

Chapter 18

NOTES ON THE STATE AND RURAL CHANGE IN JAVA AND INDIA

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Most studies of the state in New Order Indonesia have focused on its role in the formation of capitalism on the macro level. There has been a concentration on political and military leaders, trade and industry. Generally speaking, the links with the processes of agrarian change in the villages are missing.

Similarly, those who have been interested in analysing the so-called green revolution - the socio-economic impact of new inputs and technology, the spread of commerce, rise of rural capital etc. - had to carry out not only surveys but also detailed local case studies. And the necessity to go beyond overall statistics by studying specific villages, reproduction of households etc., was and still is difficult (for theoretical and methodological but also political reasons) to combine with research on the role of the state.

The problem is, however, not only methodological - how to approach the state on various levels - but also substantial: the nature of rapid rural transformation.

Just as most concerned political economists spent at least the first 15-20 years of the New Order attacking the IMF-World Bank-IGGI paradigm by talking about an extremely dependent and parasitic character of the state, many of their fellow rural economists and sociologists were not only busy trying to show the negative effects of the green revolution, but also eager to do away with Geertzian ideas about rural communalism, shared poverty etc. by focusing upon proletarianisation, concentration of land, marginalisation and increasing exploitation of rural labour.

Times are now changing. Dick Robison is, for example, labelling his previously dependent and parasitic capitalism almost progressive (without even discussing his turn-about), while critics of the green revolution no longer only find massive rural proletarianisation and hopeless misery.¹

But also, just as the importance of state intervention (and not only traditional expansion of private capitalism) has been stressed on the macro level, Gillian Hart, for example, has recently brought the state into the interpretation of detailed village data as well as into many of the important debates on the nature of rural transformation.²

In the following study I will, therefore, address the questions of how to approach the role of the state in studies of rural change, and the nature of rural transitions by first presenting and discussing some of Hart's results; secondly by adding some of my own conclusions on the importance of the state for an understanding of what is going on in rural Java; and thirdly by finally bringing some comparative results from India into the picture.

Hart's Contribution

Contemporary research on transitions in rural Java frequently stresses various exclusionary labour arrangements (such as the so-called *kedokan*). It is not easy to understand them by arguing, for example, that they are a direct result of labour market conditions - they occur under tight as well as slack conditions. Also, the arrangements vary over time and between villages in such a way that explanations in terms of growth of population or commercialisation are inappropriate. However, according to Gillian Hart, they seem to vary with different relations of political and administrative power. As long as the rural poor, supported by the communists, were able to organise, exclusionary labour arrangements were held back and, open harvests dominated. On the contrary, after 1965 the bargaining power of rural labour was drastically reduced and their masters could introduce arrangements that kept labour cheap and manageable by giving some villagers comparatively secure jobs and leaving others behind. The social control thereby created in the villages was, of course, essential also for general political stability.

Another often-debated issue that Hart addresses is whether labour is pushed or pulled out of agriculture. Is there a process of displacement and marginalisation, or do labourers leave agriculture because of better alternatives in 'modern' sectors due to economic expansion? Again, there are difficulties in finding clear answers if we restrict ourselves to studying the labour market, employment conditions, economic growth, etc. For

example, there are no clear correlations between growth and increased non-agricultural employment in 'modern' sectors. And even if some problems are solved if we add that initially many non-agricultural rural activities were in marginal sectors, we still have to answer the question why this process of marginalisation did not result in declining wages among those who could stay on. Hart's answer is, again, that the reserve labour pool essentially had a disciplinary function, that those who could uphold their jobs within agriculture were more favourably treated for social and political reasons, and that this was made possible by the shifts in power relations after 1965.

Also, there is a debate as to what extent rural change can be analysed in terms of development of capitalism. Hart has good reasons to refute most of the established explanations. Obviously there is, for example, no simple process of proletarianisation and a lot of 'pre-capitalist' labour arrangements re-emerge. The rural elite is not a typical capitalist class. As an alternative, she suggests that most of the rural masters have to be analysed in terms of state-sponsored clients, whose support and capacity to domesticate the rural masses are essential for their patrons - who could subsidise their clients with, not least, oil revenues. These favoured clients have thus been able to accumulate through their preferential access to agricultural inputs, credits etc., as well as with political and administrative powers, enough to introduce the previously-mentioned exclusionary labour arrangements.

How then do the rural poor reproduce themselves? The labour arrangements cause serious divisions. Those who are included in favourable contracts are difficult to analyse in terms of a 'typical rural proletariat'. They have more secure positions and are better paid but are very dependent upon their masters who can trust their workers and rely also on the labour of their families. Those who are excluded, on the other hand, usually cannot even choose the most remunerable income opportunities. They have to give priority to security and diversify the family's sources of incomes, which is easier if they have many children. And again, Hart stresses that the process of marginalisation is not only, or even mainly, due to lack of assets among the poor, is caused by their political powerlessness.

Why is it finally that the processes of exclusion and so on within the framework of the green revolution have not produced a red revolution or rural unrest? It follows quite elegantly from Hart's previous arguments that many countervailing forces are present. Rural labourers are fragmented. Political, administrative and military controls are tight and built into the very work-processes. Many of the new jobs that have been created are

in urban areas - where there has been some unrest. But in the rural areas 'free' labour is usually dependent upon patrons and contractors et al, and seasonal workers are desperately in need of credits etc. during the slack seasons. However, Hart also stresses that when the dispossessed protest, the capacity of the state-sponsored rural clients to domesticate them is essential, and related to the ability of their central state patrons to provide them with subsidies etc. - which is increasingly difficult now that the oil revenues are drying up.

What is the basis of the state?

I like Hart's book. The importance of the state has been neglected. Its interventions and new huge resources may help us to understand a lot of the contemporary rural transformation. But state powers and resources do not come from heaven. It is true that a lot of the oil revenues that are injected into agriculture come from outside and are not the result of taxation of peasants et al. But most of the resources are not free and without charge for the rural masses. And surplus is of course also appropriated within production as well as on the market. Unfortunately, the state-approach which Hart has imported in order to solve her puzzles does not address exploitation and the roots of state power. If we are going to talk about state-sponsored clients, for example, we need to know not only that they themselves benefit from state resources, and that they domesticate the poor, but also how they, presumably, use these assets and capacities in order to squeeze something extra out of the producers who need them. What decisive means of production are politically and administratively controlled in the villages and used for appropriating surplus from the clients of those who possess the state resources? And if a lot of the appropriation of surplus is carried out through the market (control of prices, credits, etc.), how is this done? Is there a basis for conflicts between, the state-sponsored clients and/or their dependents on the one hand, and the central state on the other hand?

Centralisation of Surplus

Personally I have followed another track than Hart which could perhaps add something to this discussion. By studying PKI's problems of making political use of theories about concentration of land and the need for agrarian reforms in the early 60s,³ I tried to understand in what direction there had to be theoretical improvements.

There were clear contradictions between PKI's way of reading reality and the actual turn out. Developments indicated, among other things, that the land of 'feudal landlords' was not so concentrated that many could not hide a considerable part of it. They could even relinquish some of their direct control without jeopardising their positions. Moreover, the peasants were split and the class struggle often degenerated into violent conflict among the peasants themselves, relying on different patrons. Obviously, there was not sufficient concentration of the land for the peasants to be able to unite on questions of land reform and isolate a few 'feudal landlords'.

In trying to hint at an alternative analytical approach, I therefore suggest that the obvious inequalities and exploitation in PKI's strongholds in rural Java were not, generally speaking, due mainly to expropriation and concentration of land into private monopolies whereafter rent is demanded from the actual tillers. Rather, the rural masters also managed to centralise huge parts of the surplus produced by formerly independent but mostly envious and thus extremely dependent peasants in return for providing these peasants with the necessary resources and protection that they missed - besides of land. Also, I maintained that this was rooted in more or less Asiatic historical specificities as well as the Dutch attempts at preventing the rise of native rural bourgeois interests on the one hand, and their tendency to strengthen and work through traditional rural lords, who usually used control over formerly common resources to enrich themselves. If one tries to enforce a traditional anti-feudal land reform under such conditions there will not be enough 'surplus' land, those who look forward to some land will compete and split, many envious peasants will first of all look for patronage, etc. - while the land reform measures (aiming at distribution of surplus land plus lowering of rents on land) will not drastically undermine the basis of the rural lords since they are mainly rooted on control over decisive resources other than land.⁴

Neither peasants vs. landlords nor proletarians vs. capitalist farmers

But what about rural transformation and the role of the state under the New Order? In 1984 I tried to make an admittedly superficial evaluation of the then predominant radical theories about contemporary rural transformation on Java.⁵ Could one find concentration of land, development of semi-feudal landlordism, and decisive conflicts between threatened peasants and landlords? Or did capitalisation of agriculture take place, with farmers who concentrate land, the development of wage work plus

marginalisation, and the emergence of main conflicts between semi-proletarians and capitalist farmers?

On the contrary, my results indicated⁶ that relatively few villagers were directly and permanently subordinated and exploited as either tenants or labourers. Thus the main contradiction was neither one between landlords and tenants nor between semi-capitalist farmers and agricultural workers. The only important clashes within agriculture were instead characterised by protests against the state from petty propertied villagers when they were threatened by proletarianisation.

My own attempts at giving an alternative explanation ran as follows. At least 20-30% of the rural households benefit from an enforced capitalisation of agriculture. Many of them become relatively well off farmers, whereas the ruling minority may be called state-backed clients who also act as local patrons with their own dependents.

The farmers are heavily dependent upon state subsidies and extra-economic protection against the non benefiting classes. They concentrated some land and make some improvements of the forces of production. But they are mainly investing in, first, the displacing of, for example, tenants and harvesters in order to get a larger share of the surplus produced, and second, in intensifying the production by the introduction of better varieties, fertilisers, the growing of several crops per year, etc. When they need extra labour they seem to prefer members of their families, relatives who need additional income on top of what they can produce on their small plots of land or earn outside agriculture, and, in peak seasons, some additional agricultural workers.

Neither do the state-backed clients cum local patrons invest mainly in the concentration of land and the development of the forces of production but usually give priority to control of the local organs of the state - the land allocated to them (*bengkok* land), development programmes, and political, administrative and to some extent repressive powers. On top of their production on their own land plus the *bengkok* land, they do not only plunder part of the state funds but also, and most important, centralise substantial parts of the surplus produced by the farmers and others who have to give them something in return for economic and political patronage (including credits, inputs, etc., but also control of labour). The patrons not only subordinate the farmers but also the 'huge mass of people' who do not directly benefit from the capitalisation of agriculture, most of whom have no permanent jobs, and thus are not mainly subordinated within

production. Finally, many state-backed clients cum local patrons also invest in off-farm businesses like hullers, service and transport.

Consequently, no unified class of poor and landless peasants or a semi-proletariat emerge that is exploited within production and has a visible class enemy to fight - with the partial exception of some, mainly seasonal, agricultural labourers and more or less permanently employed workers within construction, trade and services.

It is mainly petty propertied peasants who protest against, for example, the effectivisation of farmers' production, the expansion of plantations (which I did not include in my study), the building of factories, the construction of dams etc. Sometimes the landless labourers rally behind, since they run the risk of losing their jobs and/or incomes from self employment. But they all turn against the state - to my knowledge rarely versus the quite invisible local class enemies.

There is thus an obvious contradiction between state-backed clients cum local patrons and farmers. But the latter are very dependent upon state subsidies monopolised by the patrons as well as their extra-economic protection of the farmers against, for example, displaced petty peasants, tenants and labourers.

What we are witnessing is in other words a state enforced and subsidised capitalisation of agriculture, under which state-backed clients cum local patrons monopolise, invest and profit from public powers and resources in the local setting, dependent farmers improve production and benefit, threatened petty peasants protest and most of the proletarianised villagers do not find any permanent jobs in production either within or outside agriculture but turn to self employment and temporary jobs - if outside agriculture usually within the expanding tertiary sector and rarely in manufacturing.

Finally, however, I do not subscribe to the pessimistic view that there is a stalemate in rural Java. The villagers have many and diverging interests and the state-backed clients cum patrons are extremely powerful. But most people, to some extent even the farmers, should be interested in democracy: democratisation to get rid of repressive subordination, democratisation of the formerly common resources - which are now monopolised by the state-backed clients cum patrons and used to appropriate surplus from the producers in order to minimise exploitation and promote production and a better and more equal standard of living. That, however, is not to say that the interests in democracy do not differ among various classes and groups, that it does not vary over time, that there is no need for

organisation and so on. But it is definitely a potential option that calls for further studies - and for action.

Experiences from India

There is, a need for further and more detailed empirical studies of actual rural transformation on rural Java in order to substantiate or invalidate these preliminary and general conclusions. Many skilled scholars are in the field. But an equally important question is rarely addressed: Given that at least the general tendencies focused upon above are important - are Indonesia and Java unique? What insights can we get from comparisons with cases that are not regarded as similar to Java in terms of concentration of land, etc. At present I am, therefore, comparing the case of Java with communist attempts at radical rural change in the Indian states of Kerala and West Bengal.⁷

Communists in Indonesia as well as in India staged radical peasants' struggle against the colonial power as well as, thereafter, against the 'neo-colonial state based on landlords and the big bourgeoisie'. However, in the early 50s, more cautious lines of critical co-operation with progressive factions of the bourgeoisie were adopted. One of the basic arguments was that the so-called national bourgeoisie was interested in anti-feudal land reforms.

Despite 'anti-feudal' ambitions and measures, dynamic bourgeois social and economic agrarian developments were lacking in Indonesia and frustrated in India.

In *Indonesia*, as we know, the front from above between communists and nationalists set, an unexpectedly narrow framework for 'anti-feudal' struggles. Experience indicated that the peasants with a potential to become capitalist oriented farmers were based on administrative and political positions within the local organs of the state in addition to their land, and thus could evade bourgeois developments by using these bastions for their extraction of surplus.

In *India*, what came out of quite drastic struggles against big landlords and for emerging farmers was, at least till the late 60s, petty landlordism. The Indian ex-tenants were indeed more rooted in their land than their counter parts were in Indonesia, but could enforce sufficient political and administrative protection to escape much of the progressive logic of capitalism - to compete, invest and produce cheaper and more.

However, in the state of Kerala from the late 50s till recently and in West Bengal from the late 60s till today, communists departed from their reliance on ascribed national bourgeois anti-feudal interests and attempted to enforce land reforms in their own capacities just as the PKI tried to do on Java in the early 60s. Generally speaking, the well-known thesis was that rent on land is the main form of exploitation. Control of land is the very basis of power. Land should be given to the actual producers. This will liberate the forces of production within agriculture, increase production and the peasant's standard of living, and lay the foundation for the development in the society as a whole.

What has happened?

Power and Exploitation

The structure of power was not drastically altered during and after the reforms in Kerala and West Bengal. Most people with vested interest in land could rely on other bases of power such as influence within religious communities, ability to manipulate markets and the supply of credits, and on political and administrative positions. The latter made it possible to repress militant opposition, evade many laws and to use state regulations and resources to uphold old and create new bastions of power - even within the democratised local governments in West Bengal. And in Kerala, many of the anti-feudal tenants, who had fought with the communists and received comparatively substantial holdings thanks to the reforms, turned to conservative and bourgeois groupings.

Neither did exploitation drastically diminish when feudal rent on land was prohibited (Kerala) or regulated (West Bengal). Wage labour increased. Petty landlordism was further developed in West Bengal. And perhaps most important, appropriation of surplus outside production, on the market, within local organs of the state - through regulative powers but also control over essential public resources such as credits, water, and other inputs - became increasingly important.

Just like Java there were thus other decisive roots of power and exploitation besides land and rent on land.

Production

Once old landlordism was uprooted in Kerala, new peasants faced problems of viability and rising production. Previous patronage was no longer available. Agriculture became even more commercialised. The producers had to buy almost everything they needed. Profitable production presupposed more inputs, better irrigation etc. than before. Also, wages had increased. The fact that peasants did not have to pay rent any more did not help much. Even the fairly well off ex-tenants find it hard to invest in irrigation and weeding, to pay for necessary inputs, and not least to handle labour. This has not only led to problems of production and to an extremely unsound expansion of speculative business, but also to difficulties for the workers in terms of unemployment and declining real wages.

Peasants of all sorts have always demanded state support. But the Kerala state was and is short of revenues, (even rich peasants are hardly taxed.) And especially the strongest communist party (CPI-M) rarely emphasised actions and programmes to promote agricultural development but gave full priority to 'social and political change'. Neither could support from the often hostile central government in New Delhi be counted upon. Thus, agricultural production stagnated and even declined after the early 70s. And many peasants had to look for new forms of 'protection' - sometimes even among communal (religious and caste) groups.

Similar problems of viability and lack of progressive investments occurred in West Bengal. Since rent on land is not prohibited but only reasonably well regulated, tenants still do not have access to the 'rent fund'. Also, the implementation of the *Operation Barga* (the registration and bettering of the tenants positions) almost came to a standstill after a couple of years. Not all of those who rented out land were well off - and quite some few of them had supported the communists ... Moreover, most of the limited state support for development is directed to the relatively well off - to compensate them for not objecting too much to the *Operation Barga*. Thus, most peasants, including the somewhat strengthened tenants, are now very dependent upon state protection and support, via local governments and the communist movements. This may be profitable in terms of votes. But it has not resulted in progressive dynamics within production. There is still little difference between Bangla Desh and West Bengal in terms of agricultural performance, despite the fact that rightist military dictators dominate in east Bengal and elected communists in the west.

Consequently, social and political change in terms of land reforms may result in unproductive re-peasantisation. The control of other means of production than land must also be transferred to the actual producers if they shall be able to turn progressive, raise production and increase their standards of living. And of course the population increases in Kerala and West Bengal. There are few chances to migrate, and no stimulation in the form of new frontier lands or increased effective demand for agricultural products. Overall, economic development is stagnant, or at best very slow.

Patronage

Communists in Kerala and West Bengal were eager to point out that implementation of land reforms and further development require state and party support to the peasants, since exploitation and control of land is maintained not least with the use of extra economic means. Moreover, new forms of communist patronage developed, especially in West Bengal. The tenancy reform was (and still is) almost totally dependent upon permanent tenure of the Left Front government. Also, communists enforced a unique and comparatively successful democratisation of the local governments, and decentralised a lot of powers to them - not only implementation of land reforms but also development programmes. But peasants and rural labourers are now extremely dependent on what the local politicians decide, how they implement the reforms, what they use development funds for, etc. It is not mainly the peasants or the rural poor in general that have been strengthened but 'their' political organisations, local governments, and leaders. Not only is it possible that the 'the good leaders' lose. The concentration upon political and social change made most communists suspicious of various attempts at directly promoting production and even to co-operatives (which they were afraid might give people the illusion that radical political change was not necessary). Thus, most actual producers seem to be so vulnerable and dependent upon protection that they cannot effectively demand, protest, and get rid of corrupt people, for example. Local policies are not based upon the common needs within actual production on the many small plots of land but reflect political compromises, complicated coalitions etc. in order not to disturb new leaders, administrators, and petty landlords, and thereby win votes and uphold political control. There should be no difficulties in finding similarities with 'alternative' communist and Sukarnoist patronage during the old order on Java.

Peasant Unity

During the first phases of land reforms in Kerala and West Bengal, it seems as if most rural poor could unite and fight the concentration and rent on land, in contradiction to what happened on Java. However, already during the radical struggles in West Bengal in the late 60s there were obvious divisions and infighting among peasants, tenants and labourers (especially in Sonarpur, 24 Parganas), partly for similar reasons as on Java. And once basic land reforms had been comparatively well implemented especially in Kerala but also in West Bengal there is, of course, a shortage of more surplus land parallel with the further development of the new complicated forms of exploitation that I have hinted at above - not only via wage labour but also through the control of other means of production. There is, thus, an obvious need for not only further economic development, industrialisation etc. - but also democratic cooperation and common solutions in order to reach it. Most communists, however, try desperately to uphold their old all-peasant lines by looking for new issues over which the increasingly differentiated rural majority do not have to dispute. I shall shortly return to this and to the new so-called farmers movement.

Labourers

A final basic assumption within the general concept of land reforms is that not only tenants' but also labourers' conditions will improve, since the new peasantry will have access to the 'rent fund' and be stimulated to improve production, whereafter they can pay better wages etc. Wages and employment conditions have improved especially in Kerala. But due to economic stagnation with problems of employment etc., most workers' general standard of living has hardly increased - like on Java in the early 60s. This, of course, calls for more comprehensive reforms that include the labourers, not subordinate their interests to the propertied new peasants, and give priority to development. But communists are mainly busy trying to mediate between farmers and labourers and with the creation of a new unity by putting the blame upon the state (preferably the union state in New Delhi, especially when communists control local organs) which 'should' provide agriculture with even more subsidies.

Peasants versus the State

The traditional concept of land reform is, thus, in a crisis and new ideas about peasants and paupers versus the state are emerging. There are two decisive tendencies. Both of them take issue with the argument (which I have already discussed in relation to Java) that capitalism has developed in such a way that the main contradiction is between agrarian capitalists and rural labour. The green revolution did not foster a red one.

The first version stresses appropriation of surplus from the actual producers through the market and under the auspices of the state. There is a need for massive peasant's struggle for, for example, remunerative prices. In other words, communists try to supplement their old policies by taking up the same issues as the so-called rich farmers movements.

However, the question about the terms of trade over the years is not easy to answer. State subsidies and protection have also been substantial. There are good reasons to discuss to what extent more subsidies will stimulate investments in order to produce more and, more cheaply. And the demands from the farmers movements hardly promote alternative policies to help poor, often underemployed people to productive work - in return for wages high enough to increase the effective demand for food products, so that the peasants can sell more and do not have to ask for better prices for the little that they can market.

Anyway, the protests are real and it is likely that surplus is appropriated from the actual producers. But who does this and how, and who benefits? The state is rarely capable of even taxing the farmers. However, as far as I understand, the whole issue illustrates the increasing importance of control over other means of production besides land - credits, water, fertilisers and other inputs - plus, of course, the capacity to regulate markets, etc. The fact that this control is frequently carried out inside the organs of the state (to a lesser degree but in principle just like on Java) should not prevent us from analysing how these are penetrated from outside as well as from within.

Moreover, communists supporting farmers' movements frequently argue that there is a need for state support to agriculture before rural labour can be more decently paid. Besides the fact that this is an easy way to 'solve' conflicts between peasants and labourers, who shall pay? Communists suggest that rich peasants, for example, should be taxed. But in West Bengal, ruled by left front governments since 1977, they are not. And the indirect taxes are partly paid by the less well off who have to buy most of their basic necessities on the market.

Finally, communist leaders do not only argue that it is their duty to defend peasants against capitalism but also that it is politically necessary. Otherwise peasants would never vote communist. And even if petty peasants are doomed, they must ask the state for help before they realise that it cannot give them any relief. But what alternative can communists offer besides shared poverty struggles, reasonable demands, and a bright future beyond a delayed revolution? In 1985 leading communists did not seem to know. But when the Left Front in Kerala unexpectedly managed to return to governmental powers two years later, it was suddenly officially argued that priority had to be given to production, and that this presupposed democratisation of the local organs of the state, emphasis upon co-operatives, etc. It would be fruitful to study what interests, even inside communist-led peasant and labour movements, will prevent consistent implementation.

The second version of the new thesis, on the other hand, focuses more upon threats from the state against the possibility for the rural masses, not only the propertied peasants, to reproduce themselves. This implies that there is a need for broad popular struggles against the state-enforced capitalism, and for an alternative path of development - not mainly for better terms of trade to the surplus producing peasants. Here we find attempts to build a new broad front based upon the people on the back side and their own activities, including also those among tribes, scheduled castes, women's organisations, some NGOs, and so on. Similar ideas are present though less well developed and important on Java.

Within this framework the issues at stake in India are less concentrated on prices and the terms of trade than on local effects of state-enforced capitalisation of agriculture. Who is hurt by the construction of dams? Who shall benefit from the new pumps and system of irrigation? Also, what happens to women? How are scheduled castes effected? Sometimes this implies, first, that the hegemony of the comparatively well off farmers is somewhat undermined. Also, even if the focus of agitation is the state, those who benefit from its interventions and tend to monopolise its resources may be disclosed and hit at. Moreover, the need to struggle for and uphold basic civil rights shifts the attention from previous negative experiences of trying to fight the state with arms to the need for other methods including democratic ones.

Finally, actions against the onslaught of capitalism are sometimes combined with efforts among the threatened to not only defend their old ways of surviving and producing but also to develop new alternatives. This may presuppose democratic organisations. And struggles to promote

immediate interests and enforce political change can thereby be combined with joint democratic efforts at development of production - something quite unique within the Indian left.

On the other hand, there are obvious risks that old social movements of communal, religious, or regionalist character can get a new lease on life if and when they serve as a basis for broad popular resistance. One may also doubt their possibilities to develop new progressive development alternatives beyond the defence of old ways of reproducing positions.

Also, not least social movements and committed NGOs are constantly exposed to a mix of threat and support from politicians, bureaucrats, foreign agencies and sometimes even private business.

Finally, most of the new organisations and movements are too fragmented and locally rooted to be able to challenge enemies who often are supported by or simply consist of those who control the means of production from within the ever present, relatively well coordinated and resourceful state apparatuses.

Closing Remarks

Java is not unique. Javanese developments as well as the brief review of attempts at political implementation of predominant radical theories about rural transition in Kerala and West Bengal point in the same direction. We need a theoretical framework for understanding and analysing the importance not only of ownership and control of private but also formerly state-owned assets as well as regulative powers.

One way of approaching this problem might be to draw on the theoretical proposition about rent capitalism and the state in my previous essay in this book. It should, I suggest, be quite possible to talk about rents on individually and collectively controlled state resources not only on the macro level but also in the villages. Thereby both levels could also be combined and we could highlight the basis and character of state interventions.

With such a perspective, what are the prospects? Gillian Hart is definitely right in stressing a lot of obstacles to radical changes based on the rural poor. On the contrary she hints at more likely conflicts due to the drying up of oil money, and hence less capacity of the state to subsidise its rural clients. Of course, Indian 'rich farmers movements' might spread. But farmers and state-backed clients cum local patrons are more dependent upon the rulers of the state and have less economic and political alternatives on

Java than in India. And if we are able to identify how exploitation is carried out and upheld by not least the use of political power and monopolised control over formerly collective resources, we could, I think, be more constructive. We could, for example, indicate the options for popular struggles in favour of democratisation of the state - more equal rule of common resources - as a prerequisite for better standards of living.

NOTES

1. Robison, Richard, *Indonesia. The rise of capital*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney 1986; and, for an early example, Collier et al, 'Acceleration of Rural Development of Java', *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3, November 1982.
2. Hart, Gillian, *Power, Labor and Livelihood. Processes of Change in Rural Java*, University of California Press, 1986.
3. Törnquist, Olle, *Dilemmas of Third World Communism. The destruction of the PKI in Indonesia*, Zed Books, London 1984, chapter 17.
4. These conclusions gave rise to some discussion. Ina Slamet, for example, has recently argued, in an exciting discussion about strategies of the Indonesian peasant movement on the eve of its annihilation in 1965-66, that almost all villages differed from each other and that concentration of land was far from negligible in some less densely populated areas and in the neighbourhood of large cities, especially Bandung and Surabaya. Of course, there was some concentration of land and huge regional and local differences. I have only discussed a general tendency - when evaluating even more general land reform laws and strategies. And I am not, like Slamet, prepared to include *bengkok* land, land rented in and pawned land within the category privately concentrated land, which by definition is hit at by anti-feudal land reforms. Further, even if I maintain that, generally speaking and in the final analysis, the main problem was not concentration of land but its fragmentation (that the many poor peasant have so little land that they become dependent upon the resources of the somewhat better off) I do of course mention that these better off persons thus possess other resources (what I later on called other means of production), such as credits, access to markets, inputs, etc., usually via the state, which the poor peasants are lacking and have to pay for - whereby their surplus is centralised. Moreover, I have never said that the PKI did not try to fight

such other ways of appropriating surplus (nor that Aidit did not want fair cooperatives in the future) only that communists in 1963-65 concentrated upon trying to implement Sukarno's land reform laws (identification of surplus land plus less unfair rents on land) and sometimes even practised lower ceilings etc. Nor have I argued that the PKI did not know that there was not enough surplus land but rather (on p.201) that they, despite this but for strategical (though short-sighted) political reasons, acted as if there was enough land. Finally, I have not argued that the communists were eager to demonstrate concentration of land only because they wanted to conform to existing models for peasant revolution. Just like Slamet maintains, (and as I write about on pp.201-1) it was also, among other reasons, because they wanted to refute ideas of egalitarian communalism.

5. Törnquist, Olle, *Struggle for democracy - a new option in Indonesia?* The AKUT series no. 33, University of Uppsala, November 1984, Ch.2.
6. I was merely basing myself on interviews with researchers and 'development activists' in Indonesia and Holland plus texts such as, for instance, Collier op.cit., Wiradi, G., Manning, S., and Hartoyo, S, *A preliminary report of a resensus in nine villages in Java*, Agro Economic Survey, Bogor, April 1984; *Wages and Employment in Indonesia*, World Bank report no. 3586-IND; Zacharias, J.D., *A lurah and his dynasty: A study of village officialdom in a village of north Central Java Indonesia*, Monash University 1983; and a review report on rural labour in *Newsletter on International Labour Studies*, No. 18, July 1983.
7. I am in the process of concluding this research.

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