109
Wal Mart Stores	105
Malaysia	98
Israel	98
Colombia	96

(Source: *UNDP*: 1999)

If one were to take a look at the financial worth of the assets of the wealthiest three billionaires in the world, one would find out that the amount is greater than the combined GDP of the 48 least developed countries which have a total population of more than 600 million. (New Internationalist, 2000a:24) The total assets of Bill Gates alone are worth more than \$60 billion - "more than the combined gross national products of Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Panama, Honduras, Nicaragua, Belize, Jamaica and Bolivia." (Ibid.)

The poor are not getting a fair deal out of the capitalist form of economic globalisation. For example, the income gap between the fifth of the world's people living in the richest countries and the fifth living in the poorest jumped from 30:1 in 1960 to 74:1 in 1997. (New Internationalist, 2000a:24) Successive recent annual reports of the United Nations Development Programme repeatedly show how poverty is alive and kicking - to such an extent that during the 1990s various countries, especially the heavy debtors, are worse off than they were during the 1960s.

Economic speculation, part-and-parcel of the mantra provided by the free-trade financial gurus, is causing havoc to whole regions. One need only mention the recent Asian crises - in which millions of people succumbed into poverty. Due to short-term speculation Indonesia, Korea, Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines "suffered a destructive net reversal of private capital flows from 1996 to 1997 of \$105 billion." (Ibid.: 25). In Indonesia alone, the number of poor people increased by one-fifth of the population, or 40 million. The figure of poor people in this country has now toppled the 100 million mark. In various other countries such as South Korea unemployment kept on increasing and real wages declined. (Ibid.: 25)

3. GLOBALISATION REVISTED: ECOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL FACTORS

Armageddon Revisited: The Ecological Catastrophe

It seems that many of Marx's and Engels's predictions regarding the capitalist global dominance indeed seem to be occurring in the contemporary world economic system. Multinational corporations and international economic institutions, guided by the free-trade neo-liberal ideology are indeed upbeat in the way they are battering and dominating national economies. But is human society simply a matter of economics? Would it not be rather one-dimensional if non-economic (but nevertheless material) factors were to be ignored in the analysis of social global processes?

Wayne Ellwood is one of the various social theorists who insist that an analysis of globalisation should also cater for non-economic factors. Ellwood agrees that the global capitalist system is resulting in massive inequalities, but he also adds that "the neo-liberal economic agenda of the World Trade Organisation, the IMF and major global corporations further accelerated the depletion of the Earth's natural resources and the destruction of its life-support systems." (Ellwood, 2000:12) In other words, Ellwood includes ecology - or rather, ecological destruction - in the global equation.

It is rather obvious that ecological destruction is a major characteristic of the contemporary world, and there is abundant research that gives scientific backing to this fact. For example, according to the World Wildlife Fund, the Earth lost 30% of its natural wealth in just 25 years from 1970 to 1995 . Jane Lubchenco, President of the American Academy for the Advancement of Science, states that "we are modifying physical, chemical and biological systems in new ways, at faster rates, and over larger spatial scales than ever recorded on Earth. Humans have unwittingly embarked upon a grand experiment with our planet. The outcome of this experiment is unknown, but has profound implications for all of life." (Ellwood, 2000: 10)

The New Internationalist magazine vividly portrays the grand experiment referred to by Lubchenco. A snapshot of the global ecological situation is portrayed and includes the following facts and projections:

- An estimated 50,000 plant and animal species will become extinct in the coming decades; in the tropics, ecosystem destruction is so severe that 60,000 plant species, 25% of the world's total, could be lost by 2025;
- Mono-cropping and dependence on a handful of basic crop varieties is endangering genetic diversity. Just 20 plants now supply 80% of humanity's food and most farmers grow identical types of wheat, rice and potatoes;
- As demand for fresh, clean water for irrigation and industry mounts, underground aquifers are being drained faster than they can be refilled. Pollution and changing climatic conditions are adding to the burden on fresh water supplies;
- In 31 countries with a collective population of half-a-billion people are experiencing chronic water shortages. This may reach 3 billion people in 50 countries within 25

years. The vast majority of this water-stressed population will live in Africa and South Asia;

- Nearly half the world's major rivers are going dry or are badly polluted. In China, 80% of the major rivers are so degraded they no longer support fish life;
- As CO₂ emissions from the burning of fossil fuels rise, the Earth is heating up. Seven of the ten hottest years in the past 130 years occurred during the 1990s. Hotter air makes the water cycle run faster which leads to more intense storms and more rainfall;
- Scientific examinations of the Vostok ice core in Antarctica found CO₂ concentrations in the atmosphere at their highest levels in 420,000 years;
- On average each person in the world emits 4 tonnes of CO₂ a year, though figures vary greatly from country to country.. Emissions per person in North American average 19 tonnes, five times the world average and ten times the developing-world average;
- The Earth's forests absorb CO₂, produce oxygen, anchor soil, moderate the climate, influence the water cycle and provide a rich habitat for myriad plants and animals. Half the world's original forest cover of some three billion hectares has been destroyed in the last 40 years, only 20% of what remains is undisturbed by human activities.

(Source: *New Internationalist*, 2000b: 18-19)

The process of ecological destruction portrayed above has much to do with the process of economic globalisation. In fact, ever since the launch of European colonialism 500 years ago, no corner of the Earth has remained unaffected from the effects of industrialisation, and the accumulation of human-made waste. According to the *New Internationalist*, "excessive consumption, unnecessary production, vast quantities of waste and scandalous disparities between rich and poor have combined to put the future of both humankind and the planet in question. There is ever-more statistical evidence that this development path is unsustainable." (*New Internationalist*, 2000b:18) Marx and Engels did mention ecological destruction in some of their writings, but in no way did they give it as much importance as the global capitalist expansion. Indeed, their productivist bias is a major shortcoming in their writings. In fact their analysis treats ecology as a tool to be exploited by man in the name of economic expansion.

When one considers the economic disparities and the tragic ecological situation around the contemporary world, one may be led to think in terms of Armageddon in which the human subject is condemned to death by unbeatable forces of doom and destruction. But does such a determinist analysis really make sense, or do they ignore the human potential? If one considers the important role of politics, one may beg to differ.

The Political Safeguard

Various social theorists argue that the *political* has an important role to play in any social analysis. For example, Althusser (1977) reminds us on Marx's insistence that there is no economic system without society, although not all Marxists agree with his arguments.

Althusser insists that factors such as politics and ideology are not simply determined by the economy but may in themselves overdetermine specific social formations². To name just a few examples, one may mention the re-emergence of various forms of nationalisms and religious fundamentalisms around the world as well as the strength of various ideologies and political agents, ranging from radical leftist politics to far-right xenophobia.

Eric Hobsbawm (1998) agrees that much importance must be given to factors such as politics. For example, he states that although the world is being dominated by the capitalist mode of production, there is no nation state which permits uncontrolled immigration, although it may suit the interests of profit-maximising corporations due to the growth of the reserve army of labour in industrialised countries. Hobsbawm also states that no European government “actually believes that cutting wages and conditions can make our labour costs competitive with, say, Indian or Chinese labour costs” (Hobsbawm, 1998: 5) This is because of the importance of *politics*, which, although greatly influenced by economics, could be considered to be relatively autonomous in many respects. Just imagine the political resistance if European wages were dropped to Chinese levels! Would any government commit political suicide?

Hence, one may talk in terms of an ever increasing economic globalisation which, however, leaves space for political and ideological overdeterminations. I will now put forward an argument which states that factors such as political ones may indeed be used as an alternative form of globalisation which may, oppose the capitalist form of economic globalisation.

² Althusser’s theory of overdetermination takes account of various complexities that specifically characterise each social formation. For example, social change is not simply a question of economic change that forces sudden change on all superstructural elements. Althusser explains this point by stating that various aspects of the superstructure, particularly ideologies are capable of reproducing themselves even when social change occurs. In his words, “the new society produced by the Revolution may itself *ensure the survival, that is, the reactivation, of older elements* through both the forms of its new superstructures and specific (national and international) ‘circumstances’.” (Ibid.: 116)

According to Althusser there is no simple and straightforward contradiction between Capital and Labour, but that this always has to be put into historical context. He states that apart from class contradictions, a correct analysis of social formations must also take account of various factors that determine the social situation. These factors include, “the forms of the *superstructure* (the State, the dominant ideology, religion, politically organised movements, and so on); specified by *the internal and external historical situation* which determines it on the one hand as a function of the *national past* (completed or ‘relapsed’ bourgeois revolution, feudal exploitation eliminated wholly, partially or not at all, local ‘customs’, specific national *traditions*, even the ‘etiquette’ of political struggles and behaviour, etc.), and on the other as functions of the existing *world context* (what dominates it - competition or capitalist nations, or ‘imperialist internationalism’, or competition within imperialism, etc.)” (Althusser, 1977: 106) Therefore, overdetermination is characterised by various structural and superstructural factors such as those mentioned above, which, are “largely specific and autonomous, and therefore irreducible to a pure *phenomenon*.” (ibid.: 113)

Political Globalisation: An Alternative to Global Capitalist Dominance?

Various social theorists give much importance to political globalisation. One such theorist, David Held (1998), argues that although national governments may be losing much authority in various economic aspects, one would be wrong to consider this as being a proclamation of the 'end of the state'. Held maintains that in many aspects national governments may be more 'activist' than in previous years - especially in the political context of economic globalisation.. National governments may co-operate with as well as be confronted by such organisations and institutions, such as the United Nations in order to bring about democratic changes . In Held's words:

Twentieth century forms of international law...[ranging from].. the law governing war, to those concerning crimes against humanity, environmental issues and human rights - have created the basis for what can be thought of as an emerging framework of cosmopolitan law, law which circumscribes and delimits the political power of individual states. In principle, states are no longer able to treat their citizens as they think fit; for the values embedded in these laws qualify in fundamental ways the nature and form of political power; and they set down basic standards and boundaries which no agent (political or economic) should be able to cross. (Held, 1998: 26)

Held puts forward an alternative model of globalisation, characterised by international collaboration, the development of international law and a more regulated political and economic order. As he puts it, "this creates an anchor on which to build a more accountable and democratic form of globalisation." (Held, 1998:26-27)

But what exactly is Held proposing? The reforms he proposes include the following measures:

- The regulation of international financial markets and financial speculation;
- The extension of legislation to reframe markets in order to counter their environmental and social costs;
- The extension of international democratic mechanisms across territorial borders; .

Such reforms might begin in Europe by increasing transparency in key decision-making centres; enhancing the power of the European Parliament and increasing democracy across all institutions within the European Union. "Elsewhere it would entail restructuring the UN Security Council to give developing countries a significant voice in decision-making." (Held, 1998: 27)

Although it would be difficult to forecast whether such changes as those proposed by Held will take place, one may notice that various calls for global changes are currently taking place around the world. The lack of public support to the global economic system is being recognised by powerful institutions. To give an example, US Trade Representative Charles Barshefsky recently said that "there is growing distrust" (Ellwood, 2000:10) of globalisation in both the North and the South.

Coupled with the growing distrust of the capitalist globalisation process is the decrease in options which serve the global economic powers. In the words of Mary Alice Waters:

The maintenance of their social order depends increasingly on balloons of debt forced upon others and inflated and unstable paper values, both inside and outside the imperialist centres. The resulting volatility brings growing insecurity and acceleration of political polarisation. (Waters, 1998:33)

Indeed, during the 1990s the world witnessed various examples of democratic demands against the global capitalist system. The decade (and the millennium) ended with the spectacular Seattle demonstrations against the World Trade Organisation. These paralysed the neo-liberal changes which the WTO wanted to impose. Here one could find a range of political movements, trade-unions and new social movements representing various issues, such as labour, environment, national development and animal rights. The massive demonstrations were an encouraging example of alliances against the prevailing capitalist world order.

The battle of Seattle was indeed a fitting way to end the millennium. This struggle could be added to many other “global” or “internationalist” struggles during the 90s , which included:

- the alliances formed by various developing countries and political movements against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), which proposes to give more power to multinational corporations and less to nation states;
- The various internationalist environmental campaigns put forward by Green Parties around the world as well as various environmental campaigns by Greenpeace, one of the forerunners of global environmental struggle;
- The appeals by various politician and religious movements, developing countries as well as rock stars and other celebrities to appeal for the cancellation of third world debt;
- Global human-rights activities ranging from those organised by Amnesty International to individual campaigns such as the Free Mumia Abu Jamal campaign, with supporters around the world as diverse as the European Parliament, actress Whoopi Goldberg and rock band Rage Against the Machine;
- Cross-national strikes, such as those carried out by French and Belgian workers against Renault;
- The June 18 1999 World Anti-Capitalist Day, and other similar activities, in which all sorts of movements – ranging from environmentalist to anarchist - organised activities around the world ranging from mass demonstrations to rock concerts;
- The protests around the world against French nuclear testing in Muroroa;
- The Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, Mexico, against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Mexican government, an example of do-it-yourself grassroots action which has gained international attention and support.
- and many other examples.

I shall now proceed to analyse one of the most vivid examples of political globalisation confronting the global economic order, namely Green Politics.

Green Politics: Political Globalisation in Practice

As mentioned above, the Green Movement is among the forerunners of global political action. In the words of political scientist Robert Garner, the global significance of Green politics is due to the fact that “the most critical environmental problems can only be tackled internationally.” (Garner, 1996:110) Garner insists that global problems such as global warming and ozone depletion can only be tackled by means of global co-operation. Green parties promote such co-operation.

The roots of Green politics are found within the first ecological and alternative political groups which emerged in Western Europe during the 1960's – indeed the years of massive rebellion against Capitalist injustices. Most European Green Parties were not created until a decade or more later, and many have since then established themselves as political forces of considerable strength in their countries.

The first Green Party to achieve considerable success was the German Green Party, *Die Grunen*, which, in 1983 attracted nearly a million votes (5.6%) and gained 28 seats out of 497 in the federal Parliament. The German Greens currently hold 47 seats in Parliament and have now become the third political force in the country, currently in Government in a coalition formed with the Social Democratic Party. Examples of other successes in Europe include or included the participation in the National Governments of Belgium, France, Finland, Italy, and Ukraine, an agreement with the Swedish government as well as participation in 16 national parliaments. Besides, Michael Schreyer, has been the first ever EU Commissioner, being Budget Commissioner since 1999. The Greens are also experiencing successes in other countries in various continents. For example, the Australian Greens have been successful for years, and are currently represented in the Senate. In Africa, there are or were Greens in a number of West African states, as well as Ministers in Burkino Faso, Guinea Bissau and Mauritius. US Green candidate Ralph Nader, won 3 million votes in the 2001 Presidential Elections.

The first European Green organisation, the European Co-ordination of Green Parties, was born in 1984. Important events in Europe during the late 1980s and early 1990s called for Green action on a European scale, in favour of processes such as the democratisation of the European Union and peaceful transition to a post-Communist era in Central and Eastern Europe. This led to the transformation from the Co-Ordination into the European Federation of Green Parties (E.F.G.P.), during the Helsinki Conference held in 1993. The European Federation of Green Parties has 31 member parties from 29 countries all over Europe, from Ireland to Malta.

Green parties put forward a global social analysis, which in turn influences their principles. In the words of the European Greens Website,

the so-called progress of the past centuries has brought us into a situation where the basis of life on Earth is seriously under threat. While technological development may delay the deterioration of the environment for a time, it cannot prevent the ecological and social collapse of civilisation without a fundamental change in the ideology of unquestioned material growth which still prevails. (<http://www.europeangreens.org>)

The European Green global perspective is indeed political, insisting that “as pioneers of the industrialisation which lies at the heart of the present crisis, Europeans carry a major responsibility for the reversal of these destructive trends.” (<http://www.europeangreens.org>) So what are the Greens proposing?

The Greens stand for various principles which are placed within a global perspective. Such principles include eco-development, which has to be based on democracy, transparency, gender equality, peace and the right of all people to express themselves and participate fully in decision making. This involves efforts to combat racism as well as the mutual understanding and respect for other cultures and, above all else, to end global poverty. Nuclear disarmament and a comprehensive Test Ban Treaty are urgent priorities for Green parties.

The European Greens Website pronounces the green principles clearly and unequivocally:

The economy, i.e. patterns of consumption and production – must be adapted to the tolerance of the natural environment. A new global security structure must be established in order to achieve world peace based on fair resolution of conflicting interests. A new vision of citizenship built on equal rights for all individuals regardless of gender, age, race, religion, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, wealth and health must be realised. These goals must be reached by democratic means and by strengthening the role of local communities in the decision making process. (<http://www.europeangreens.org>)

Similarly to various other global democrats around the world, Greens believe that sustainable and fair forms of trade and co-operation based on self reliance rather than on unlimited world trade should be put into practice. Thus, WTO, IMF and the World Bank should have their role transformed, and a more democratic United Nations should have a stronger role in world politics.

The European Union itself, within which Green Parties have considerable strength, should be more democratic, sustainable and socially just. This means to develop a new perspective for the European Union, elaborate a concept for conflict prevention and non-violence in Europe, support the transition of the new democracies in East and Central Europe, as well as to participate in the development of alternative global structures in co-operation with Greens elsewhere. (<http://www.europeangreens.org>) Indeed, 2001 saw the birth of the Global Greens, representing Green Parties from all continents.

Green politics – similarly to proposals by social theorists such as David Held - require further democratisation of political and economic structures. Greens struggle for such democratisation by co-operating globally, by offering global political resistance to the capitalist (or as the Greens put it – ‘productivistic’³) onslaught.

³ “For the workers’ movement, the great form that had to be eliminated was called ‘capitalism’; for political ecologists, it is called ‘productivism’. This difference is far from neutral, but who does not see that ‘productivism’ plays for the Greens exactly the same role that ‘Capitalism’ has played for the Reds? It is what has to be changed in order to change life..... Now that ‘socialism’ has been reduced to the status of a bad memory, the Greens will increasingly admit that ‘productivism’ and ‘capitalism’ are the same thing.” (Lipietz, 1996: 329)

Green Resistance in Relation to Marxist-Inspired Politics

Alan Lipietz (1996) notices that similarly to other leftist ideologies, Green ideology shares the Althusserian idea that ‘everything is overdetermined’. Within Green ideology, the factors which are overdetermining global society are resulting in *catastrophism*. Lipietz relates such catastrophism to the global battle-cry of the workers’ movement against Capitalism. In his words, “the historic (or millenarian?) responsibility to fight Armageddon rests with them: yesterday ‘socialism or barbarism’, today ‘ecology or death’.” (Lipietz, 1996: 329)

Lipietz adds that

although they no longer believe in a materialistic transhistorical movement that can guarantee progress, the Greens nonetheless spontaneously align themselves with all movements, both before and after the workers’ movement, that have tried to emancipate humanity: democracy, socialism (the libertarian wing), third worldism, feminism, regionalism. They thus find themselves fighting the same historical battles as the Reds, denouncing the so-called socialist parties for abandoning their own social priorities. (Lipietz, 1996: 329)

Therefore Lipietz relates the Green political perspective to Marxist-inspired politics, arguing that there are various similarities with regards to macro-analysis and macro-political action.

Global resistance, indeed.

Global Resistance / Global Democratisation

One may notice that the struggles against the global capitalist dominance include not only workers’ struggles such as those mentioned by Marx and Engels, but also a variety of other struggles, such as the environmental ones. In itself this is a reflection of the globalisation process, which affects a broad range of social structures and groups.

Although the various progressive groups mentioned above have their own agendas, one may notice certain similarities among many of them, such as their demands for the deepening of democracy, participation and autonomy and their staunch anti-authoritarianism. Their demands, could create a new common sense based on radical and plural democracy, as proposed by Laclau and Mouffe (1985), in which the identity of different groups are articulated equivalently with those of others in which no subject is privileged over others. Indeed, the political strategies of Green Parties, in particular, are very much in line with the concept of radical democracy – Greens propagate the decentralisation of power in favour of local communities and believe in equivalence between different individuals and social groups.

Conclusion

In this essay I have tried to show how much of Marx's and Engels's predictions regarding the global dominance of capitalism are being seen and felt in the contemporary world, although various other changes were not predicted, or at least not given as much importance as economic change by the duo. The Capitalist globalisation process is indeed affecting various social structures and groups, resulting in great economic inequalities as well as various other problems such as ecological destruction. At the same time global opposition to this process is intensifying itself. Resistance has become as transnational as capital, albeit characterised by a variety of interests and aims.

The outcome of such struggle? Who knows? As Althusser would put it, the future, being aleatory, lasts a long time.

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