Why is Marxism the theoretical instrument employed by almost all revolutionaries in Latin America?" One reason, says Marcio Moreira Alves, a Brazilian congressman and journalist now in exile (The Christian Century, June 10), is "because revolution means change, and Marxism seems to be the only intellectual instrument available for analyzing social change on a global scale. Neither the U.S. nor Europe or Latin America has produced a single serious social, economic or political study that is not influenced by Marxism. The U.S. sociological school has developed precise non-Marxist methods for examining and measuring social structures, and especially with the concept of change, it is scarcely able to avoid Marxist categories, for it is rarely able to avoid Marxist categories, for avoiding those categories results in incomplete analysis. Sometimes indeed U.S. sociologists examine only superstructures, as if a social fact were unrelated to economics and politics; or they accept facts at face value and describe effects without inquiring after their causes, thus leaning toward social psychology or even moralism. For example, U.S. sociologists typically say that Latin America is underdeveloped because its dominant classes spend their money on luxury goods and therefore are unable to save capital for investments. Obviously, then, the sociologist who refuses to employ Marxism is like the farmer who plows his fields with an ox while a tractor sits idle in his garage."

The author stresses, however, "that using Marxism to analyze class struggle is not tantamount to accepting Marx's philosophy of historical materialism. This point," he notes, "is extremely important for Christians. Separating the young Marx of the 'cosmovision' from the social scientist of Das Kapital is what allows Archbishop Helder Camara, for instance, to speak publicly in favor of socialism."

"Again, modern Marxist thought, as best presented by France's Roger Garaudy and Italy's Luigi Longo, does not pretend to be a total explanation of history. Garaudy says that Marxism is an effort to end man's alienation, and Longo declares that Marxist atheism is a false problem because Marx denounces only alienating religion. More precisely, Marx's attacks on religion as the 'opiate of the people' applied only to his own time—to the nineteenth century, when the Catholic and Protestant churches with their other-worldly theology were a powerful brake on social change. Present-day Christians are the first to admit as much..."

Among Senator J. W. Fulbright's reflections on "What Students Can Do for Peace" (The Progressive, June, 1970), the following:

"Radically different in motive and purpose though they are, the humanitarians of the New Left who would remake our society through social revolution share one common trait with the social scientists who think they can manipulate society with their computers, with the strategists who write about the responsibilities of power, and with the theologians who construct ponderous theories of the 'just war.' That common trait is a supreme confidence in their own capacity for moral choice.

"I am unattracted by that excess of conscience which leads individuals to invoke a 'higher moral law.' I mistrust too much conscience because it places too heavy a burden on human judgment, which we all know—or ought to know—is susceptible to distortions ranging from rationalization to total obsession. In broad terms, and for most purposes, I would rather be ruled by law than by conscience, because law, imperfect thought it is, is the only means we have of protecting ourselves from the arbitrariness, capriciousness, and susceptibility of our own human nature. A reliable, undeluded, objective morality would be preferable to law if it were attainable, but I do not think that it is.

"In any matter of justice or morality, the critical question is always: Who is to make the distinction between right and wrong, between progress and regression? Professor Herbert Marcuse suggests that the man qualified to make this distinction for society as a whole is 'everyone in the maturity of his faculties as a human being, everyone who has learned to think rationally and autonomously.' With all respect for Professor Marcuse's significant insights into the nature of our society, I think that he begs the question of moral choice. How are we to select those special individuals whose maturity and capacity to think rationally and autonomously qualify them to make important decisions for society as a whole? Can they really select themselves? Would any of us volunteer to disqualify ourselves..."

"It is not just what one thinks but how one thinks that makes a person dangerous and destructive. It was not just the moral and strategic opinions of our leaders and their intellectual supporters that got us into Vietnam; it was their arrogant certainty of the rightness of their own predictions and opinions. Like it or not, there is one thing that even the most committed of social reformers share with the strategists and the moral crusaders: human nature and its susceptibilities. We cannot escape them, much as we might like to, and, because we cannot, we do well to remember Judge Learned Hand's warning that 'the spirit of liberty is the spirit that is not too sure that it is right.'"

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With so much attention and deference being given to public opinion in general and student opinion in particular these days, it is perhaps worth recalling what Walter Lippmann said in his *Public Philosophy*: “The unhappy truth is that the prevailing public opinion has been destructively wrong at the critical junctures. The people have imposed a veto upon the judgment of informed and responsible officials. They have compelled the governments, which usually knew what would have been wiser, or was necessary, or was more expedient, to be too late with too little, or too long with too much, too pacifist in peace and too bellicose in war, too neutralist or appeasing in negotiation or too intransigent. Mass opinion has acquired mounting power in this century. It has shown itself to be a dangerous master of decisions when the stakes are life and death.”

Lippmann continued, “There is no mystery about why there is such a tendency for popular opinion to be wrong in judging war and peace. Strategic and diplomatic decisions call for a kind of knowledge—not to speak of an experience and a seasoned judgment—which cannot be had by glancing at newspapers, listening to snatches of radio comment, watching politicians perform on television, hearing occasional lectures, and reading a few books. It would not be enough to make a man competent to decide whether to amputate a leg, and it is not enough to qualify him to choose war or peace, to arm or not to arm, to intervene or to withdraw, to fight on or to negotiate.”

Even if one thinks there is a large measure of truth in Lippmann’s assessment, public opinion in America will determine whether there will or will not be a significantly lower United States profile after Vietnam. Hopefully, President Nixon will stick to his stated determination to see Vietnamization through regardless of his political fate. Hopefully, he will not reduce the American presence in Western Europe, Asia and elsewhere prior to other allied and neutral nations moving to fill the vacuum of power which such an American withdrawal would create. Hopefully, the Congress will not engage in major surgery on needed military, foreign aid and other programs in emotional over-reaction to the trauma and mistakes of Vietnam—and to the Cambodian venture.

It has often been said that the greatest danger from the Vietnam tragedy is to the confidence of the American people in their system. Some, like William Shirer, have even compared the divisions in America today to those which led to the downfall of the French Third Republic in 1940. Surely this is an example of a false analogy. America’s democratic tradition is much more deeply rooted; America lacks the threat from the radical Left and radical Right which plagued the Third Republic in the 1920’s and especially in the 1930’s; most people in this country, despite Vietnam, racial discord, riots et al, demonstrate at elections and in opinion polls and in their daily lives that, unlike some intellectual Cassandras, they are not about to abandon democracy in the present period of tumult. As for the young, they are getting older every day. Even now, the vast majority of students are pro-democratic, although naive about the possibility of completely eliminating the gap between ideals and practice.

The greatest danger stemming from the Vietnam fiasco is to the future steadiness and responsibility of American foreign policy. The cold war and Have Have Not conflicts continue unabated. The prospects for a stronger United Nations and more effective international law remain dim in light of the facts of international politics. “How long, oh Lord, how long!”: as long as evidence and rational analysis dictate the continuing need for a significant American presence in world affairs. The basic alternatives of either surrender on the installment plan or a nuclear holocaust are unthinkable.

*in the magazines…*

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Ask-me-another department:

“Mr. Spiteak: Mr. Ambassador, may I ask you a question? There are many students who insist that whether Cambodia is a success or failure has nothing to do with the issue; that it was morally wrong for us to go into Cambodia. How do you answer such students?”

“Ambassador Bunker: Well, this is a matter, I suppose, of opinion. I don’t think it was morally wrong to go into Cambodia. After all, Cambodia is a neutral country, supposedly, whose neutrality had been violated for the last five years. The Cambodian Government was trying to re-establish neutrality, trying to get the North Vietnamese out—unsuccessfully. As a matter of fact, I think it is an understood principle of international law that a country who is neutral is bound to try, when its neutrality is violated, to get the violator out. If it cannot do so, the belligerent country who is threatened by the violation of that neutrality has the right to defend itself.” (From the transcript of an interview with Ellsworth Bunker on NBC’s “Meet the Press,” May 10, as it appeared in *The Department of State Bulletin*, June 1, 1970.)