

## Research Note

## Class and Democracy in South and Southeast Asia: Some Critical Notes

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INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

Explanations influenced by Marxism of relations between, on the one hand, Third World economic development in general and expansion of capitalism in particular, and, on the other hand, democratic forms of regime tend to be economic and deterministic, especially those which have been used in practical policies. Several communist parties — among others the Indonesian and Indian parties during the 1950s — have, for example, maintained that the so-called national bourgeoisie<sup>2</sup> has a class interest in developing at least a 'bourgeois democracy'<sup>3</sup> in order to fight political and economic monopolies of semi-feudal and imperialistic forces. First, it has been argued, this national bourgeoisie needs political and economic liberalism in order to promote its own economic interests in demonopolized markets and the accumulation of capital with the support of a nation state. Second, the national bourgeoisie could be expected to take an interest in the liberation of large sections of the population from extra-economic oppression in order to get both the necessary labour force and the support of the masses against feudal lords and imperialists. Finally, such policies on the part of the national bourgeoisie were assumed to provide the necessary room for preparatory radical political manoeuvres.

Unfortunately, however, the national bourgeoisie was rarely capable of acting

in this way. The majority of the domestic capitalists was often not interested in 'bourgeois democracy'. There have even been several cases when it has rather been the so-called semi-feudal forces that have defended parliamentary democracy.

## A NEW CONTRIBUTION

Barrington-Moore, however, already went beyond simple deterministic approaches in his *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*.<sup>4</sup> And recently the Danish scholar Professor John Martinussen has made an impressive and inspiring attempt to further develop our understanding of the relationship between economic development and forms of regime. In 1980 he published his dissertation *The State in Peripheral Societies: India and Pakistan*, 1 600 pages in Danish, with a summary in English.<sup>5</sup> The theories that he arrives at have already become quite influential. Using a historic materialistic method, he compares, among other features, the forms of regimes in India and Pakistan.

The conclusion is that the decisive factors explaining the rise or the lack of parliamentary democracy are the economic strength of the national bourgeoisie as well as the way in which it is politically organized. It is not sufficient to explain an interest of the national bourgeoisie in a democratic form of regime with ref-

erence to its economic aspirations. In fighting its competitors in order to get state support for its interests, it must also favour and use representative (and legislative) organs of the state rather than the executive institutions.

Martinussen's conclusions are based on thorough study of the strength of classes and the ways in which they organized themselves in relation to the colonial state and the post-colonial states in India and Pakistan. The Indian national bourgeoisie was comparatively strong. And already during the anti-colonial struggle it was mainly organized within the nationalist movement, which acted for and through the representative organs of the state. The Pakistan nationalist movement had stronger links with the landed aristocracy, and the Pakistan national bourgeoisie was more inclined to promote its interest through the executive branches of the state. These differences explain why a parliamentary-democratic form of regime developed in India but a bureaucratic-autocratic regime in Pakistan.

Martinussen maintains that a comparatively strong national bourgeoisie will choose to promote its interests in relation to the state via the representative organs — if this is the most promising

way of defeating its main enemy. In the struggle against colonialism the Indian national bourgeoisie was economically strong enough to dominate the nationalist movement and had comparative advantages in acting through the representative organs, where the imperialists were weak. At a later stage, when coming into conflict with the so-called semi-feudal landlords, who have decisive influence in the local executive branches of the state and in local legislative institutions, and who have a capacity to mobilize the electorate, the national bourgeoisie has been forced to rely more on its influence in the central executive organs of the state. In this conflict it has rather been the feudal lords who have been interested in promoting parliamentary democracy. This has also been the case when the national bourgeoisie has been challenged in some states by radical political leaders who draw on the electoral support from workers, poor and landless peasants, and the lower intermediate strata.

My summary of Martinussen's conclusions is of course extremely simplified. When he himself was asked to summarize his results in relation to social classes and forms of state and regime, he drew mainly on the following three Tables.<sup>6</sup>

Table 1. *Basic characteristics of the Indian nationalist movement and the Muslim separatist movement*

	Indian nationalist movement	Muslim separatist movement
Social basis	Alliance between the Indian bourgeoisie and major parts of the Westernized intelligentsia	Alliance between the Muslim landed aristocracy, the Muslim, non-Westernized intelligentsia, and the Muslim commercial bourgeoisie
Social support	The working class, the petite bourgeoisie, and large parts of the agrarian classes	The petite bourgeoisie and peasants
Organization and form of leadership	Mass organization and mass mobilization Democratic	Elite organization and mass mobilization Autocratic

Table 2. *Form-differentiating characteristics of India and Pakistan in the initial phase*

		India		Pakistan	
A. SOCIAL BASIS					
Major classes econ.— structural positions					
—nat. bourgeoisie		comparatively strong		comparatively weak	
—working class		— — strong		— — weak	
—centre bourgeoisies		— — strong		— — stronger	
—landed aristocracy		— — strong		— — stronger	
Other social forces					
—civil and mil. bureaucracies					
		Both states inherited highly developed and very influential bureaucracies			
Major social forces organized interest promotion and relations to the state apparatuses		Executive branch      Repr.- legislative branch		Executive branch      Repr.-legislative branch	
—civil and mil. bureaucracy		X		X	
—centre bourgeoisies		X		X	
—nat. bourgeoisie		X		X	
—landed aristocracy					
—working class					
—other classes of direct producers					

Table 3. *Forms of regime—an explanatory paradigm*

P <sub>1</sub> -societies (No nat. bourgeoisie)	P <sub>2</sub> -societies (A nat. bourgeoisie but not in the position of hegemony)	P <sub>3</sub> -societies (A nat. bourgeoisie in the position of hegemony)	
Bureaucratic— autocratic forms of regime	Bureaucratic—autocratic forms of regime (Pak.-2)		The nat. bourgeoisie is organized primarily in relation to the executive state organs
(the 'pure' colonial state) (Pak.-1)	Parliamentary—democratic forms of regime (India-1)      India-2)		The nat. bourgeoisie is comparatively well organized in relation to the representative- legislative state organs

## CIRCULAR ARGUMENT?

I have two interrelated problems with Martinussen's argument and paradigm. First I think that he comes close to a circular argument when he maintains that if a class is economically strong and tends to promote its interests through the representative organs of the state, this will give rise to a parliamentary-democratic form of regime. To me this is like arguing that  $a + b = b$ .

I do think, however, that one can save the argument if one reads the full text of Martinussen's book and not only his own conclusions. The main idea seems to be, that if an economically strong class is best able to promote its interest in competition with its main enemy through the representative organs of the state, then this might — *in the future* — lead to a parliamentary regime. Thus we must distinguish between the precondition that a class may be best equipped to create and act through the representative organs, and the result, that thereafter, and because of this activity for and within the representative organs, this branch of the state will become so important that a parliamentary-democratic regime may emerge.

But still, the second independent variable (whether the class promotes its interests through the representative or the executive organs of the state) is extremely tied up with the dependent variable. To use a parallel: the correlation between the fact that one party is better than the others in attracting sympathizers and the fact that this party later on wins the election may be impressive, but how much do we actually explain? Don't we have to analyse why the successful party was so skilled in mobilizing electoral support if we want to say something substantial?

## DESCRIPTION OR EXPLANATION?

This first objection points in the direction

of a second and even more serious one. I am impressed by Martinussen's analysis, but I find his concluding arguments, and especially the explanatory paradigm, more static and descriptive than dynamic and explanatory. If the economic strength and political organization of the classes in the framework of various contradictions are decisive for the development of different kinds of regimes, we have to put the wheels under the wagon and *explain why* they are so strong and politically well organized. As far as I understand, this is necessary if we want to formulate a fruitful explanatory paradigm, keep the door open for the existence or development of other classes and social forces than those which are prescribed in Martinussen's paradigm, and use the paradigm to say something about the chances for certain classes to fight for an alternative form of regime.

This second objection to Martinussen's explanatory paradigm is partly based on another way of reading his analysis than the one expressed in his own summaries and theories. The unnecessary square summaries imply that scholars using Martinussen's paradigm as a point of departure run the risk of producing rigid and mainly descriptive studies — in sharp contrast to the dynamic analysis offered in Martinussen's main text. In his analysis, it is most often the causes for and character of the economic strength and political organization of the classes that are the leading actors of the play — not a mapping of the strength and organization of certain prescribed classes in a particular historical situation.

But it is mainly my own results from studies of the case of Indonesia that have made me hesitate about Martinussen's conclusion and paradigm.<sup>7</sup> I will therefore relate my partly alternative reading of his analysis to some of my own conclusions from Indonesia, and focus first on the dominant agrarian classes, including Mar-

tinussen's more or less semi-feudal *malik* class and its potential interest in parliamentary democracy. From there I proceed to a discussion of the capitalist classes in general, including of course Martinussen's national bourgeoisie.

### DEMOCRATIC LANDLORDS?

If we make a simplified interpretation of Martinussen's conclusions, we arrive at the argument that any class — not only the national bourgeoisie — that is sufficiently strong economically and is organized mainly in relation to the representative organs of the state should gain from acting in favour of a parliamentary-democratic form of regime — at least when fighting an enemy which has less comparative advantages in promoting its interests via the representative branches. Thus this should be valid also for a more or less feudal class of landlords.<sup>8</sup> According to Martinussen, the Indian *malik* class has, for example, been prepared to defend the representative organs of the state against the national bourgeoisie. The explanation is that the *malik* class has better chances of promoting its interest by mobilizing the electorate than the bourgeoisie.

Superficially this might be true. But if we want to go beyond a description, we have to analyse the basis for the economic strength of the *malik* class and what kind of democracy it is interested in fighting for under what circumstances.

In his analysis — but not in his conclusions — Martinussen himself repeatedly stresses that the *malik* class is prepared to act in favour of parliamentary democracy only on a local level. The reason is that the productive basis of the *malik* class is restricted to the local level. It is only in the environment of its units of production — which are tied to the land, isolated from each other, and not economically complementary — that the landlords may mobilize votes and get

access to the rural executive organs of the state. Consequently, their interest in democracy will always be tied up with decentralization of the state and strongly related to the more or less feudal relations of production, which are *de facto* integrated with the local organs of the state.<sup>9</sup> In the rural setting it was (and probably still is) rarely the case that we can distinguish between economy and politics, between economic strength and political organization.

Thus, in order to say something substantial about the reasons for and character of the economic strength and political organization of the rural lords, we must examine the control of man and land and thereby the exploitation of people. The modes of exploitation differ. Let me illustrate this by three short sequences from Indonesia.<sup>10</sup>

During the early and mid 1950s a majority of the rural lords in Java did not object to elections for a national parliament. Their ability to strengthen patron-client relations and use them to exploit peasants had improved, since the politicians on the central level were in desperate need of all the votes that the patrons could mobilize by using their patron-client ties, cultural and religious loyalties, etc. What was more, most of the rural lords were not threatened when the Indonesian Communist Party succeeded in reaching out to the villages and mobilizing a whole lot of voters. The positions of the local and regional leaders and administrators were not at stake in the elections. And the communist mobilization of sympathizers followed the established patron-client relations and the cultural and religious traditions used and controlled by the rural lords themselves.

During the 1957 *local* elections the same patrons were, however, threatened and thus they abandoned democracy. Landlords like Martinussen's *maliks* could have been expected to use their ownership of

land and more or less feudal way of controlling the bulk of the rural population in order to counteract and perhaps even use limited forms of parliamentary democracy. But the majority of the Javanese rural lords did not primarily base their control of man and land on a basis similar to that of traditional landlords. The crucial basis of their power was instead the fact that the bulk of the peasants owned so small plots of land that they were prevented from being economically and politically independent. Thus these peasants needed the support of various lords, who as patrons of course used the dependency relations to centralize a substantial part of the surplus produced. With the support of their clients the patrons could in turn get access to the local organs of the state and the village administration, and use political and administrative powers to distribute patronage and to further centralize the surplus. Thus, when the local elections were carried out and the communists were able to mobilize a lot of votes — in many places even the majority of the electorate — the power basis of this patronage was at stake.

Consequently the patrons had to find an alternative concept of democracy which restrained the possibilities of using local democratic rights to undermine their basis of power, while at the same time enabling them to mobilize their clients and thus remain in power. The solution was Sukarno's 'Guided Democracy' — ironically supported even by the Communist Party. In order to get the protection from the central state, in particular President Sukarno and the army, the rural patrons had to give up parts of their local autonomy. But the appointed administrators, who replaced elected (and sometimes 'inconvenient') regional and local leaders, were on speaking terms with the village leaders and patrons. The national political leaders and administrators desperately

needed all the popular support that the patrons could mobilize.

Still the patrons required the backing of clients to be able to centralize surplus. Various political organizations protected the clients in order to get their political support. The patrons could not substantially concentrate land and get rid of a whole lot of tenants and harvesters in order to make the production more effective and profitable. The destruction of the communist party in 1965–66 solved this problem. Now the patrons got impressive support from the central state in general and the army in particular. Consequently they could get rid of a whole lot of clients and still stay in power. And they could start concentrating land. Besides this they got substantial economic subsidies via the green revolution, which it was possible to introduce because of the 'improved' control of man and land. Credits and inputs were relatively cheap, and many of the displaced peasants could survive within public works, state investments in the infrastructure, and by commuting cheaply to places where the economy expanded — all financed from the increasing oil revenues and foreign aid. Consequently the patrons became even less interested in democracy than before. They no longer needed the same degree of support from their clients as before. Any kind of democracy was now a threat against their economic and political position as protected by the military commanded bureaucratic-autocratic regime. The amount of concentrated land these rural lords own directly is still far from enough to give them an independent economic and political basis. If the state subsidies (and public works) have to be reduced in the future because of less oil revenue, there will probably be protests. But first, these will presumably be led by patrons and farmers who benefit, not by the rural poor, and secondly the patrons are still not capable of fighting the state

independently but have to invest in alternative sections using the central state.

To conclude, it is the different ways in which the rural lords control man and land that explain the basic way in which they are able to organize themselves in relation to the state. The mere analysis done by Martinussen of what kind of democracy the Indian *malik* class are interested in fighting for and my short sequences from Indonesia indicate that essential differences in the manner in which rural lords organize politically depend on whether they are based on concentrated land or centralization of surplus. As long as the latter are able to use their patron-client relations, they may very well promote and use representative organs of the state. But as soon as they are challenged in local elections their control of man and land is also at stake. In these crucial situations the patrons with little direct control over land are therefore less capable of promoting and using representative organs of the state than landlords, even though the former mobilize the support of their clients. And when local lords improve their control of man and land this is done with the support of the central state. Thus they are able to capitalize their production, and may fight for more subsidies but cannot bypass their dependency on the undemocratic central executive organs of the state.

### CAPITALISTS WITH AND WITHOUT DEMOCRACY

According to Martinussen, the national bourgeoisie must be economically strong in comparison with other domestic classes and better equipped to promote its interest through the representative organs of the state than its main enemy, if a parliamentary-democratic form of regime is to emerge.

Let me problematize this thesis by referring to some cases from Indonesia.<sup>11</sup>

After independence the politicians who to some extent represented the interests of the national bourgeoisie chose to favour and organize themselves in relation to representative organs of the state. Indisputably they were better equipped to use these organs than the former colonialists, but hardly in comparison with the rural lords. And in sharp contradiction to Martinussen's thesis, the national bourgeoisie was economically extremely weak directly after the achievement of political independence.

The majority of these politicians continued to rely on the representative organs until the second half of the 1950s. Let me call this majority the nationalists. I will argue that it was the way in which the nationalists tried to enrich themselves by using the state which may explain their interest in parliamentary democracy. Their interest in parliamentary democracy is thus not despite but rather because of the economic weakness of the national bourgeoisie.

The nationalists had only minor private economic strength. And the national bourgeoisie was too weak to help them. Instead they used their capacity to mobilize popular support to increase their influence within the executive state apparatuses. This influence could then be used to enrich themselves (through the use of licences, monetary policies, etc) in contrast with foreign capitalists and against domestic capitalists (ethnic Chinese as well as *pribumi* businessmen) as well as against some few landlords mainly working within the remnants of the former colonial economy. All of the latter were relatively strong in relation to the executive branches of the state.

So far the nationalists had, however, no reason to confront the majority of the patrons in the countryside. The main issue at stake was to conquer the influential positions within the state apparatuses. The patrons had the same interest in con-



solidating their positions within the local branches of the state with the support of their clients — in order to further develop the centralization of agricultural surplus. Furthermore, the rural as well as urban workers were preoccupied with fighting the foreign capitalists; the radical labour movement was prepared to support anti-imperialist policies. Consequently the nationalists and the rural patrons formed an alliance, with the popular support of their clients and most of the urban and rural workers.

Their enemies — the few landlords and the foreign capitalists and most of the domestic businessmen — tried to counteract mainly by mobilizing international support and by relying on their influence via professional administrators and officers within the executive organs of the state. These were mainly organized within the Socialist party and the modernist and relatively commercially oriented Muslim Masjumi party. They even tried a coup d'état (1952) and staged partly CIA sponsored regional rebellions (1956–58).

The nationalists and the rural patrons, supported by the communists, did, however, manage to form an alliance with the central army leaders and to share control of the state apparatuses with these officers. A state of emergency was proclaimed in 1957 (motivated by the already mentioned regional rebellions and the continued struggle against the Dutch over Irian Barat, West New Guinea), the Guided Democracy in 1959 and soon also a 'Guided Economy'. Most of the foreign companies were nationalized.

Since the weak domestic capitalists and their international supporters had lost a lot of their influence within the executive branches of the state and did not have access to the patronage distributed by the nationalist politicians, administrators and officers, the former's interest in parliamentary democracy now increased.

The enlarged group of nationalists, par-

ticularly the officers, managed to increase their personal control over the nationalized companies and the state apparatuses commanding the economy. (In order not to lose their control, they did not privatize the companies.) They were also successful in domesticating the communist labour and peasant movements.

And precisely because of this type of economic strength their old interest in favouring and using the representative organs of the state diminished. Now they had to defend the executive positions to which they had managed to get access by drawing on populist people's support. And within the framework of parliamentary democracy, similar to the rural patrons, who were threatened in the local elections in 1957, these new masters of the state executives not only ran the risk of losing their political power in an election, but also their basis for economic power and appropriation of surplus. Thus they postponed the parliamentary elections scheduled for 1959 — which, no doubt, the communists would have won — introduced the Guided Democracy and a parliament with directly or indirectly appointed representatives from so-called functional groups in society (e.g. workers, peasants, officers) besides the domesticated parties (including the communists). Later on the present regime has skillfully coordinated these functional groups within a corporatist party — Golkar — and used them to legitimate its existence, to co-opt the decisive groups who benefit from the ongoing development, and to use the latter in order to enforce popular support in a smooth way.

After 1965 the generals in alliance with not only earlier Sukarno antagonists but also a good many politicians, administrators and rural patrons who had gained executive positions during the Guided Democracy and Economy period, managed to get rid of radical nationalists and especially the communists. Thereafter the



accumulation of power through the state has increased and been used in order to further expand a personally controlled state-commanded capitalism in cooperation with international capitalists and expanding domestic client capitalists.

Thus there emerged strong capitalists. But these obviously did not constitute a private national bourgeoisie working in close cooperation with a nation state, like the one identified by Martinussen in India. The bulk of the Indonesian capitalists have emerged through the state. They have used their powers to substantially influence and profit from cooperation with international capitalists but also domestic client capitalists, especially the Chinese *cukongs*. At the same time their decisive domestic basis of power makes it quite impossible to analyse them as 'comprador capitalists' basing themselves exclusively on the imperialists, or as 'bureaucratic capitalists' either with a basis in a domestic monopoly capitalist class (as argued by Mao in pre-revolutionary China) or with no class basis of their own but being essentially bureaucrats.

Consequently this Indonesian section or new post-colonial capitalists do not have any interest whatsoever in democracy. Their substantial economic power emerged and is upheld through their abundance of political power. Democracy would be a threat against one of their essential bases.

But since the post-colonial capitalists are so dependent on their political, administrative and military positions, they still need ideological legitimation and smoothly mastered popular support. Thus they have used their ability to distribute patronage, which substantially increased with the oil boom, in order to further expand and control the corporative type of representative system introduced during Sukarno's Guided Democracy and mentioned above. Ideologically this system is skilfully related to traditional con-

cepts of power, patronage, etc., especially in the increasingly glorified Javanese pre-colonial history. Hence the regime relies heavily on the capacity of a modern type of sultan (Suharto) to increase the quantitative standard of living among the politically decisive groups.

In the same way the international and domestic private capitalists, no matter whether they are ethnic Chinese or Indonesian (*pribumi*), are allowed to expand as clients who are dependent on contracts, licences, concessions, credits and control of labour, offered and distributed by different patrons via their personally controlled state apparatuses. Thus these private capitalists also cannot be analysed as a traditional private and more or less national bourgeoisie. Critical Indonesian economists often prefer to talk about a 'middle group' rather than a 'middle class' in the dynamic entrepreneurial sense of the word. To this should also be added the considerable increase of economic and administrative professionals within and around the state apparatuses — intermediate strata that benefit and are highly dependent on their commanders.

## FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Having said this we may also discuss likely future developments. What will happen during the reconstruction of the Indonesian economy that has become inevitable because of less oil revenue, the partial recession within the world economy, the ineffective import-substituting industries, and the development of more advanced business interests among and around the business generals? Less oil revenue and the recession imply smaller subsidies to the import-substituting capitalists and rural kulaks but also less chances to employ the drastically increasing labour forces, thus causing protests from many sections and social groups,

some of which may mobilize sections of the poor.

If these developments — and the solutions that different sections will disagree on — coincide with the soon unavoidable generational shift within the army leadership, and thus also the distribution of top political and administrative positions which the old generation of officers occupy, the course of events may become tricky for the Suharto regime and its business clients to handle.

The old generation would of course like to retain their economic powers, despite the fact that substantial parts of their influence are not privatized. Presently they seem to be busy trying to find various solutions. But so far most of them obviously cannot afford to retire.

The somewhat younger army leaders, on the other hand, have not had the same chances as their masters to advance into and to consolidate and abuse influential positions within the state apparatuses during some 27 years, since the nationalization of Dutch companies in 1957. Thus the junior generals would like to take over these influential positions. This, however, means that they have to settle compromising agreements with the old generation. The alternative is to look for new clients among the domestic and international business community, who might try to support a limited demonopolization of the economy. But the junior generals do not have a solid economic and political basis as do their present supervisors and will have less oil revenue to distribute to their clients.

Only two things are certain. First, the progressive dissidents will have very little to say during the next few years. The old left is totally crushed. The new opposition is tightly supervised. The traditional strategic prescriptions have little validity.<sup>12</sup> Secondly, democracy is not on the agenda. Even if the economy will be slightly demonopolized, all business

groups — even the transnational and domestic private capitalists — seem to be extremely tied up with various sections of the state. And in order to further the growth of the economy within this structural framework, one is in desperate need of effectively controlled 'manpower' and the allocation of economic resources to modern, capital intensive projects, which are often not yet competitive. Thus the need of state intervention and control of labour is still there. Presumably, only limited economic liberalism or demonopolization can be realistically expected. During a short transitional period this might give the dissidents some room for political manoeuvres. But only as long as the powerful competitors need to mobilize some popular support and probably stage some riots (most of which will be anti-Chinese). Even the much stronger and more independent Philippine private domestic capitalists, who are fed up with president Marcos, are obviously mainly interested in a limited demonopolization of the economy and do not mind some kind of modified state of emergency very much as long as it is used against the urban and rural labourers, who have to be controlled anyway.

#### CAPITALISTS AND DEMOCRACY — A SUMMARY

I hope I have been able to show that if we want to explain why capitalists sometimes do and sometimes do not favour parliamentary democracy, it is not sufficient to look for an economically powerful national bourgeoisie that tends to organize itself in relation to representative organs of the state. The crucial factor is instead how the capitalists, or would-be capitalists, try to gain and protect their economic strength. This may be done in more than one or two ways. Besides the strategy of the compradors, the project of the traditional private national bour-

geoisie is only one possibility — a rather unusual one — and might have the implications of limited interests in democracy as outlined by Martinussen in his analysis. But the Indonesian way of doing it — the post-colonial capitalist project via the state — has quite different implications. And I think that this model is more common than the national bourgeois one. Because of the weakness of the national bourgeoisie, political groups in its surroundings favour parliamentary democracy until they have gained executive political and administrative positions which they can use to promote a capitalism in their interest and thus become directly threatened by democracy.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

It follows from my critical notes that an explanatory paradigm must be based on the analysis of the development of different main ways in which various classes control man, land and capital and thus appropriate surplus.

This is not to return to a deterministic and economic perspective. As I have tried to show in the Indonesian sequences, the political level was and is extremely important for the distribution of power between the classes and the emergence of contemporary capitalism, including the lack of democracy.

Neither do I think that my notes indicate that we have to give up general theories and concentrate on historically specific developments. What we need are theories about different main ways in which capitalism emerges and develops in post-colonial societies in order to put the explanatory wheels under the wagon of descriptive figures.

If we manage to work in this direction, we hope we will be able also to go beyond explanations of existing forms of regimes to discuss the chances the oppressed

classes have to struggle for alternative regimes.

It is, I think, essential that we try to transcend the relatively Eurocentrist framework of a national bourgeoisie that may favour parliamentary democracy. First, it is an ideal version which does not take into proper consideration the different historical developments in Europe and especially the decisive role of the labour movement in the struggle for democracy. Second, from such an analysis it follows implicitly that no democracy is possible unless a national bourgeoisie has managed to develop its capitalism. Consequently we will have to wait for quite some time before there are any realistic chances to fight for democracy, and perhaps even to fight in a democratic way. Moreover, such a national bourgeoisie is rarely present within today's expansive third world capitalism societies. And where it has been influential — as in India — it is now preoccupied with using executive organs of the state to promote the further development of capitalism by fighting landlords, kulaks, urban and rural workers and rapidly expanding intermediate strata, and is thus much less interested in democracy than before.

Therefore I think that the argument based on the idealized European relation between the success of the national bourgeoisie and the emergence of parliamentary democracy might be as deterministic and politically passivating as the old idea that socialism is not possible before capitalism has been fully developed and perhaps even overdeveloped. The latter argument proved wrong. Socialist solutions could be put on the agenda mainly in third world countries where development of capitalism was effectively retarded by colonialism and imperialism. Later on the conditions for this strategic option were reduced in countries where new expansion of capitalism was taking place. But at least from my

previous and ongoing research<sup>13</sup> it follows also that, parallel to the old strategic opening for radical political strategies, a democracy that is not only restricted to economic and political liberties for the bourgeoisie is effectively retarded by the new ways in which contemporary capitalism is expanding in several of the third world countries — and that thus democracy has to be created by the masses themselves. This *might* be a new strategic option replacing the old one. Anyway, one cannot expect that a national bourgeoisie will be powerful enough to lay the foundations for democracy, and that a labour movement may thereafter develop and defend democracy, as in some parts of Europe.

From the hypothesis that democracy can and must be introduced and fought for by the oppressed themselves it does not, however, follow that this is a purely working-class project. The proletarianized may become a majority of the population but not necessarily the working class, the proletariat. There are too many examples of working-class leaders finding it comparatively advantageous to implement various forms of totalitarian regimes. And within a framework of an expanding post-colonial capitalist economy, there are obvious chances to pay off the strategically most important workers, i.e. those permanently employed within the modern sector.

Therefore we need research on the conditions for and experiences of the practising of and struggling for democracy as a means of uniting various oppressed classes, starting to build positive alternatives and striking against the weakest point of the exploiting classes, which base their expansion of capitalism on the more or less autocratic use of state apparatuses.

sented at the VII Congress of the Nordic Political Science Association, Workshop on Democracy and Economic Development, in Lund, Sweden, 20–22 August 1984, and at the first annual conference of the Nordic Association of Southeast Asian Science Researchers, Copenhagen, Denmark, 25–26 August 1984. I am indebted to several of the participants for their valuable comments, especially to Björn Beckman and Lars Rudebeck.

<sup>2</sup> This is not the place to make a profound definition of the national bourgeoisie. The implicit historical reference is, however, the revolutionary bourgeoisie in, for example, France. This bourgeoisie relied on private ownership. It fought feudal political monopolies and restrictions on trade and production. In this struggle it favoured economic liberties within a nation state. Thus, its private capitalist accumulation and reproduction was based on and centred around a nation state.

<sup>3</sup> This concept usually implies economic liberties, a free market, and freedom to invest and accumulate capital, and thus no substantial political monopolies preventing freedom of speech etc.

<sup>4</sup> Moore-Barrington, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World (1966), Harmondsworth, Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1967.

<sup>5</sup> Martinussen, John, *Staten i perifere samfund: Indien og Pakistan*. En historisk-konkret analyse med teorigenererende sigte. I–IV bind. With a summary in English. Aarhus, Forlaget Politica, 1980.

<sup>6</sup> Martinussen, John, *Social classes and forms of state and regime in peripheral societies*. Summary of a lecture. AKUT 24, Uppsala, The AKUT-group, 1982.

<sup>7</sup> Törnquist, Olle, *Marxistisk barlast*. Stockholm, Symposion bokförlag, 1982. In English through Zed Books London with the title: *Dilemmas of third world communism: The destruction of the PKI in Indonesia*.

<sup>8</sup> Discussion with Martinussen, Roskilde, Denmark, 23 March 1984

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, pp. 754 ff. in Martinussen (1980) op. cit.

<sup>10</sup> See in particular chapters 12, 13 and 18 in Törnquist op. cit. (Ch. 11, 12 and 17 in the English edition.)

<sup>11</sup> See in particular chapters 11, 12, 14 and

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this Paper was pre-

17 in Törnquist op. cit. (Ch. 10, 11, 13 and 16 in the English edition).

<sup>12</sup> See Törnquist op. cit. I will not go deeper into this problem in this paper, since I am presently doing research within this field and will later on publish reports separately. See the research outline: Törnquist, Olle, *Problems of Radical political strategy under the rise of a new capitalism: South and Southeast Asia in a*

comparative perspective and effects in Sweden. AKUT 28, Uppsala, The AKUT-group, 1984. Within this project I have also published a preliminary first report on contemporary Indonesia: Törnquist, Olle, *Struggle for Democracy—A New Option in Indonesia?* AKUT 33, Uppsala, The AKUT-group, November 1984.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.