

THE NEW BOURGEOISIE AND ITS PSEUDO-ELITE IN THE SOCIETIES OF PERIPHERAL CAPITALISM (A SKETCH FOR A SOCIOLOGICAL PORTRAIT)

UDC 316.62(497.16)

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Abstract. *The paper analyses the changes in the class structure of the post-socialist societies under the influence of the neoliberal development strategy and the restauration of peripheral capitalism.*

It especially focuses on the changes that have taken place in the very composition of the ruling neobourgeois class, of its fractions and elites. In particular, it analyses the social profile of the comprador bourgeoisie and its political elites, as well as the detrimental effect they have on the future and the development of the Balkan societies. Through uncritical acceptance of the neoliberal strategy of dependent modernization and obedience to their Western mentors, the satellite pseudo-elites have contributed more to the processes of destruction than those of creation. They have brought about the peripherization of economy, society and culture and have pushed Serbia and the Balkans into the zone of peripheral capitalism.

The paper explores the social position and the role of the given groups in the social structure, in the system of the division of social power and in the current social changes in Serbia and the Balkans. It also compares the changes in the class structure that have occurred in the Balkan societies to those that have taken place in Latin America and Asia, pointing thereby to the relevant similarities and differences. The common denominator turns out to be that all of those societies in the various parts of the world are dependent societies of peripheral capitalism in the global system. They are ruled by the comprador bourgeoisie and satellite lumpen-elite. They are heavily segregated and exploited societies, they are deeply devided, and full of risk and conflict.

The paper concludes with a paraphrase of a thought of Rene Dimon (expressed in his Neocolonial Rule in India): without a change in the development strategy and the social structure, that would strip the comprador bourgeoisie and all the corrupted elites in both the cities and in the rural areas of their power, Serbia will never be able to make any progress!

Key words: *peripheral capitalism, dependent modernization, comprador bourgeoisie, pseudo-elite, lumpen-politics.*

*European lumpen-bourgeoisie has created
"national" lumpenstates
that have never been truly independent
but have simply been an important instrument
of the lumpenbourgeois politics of lumpendevelopment.*

*Bourgeoisie as a whole cannot possibly
take the direction
of true progress because doing such a thing
would endanger its own interests*
(Andre Gunder Frank)

The corruption of the elites is primarily the corruption of us all.
(Jean Baudrillard)

1. INTRODUCTION: FROM THE SOCIOLOGY OF ELITES TO ELITOLOGY

Ever since ancient times, the history of social and political doctrines has offered an abundance of examples of various authors trying to approach the phenomenon of the emergence of elites and their role in social life and development. In various ways, this problem was initially approached by Plato and Aristotle, the two giants of ancient philosophy, and then by Niccolò Machiavelli, Karl Marx, Max Weber and others.

The basic elements for the foundation of the sociology of elites are to be found in the works of V. Pareto and R. Michels, as well as in those of T. Veblen, J. Barham, J. Schumpeter, K. Mannheim, R. Aron, R. Mills and T. Bottomore. Contemporary sociology has seen an increase in the number of authors dealing with the phenomenon, and in Serbia this issue has been explored by: M. Pečujlić, M. Popović, Z. Golubović, S. Bolčić, V. Milić, M. Lazić, S. Antić and S. Miladinović.

In keeping with the tendency in contemporary science to approach phenomena in a multidisciplinary way, *elitology* today is developing precisely as such a science, the one that tends to rely on and integrate the findings of a number of social sciences and branches of the humanities (among them being philosophy, anthropology, sociology, psychology, elitopedagogy, politicology and management), and the one that analyses the sources and the ways of establishment of social elites, and their role in social changes.

Elites are necessary in every nation, every class and every professional group in their struggle on the national and the global market, so that those groups could articulate and protect their interests and secure their development. There are futurologists claiming that the 21st century will see a rise of plutocracy and meritocracy, and that consequently the struggle for the establishment of new elites fighting for leadership in the contemporary world will also rise in importance. Z. Brzezinski as well as some other geopolitical analysts have written about *geostrategic elites*, as global players on the "great chess board", while J. Attali, writes, among other things, about managers in the era of globalization, calling them a unique *hyperclass*, elite professionals in the sphere of (production, sales, marketing) management as well as in the management of social changes at the level of corporations and in the contemporary global economy. Corporation owners struggle to win such managers over to their side because it is creative competition, and the *creative destruction* of these new revolutionaries

that the survival and success of those companies on the global market, characterized by ruthless competition, socialdarwinistic struggle among global gladiators and market bandits in the era of the rise of the "capitalism of disaster" depends on.

In addition, the issue that is currently becoming ever more important is that of creation of new strategic elites in the postsocialist societies in transition, as key agents of democratic reforms, modernization and development.

In that sense, the given paper addresses the problem of elites in the dependent societies of the capitalism of the periphery in the Balkans, with the focus being on the role of the comprador bourgeoisie marionette pseudoelites.

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH OF THE CHANGES OCCURRING IN THE PROFILE OF SOCIAL CLASSES AND OF ELITES IN THE POSTSOCIALIST ERA

When *Milovan Đilas* wrote his "*New Class*", little did he think that he would be among the first ones to discover and define the phenomenon of the red nomenclature bourgeoisie as a new political class. He was the first one after Max Weber to introduce the given term into sociological literature and to analyse the role of this class in the production of social relations and the bureaucratization of the emerging society of monoparty socialism. Naturally, in doing this Đilas was not led by academic reasons but by an urge to rethink the revolution as a revolutionary himself. Hence his articles, which he first published in *Borba*, then in the journal entitled *New Thought*, and eventually in a book, address the phenomenology and anatomy of the morals of the new class. The reaction of the bourgeois caste was rigid and administrative. The new political inquisition put Đilas in jail on account of his ideas. All of this testifies to the fact that those in power never want the roots and sources of their power to be known. This has been the case since time immemorial despite all the talk about "an open society", democracy and transparency. And no sociological analysis would be sociological one in the scientific sense of the word if it did not reach the roots of any given social phenomenon. And it is exactly social power, the ways of its construction and the directions of its distribution that make the key point of sociological analysis related to the changes in the social class structure, the forms of recruiting and of the functioning of elites.

The emerging capitalist society in Serbia and in the Balkans is today in need of its social analysts. It is time the rosy view of the contemporary society and of its elite were dropped. There are too many ideologized myths currently in existence regarding the modernization of the capitalism emerging here, the democratic rule and the elites. It is time scientific analysis demystified the views societies have of themselves, the nature of social processes and the character of the currently emerging social relations.

Marx justifiably warned researchers that an epoch could not be understood historically from the perspective of what ideological opinion the agents of social change have about themselves, but only from the perspective of the contradictions occurring in the sphere pertaining to the ways of production of social life and the distribution of social power. This is still valid today despite the epochal character of the information revolution, when the forces of the "third wave" have brought about synergy of social and symbolic power in the contemporary world.

The object of our analysis in the given paper is the research of the mechanisms pertaining to the reproduction of the social power of the neobourgeoisie as a new social class in the conditions of the emergence of peripheral capitalism in our country; in that sense, the paper

will especially focus on the position and the role of the comprador bourgeoisie and the pseudoelite of the lumpenpoliticracy, as well as on the similarities and differences between Balkan and Latin American state of affairs regarding the given problems, the characteristics of the classes and of satellite elites, and on their role in social changes.

3. THE STRATEGY OF THE DEPENDENT NEOLIBERAL MODERNIZATION AND THE PRODUCTION OF PERIPHERAL CAPITALISM IN SERBIA

Social phenomena are not natural processes. They are not gifts of God or of leaders. Sociology has long ago demystified the laws that govern the ways social life is produced, focusing thereby on the ways of reproduction of capital relations, social power, development strategies and their implications for social inequalities among social groups.

If the influence of the geostrategic factor of the great powers is abstracted away, the implosion of socialism was an expression of the crisis of reproduction of the statist way of production and of the monopoly system of rule. The creeping bureaucratic counter-revolution paved the way for nationalism, disintegration, the fall of socialism and the restoration of capitalism.

Following the neoliberal ideology and concept of development (characterized by market fundamentalism, monetarist economic policy, privatization, liberalization, deregulation, Washington Agreement), the forces of the global capitalism, whose agents are the leading countries of the world centre and the USA, TNCs and the financial bank bourgeoisie, have imposed the neoliberal ideology of dependent modernization on the countries of the semi-periphery and the periphery. The newly established (political, economic, cultural) elites in the postsocialist societies in most postsocialist states have mostly accepted this strategy. It has been offered in the form of a programme of radical economic reforms by the IMF and the World Bank, as instruments of the TNC and the USA. The experts within these institutions, starting with *Geoffrey Sax* and up to *John Perkins* and other "paid murderers", the representatives of the god Mammon and of the Money-Driven Internationale, have spread the spirit of the capitalism of disaster (N. Klein) in the postsocialist states. In that sense, post October 5 Serbia has also found itself on the receiving end of such neoliberal radicalism (ie. *market banditism*). Plagued by a decade long sanctions and wounded by the NATO war intervention, impoverished and confused, Serbia, still in agony over October 5 events and antirevolutionary changes, easily fell prey to the "big brother" and his/its experts of Machiavellian social engineering.

The new so called democratic elite, which was recruited from various social layers, but that was mostly made up of urban middle class people considered renegades in the former socialist societies, wholeheartedly and uncritically accepted what their Western mentors had to tell them and started creating the political strategy of satellite dependent modernization based on the neoliberal programme that has paved the way for a radical disintegration of the real economy (industry, the working class...), radical privatization of companies, introduction of foreign banks and foreign media.

This transitional shock has created profound changes in the economy and social anomia. There followed mass unemployment, enormous exploitation, social inequalities, the rise in social contradictions. All of the given processes led from a blocked to a disintegrated society, from real economy to "bandit economy", to lumpenpolitics and lumpendevelopment. In short, Serbia and the Balkans have faced the renewal of the phenomenon of dependent so-

cieties of peripheral capitalism of the Latin American type, so aptly and brilliantly written about by *Andre Gunder Frank*.¹

Dependent modernization is an expression of the hierarchical relations to be found in the reproduction of capital power between the countries of the world centre, on the one hand, and the countries of the world periphery or satellite countries, on the other hand. Such a type of neoliberal dependent modernization creates a specific type of capitalist society, namely bandit economy, lumpenpolitics and dependent culture. It also serves as the basis for the creation of a specific structure of social classes, layers and elites, that are instrumentalized by the global domination of capital, that are its servants and representatives of their power at the national and the local levels.

Dependent modernization has brought about peripherization and rebalkanization of the Balkans, that Eric Hobsbawm wrote about saying that "future will be most difficult in South-Eastern Europe, that is relatively, and sometimes absolutely, underdeveloped when compared to the other parts of the continent" (*NIN*, 15 July, 2010, p. 56). Such a position of the Balkans has been described *Ivan Berenda* as the Balkans running in circles - from the periphery in the Soviet Empire to a new periphery in the EU.

4. COMPRADOR BOURGEOISIE AND SATELLITE PSEUDOELITE

In my books², I have already written about the emergence of the degenerative social structure and the class structure of the dependent societies of peripheral capitalism.

In connection with that, I would like to remind the reader of the classification I offered of the possible fractions of the emergent new bourgeoisie, its sources of power and its social role. In that sense, in the book entitled *Contemporary Society* [*Savremeno društvo*, 1996], I wrote that the new bourgeoisie consists, among other things, of three fractions:

- a) *the entrepreneurial one*;
- b) *the nomenclature one*;
- c) *lumpenbourgeoisie*.

Apart from the entrepreneurial bourgeoisie, which is a driving force of development, the other two are non-productive, consumerist, and are often criminal and destructive in nature.

Comprador bourgeoisie is the upper layer of the bourgeois class. It is recruited from all the three fractions. It is a tycoon group ruthlessly led by its interests. It posits its own interests over general social ones. It is not national in character and is socially irresponsible. It is a blind servant of foreign capital, ruthless in the exploitation of the domestic workforce and dictatorial in relation to its fellow countrymen. Its homeland is where its interests are. It is the agent of the megacapital in the function of global economy. It is a "Trojan horse" of the foreign TNCs in Serbia and the region. Its god is the god Mammon, the capital. Its aim is to amass capital, and it puts profit above individuals. It is a predatory class of the nouveau riche and often bon vivant and parasitic upstarts. It is a peculiar jet-set of bandit economy. It may contain actually good businessmen that are trying to be successful not only nationally but also globally.

¹ See *Lumpenburžoazija i lumpenrazvoj* [*Lumpenbourgeoisie and Lumpendevelopment*], A.G. Frank, CID, Podgorica, 2002.

² See Lj. Mitrović, *Savremeno društvo* [*Contemporary Society*] (1996); *Put u zavisno društvo* [*Road to Dependent Society*] (2004); *Tranzicija u periferni kapitalizam* [*Transition into Peripheral Capitalism*] (2009).

The given class usually invests "its" capital into non-productive but profitable sectors – trade, banking and services. Driven by the logic of profit, it moves its capital from one field to another. Due to its massive exploitation of the workforce, it creates/enlarges its fortune. It pays no attention to the plight of the working class and the people.

As opposed to entrepreneurial bourgeoisie, as a driving force of development, comprador bourgeoisie is only profit-driven. Both are market-oriented, but while the former is productive, the latter is speculative. Both cooperate with international bourgeoisie and the TNC. Lumpen-bourgeoisie is the main agent in the world of bandit economy. It is a part of the "underground" economy and recruits its members from war profiteers and the social lowest of the low. It lives on the "holes in the law" and the social anomia that emerged on the ruins of socialism.

One may ask which social groups are the elite parts of the various layers of the new bourgeoisie in contemporary postsocial societies and what their profile and their social roles are. A possible sketch of the *composition of the elite groups* in contemporary postsocial societies may look as follows:

- a) *economy elite* (managers, meritocracy and technocracy)
- b) *political elite* (politocracy, bureaucracy and ideocracy)
- c) *cultural elite* (scientific elite, artistic elite, scientocracy, ...)

The shapes of the emerging social class of the semi-civil society in Serbia and in the Balkans are becoming ever clearer. On the basis of the capitalist ways of production, new elites emerge, ranging from lumpenelite, pseudoelite and comprador elite to mature and responsible elites.

If we start from a hybrid Marx's and Dahrendorf's model of the emergence of social groups, where those groups vary from a pseudogroup ("class in itself") to a self-conscious group ("class for itself"), and apply it to postsocialist societies, we could distinguish several types of elites. Social classes and layers in postsocialism can have: no developed elite, semi-developed elite, pseudoelite – lumpenelite, and developed elite.

The given classification of elites (organized on the basis of how much their respective consciousness of their identity has formed) can be compared to the structure of social classes/layers: *production class*, *middle class*, *capitalist class*, ie. the lower, the middle and the upper class. According to how much they are ideologically formed, we can distinguish among:

- a) *undeveloped elites*;
- b) *semi-developed elites*;
- c) *developed elites*.

We should also try and find answers to the following questions: What kind of elite suits undeveloped and degenerate social and class structure of peripheral capitalism? What is the link between bandit economy and satellite political elite? To be more precise: What is the link among bandit economy, comprador bourgeoisie, satellite political elite and lumpenintelligence, between lumpenbourgeoisie and lumpen development (A. G. Franak), among the strategy of dependent modernization, lumpenpolitics and lumpen development, between the strategy of dependent modernization and the culture of dependence?

Branko Dragaš, an economist, in his article entitled *The Rabble* [Ološ], published last summer in an issue of *Tabloid*, establishes links among all the given elite fractions in Serbia, showing, in the deterministic conglomerate of factors, their complementarity in the reproduction of the ways of life and the pathology of dependent societies of the world periphery, as represented by Serbia and the Balkans at the beginning of the third millennium.

5. POSTSOCIALIST SERBIA IN THE JAWS OF THE NEOLIBERAL STRATEGY OF DEPENDENT MODERNIZATION, COMPRADOR NEOBOURGEOISIE AND LUMPENELITE

Postsocialist Serbia is characterized by destroyed society, i.e. lumpenpolitics and lumpendevlopment. It has found itself in the jaws of the neoliberal strategy of dependent modernization that produces subdevelopment, peripherization of economy, society and culture. The degenerate social structure then sees the emergence of new aspects of neobourgeoisie as well as the emergence of the new fractions of its elites (the entrepreneurial fraction, the nomenclature fraction and the lumpenbourgeoisie).

The focus of our analysis is comprador bourgeoisie and the fraction of pseudo-lumpen elites, which, as agents of social change, produce underdevelopment and the culture of dependence, i.e. lumpenpolitics and lumpendevlopment.

A critical analysis of the social role of this bourgeoisie can show all the detrimental effects of the strategy of dependent modernization, of the actions of comprador bourgeoisie and the satellite political elites on the development on the contemporary society of Serbia. As industrialization has destroyed the rural areas and their inhabitants, so the transition of the given type is currently destroying cities, the working and the middle class. Serbia and the Balkans are currently experiencing production of dependent societies which have entered the zone of neocolonial debtor slavery.

Comprador bourgeoisie is the main force behind subdevelopment and subservience to the world of the supercapital. It is a domestic offspring of the profit-driven Internationale in the countries of peripheral capitalism. It develops "bandit economy" and invests its capital in the peripheral sectors of trade, and, if necessary, in the narcomarket, too. As far as its social profile is concerned, it is an amalgam and recruits its members from the various groups involved in the neobourgeois ways of production, from the nomenclature bourgeoisie, lumpenbourgeoisie and partly from the entrepreneurial bourgeoisie. It possesses no developed national consciousness and blindly follows its interests at all costs. It creates clones with a European and transatlantic trademark, it produces people who have sold their souls to capital, and who are ready to act against national interests in order to increase their wealth. It creates betrayers with the European and the transatlantic trademark.

Comprador bourgeoisie is neither an agent of progressive ways of production nor does it have developed social consciousness so as for it to become a leading class. Therefore, when social struggles occur, this bourgeoisie simply gives support to the winning fractions of the new bourgeoisie, no matter what the ideological standpoints of the latter happen to be. Its sole concern is to secure its interests and to profitably invest its capital nationally and globally. Its political elites group around the liberal-democratic parties, but it is also ready to support the conservative ones, if their political programme enables this bourgeoisie to secure those interests. In Serbia, they can primarily find support in those parties that are not nationally oriented, and that are profit and client-oriented.

Entrepreneurial bourgeoisie in Serbia has just started to secure its position and form its political and cultural elite. On the other hand, the most marginalized class is the working class. It is on the defensive, just like the entire production class. The leftist political fractions are also destroyed and divided. Most of the leftist intelligence behave like converts and prozelytes. They have given up not only Marxism but also emancipatory thought, and have become part of the echelone of the spiritual forces of conservation, of the status quo; they support the capital relations and try to dissuade the working class from class struggle. In such a

way, the intellectual elites themselves become comprador ones, betraying thereby not only emancipatory but also national ideas and interests.

6. CULTURAL TRANSITION AS THE TRANSITION INTO THE CULTURE OF DEPENDENCE AND SYSTEMIC COMPRADOR INTELLIGENCE

The transition of the cultural subsystem in the postsocialist states in the Balkans is a part of the process of their dependent modernization, of their becoming enslaved by the forces of neocolonialism, of the modern rulers of European and global power – the alliance of plutocracy, politbureaucracy, financial bourgeoisie, and mammonocracy of the profit-driven Internationale. It is in this context that the reform of education on the basis of the Bologna Declaration is being done, with an aim to produce a generation of semieducated morally disinterested people meant to be used by the megacapital.

There is currently ruthless global competition for leadership, especially at the "grey matter" market. In that sense, the leading TNCs keep discovering and providing scholarships to talented young people in the developing countries and the countries in transition. Our universities are teeming with posters such as "Coca Cola Talents" and others sponsored by various foundations (e.g. Soros's one). The enslaved and underdeveloped countries are in that way confronted with brain drain, as they get robbed of the elite of each generation, whose knowledge is then used for the purposes of world domination and the survival of capitalism, rather than for the benefit of those underdeveloped countries.

In order to get out of the transition recession, the postsocialist countries need not only development strategies but also a *radical change in the reproduction of professionals*. The bureaucratic practice of negative selection should be dropped, and the most capable professionals should become part of the leading elite. It can be expected that the abolition of the neocolonial relations would enable the countries of the periphery, such as the Balkan countries, to form new (economic, scientific, political and cultural) elite that will play a progressive role in the development and emancipation of the Balkans. This change can take place through a *new social revolution*, in which societies will get rid of parasites, compradors, bureaucrats, and corrupted people, and in which they will get an authentic, highly professional, competent, responsible and patriotic elite that would destigmatize Serbia and demarginalize its position in the world. Such elite will know that it is honourable to be patriotic, and that patriotism and love for mankind are not mutually exclusive but complementary. As opposed to the pseudomondialists we currently have, who are ashamed of patriotism and who would rather play a subservient role to the new masters of the world power, this kind of elite would serve its people and mankind.

There is now a considerable number of works in Serbia on the transition of culture and on what the characteristics of a better political elite than the present one would be. I would to remind the reader of, for example, the columns entitled *An Intellectual in Transition* or *What is to be done? The Balkans in Search of Moderate Politicians*. In our country, pseudoscientists reduce transition to adapting to the global development strategies and its structures of power, and to cloned dependent modernization and the culture of dependence. In this context, the role of intellectuals and of political elites is interpreted functionalistically, always keeping in mind the principles of political correctness, i.e. the focus is on how much transition can serve the purpose of perpetuation of the imposed order both globally and nationally.

We seem to suffer from new Bolshevism leaning towards the political right. The profile of an intellectual that is currently being promoted is that of a person that has been ideologized in a new way, that will be ready for every kind of "ketmanship" within the limits of the "enslaved mind", that is guided by no principles, that is ready for camouflage, that is like a marionette and that can adjust to any political view ranging from the far right to the far left.

Politicians that can serve any regime, that are politically correct and adhere to the transatlantic alliance are being cerated. And such a politician is considered to be an ideal! As a rule, such elites have done nothing for their respective nations. Sooner or later, collaboration has made them historical losers and betrayers of national interests

If right before the transition of socialism one could talk about *spent* (intellectual and political) elites, in the emerging society of dependent peripheral capitalism one can talk about immature upstart pseudoelite, incapable of rationally ruling its country. Such elites are profoundly subservient to the imperial centres, wherefore one is justified in talking about the phenomenon of marionnetic pseudoelites.

7. CHANGES IN THE CLASS STRUCTURE OF THE POSTSOCIALIST SOCIETIES AND ELITES BECOMING SOCIAL AGENTS

Postsocialist societies are still torn between the processes of retraditionalisation and modernization. The achievements of 20 years of transition can show all the contradictions of the development of those societies and the problems involved in the basic processes of their transformation.

We have already pointed to the limited and devastating effects of the neoliberal dependent modernization, that have led to the phenomenon of countermodernization and historical restauration of the forms of social life that were typical of the so called early or wild capitalism. The criticism of the strategy of neoliberal social development does not mean that the limitations of the concept and of the agents of conservative retraditionalization and rebalkanization can be vindicated. The 1990s in Serbia and in former Yugoslavia have also shown how catastrophic the effects can be of blocked transition, destroyed society, cultural trauma, xenophobia, i.e. of the "shock of the past". In Serbia, on the cultural and ideological level, the myth of a "heavenly nation" has been substituted by the myth that can be called "*There is no alternative to Europe*". Serbia seems to be trapped between these two myths despite radical changes in public opinion and the ever increasing peripherization of the orientation towards Europe not only in the elites but also among people.

Radical changes in the class structure of Serbia's postsocialist society can reveal antagonistic nature of production and social relations. Social and class contradictions, i.e. the confronted interests of social forces have become very apparent. It will not be possible to politically camouflage those basic contradictions for long by ethno-political tensions, nor to pacify them, nor to redirect them by trying to marginalize their systemic taming. Enormous exploitation, impoverishment of most of the nation, mass unemployment, form the core of negative social synergy for potential mass dissatisfaction, and possible social protests and conflicts. If they wish not to be discarded by the citizens and most of the nation, political parties and elites would have to stop deceiving the citizens and articulate their real interests in the struggle for social change.

The achievements of transition necessitate critical rethinking of the development strategy used so far and its radical redefinition so as for the crisis to be overcome and so as for true modernization, development and progress of Serbia to be made. The current practice has shown inner limitations and disastrous effects both of the strategy of conservative retraditionalization and of the strategy of neoliberal dependent modernization. The time ahead will soon show which direction contemporary Serbia will adopt – conservative authoritarian modernization or liberal democratic / social democratic model. It is up to the emerging elite and the citizens to decide on and redefine the direction of future development. That direction must comply with the global megatrends in Europe and in the world, but also show respect for our national and cultural identity, for the interests and peculiarities of our geostrategic position and our role in the contemporary world. It is against such a background that a new conglomerate of elites as agents of social change will emerge.

This paper advocates *socialdemocratic alternative of social development* as a historical form of social change that can help create an open, modern, civil society, in which there is a plurality of forms of ownership, whose backbone consists of the common actions of the employed and participation democracy, starting at the level of microsocial structures, through local and regional self-government, to central institutions of the global society. Such a model of social relations fosters social initiative, creativity and responsibility of all the social layers in the process of social development, and, as such, can guarantee success and a promising future for all social groups.

Still, no choice of an authentic alternative for future social development is possible without critical analysis of the causes and the consequences of the state we currently find ourselves in, i.e. without getting rid of various illusions and a radical change in the structure of strategic elites which have brought us here. There is no doubt that those who have created the crisis cannot possibly get us out of it. It is time for new social changes that can be brought about by new elites.

INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION

Serbia and the Balkans belong to the new European and world periphery, regardless of whether they are officially in the EU or not. Such conclusion can be drawn on the basis of the place and role the Balkan countries play in the regional and class division of labour in the contemporary world. This fact, in turn, determines the ways of the reproduction of social, class and political structure of the given societies. Those societies are dependent societies characterized by subdevelopment, degenerate structure, undifferentiated elite and undeveloped new world view. They are unfortunately still plagued by "cultural trauma", and exist between "the shock of the past" and the "contemporary challenge". It is in this context that in Serbia, at the cultural and ideological level, the myth of "heavenly Serbia" has been substituted by the "there is no alternative to Europe" myth!

The elites in the countries in transition are still immature, and are still pseudoelites. Serbia (and the other Balkan countries) need mature, nationally conscious, entrepreneurial elite. They need a modern elite, that will be open to the world, and that will, through its professionalism and respect for the common good – the national interest, show that "one can die for one's homeland everywhere and not just at the battlefield" (D. Daničić). Such new elite, with its entrepreneurship and cultural diplomacy, can potentially do more than all the transition

governments, which have been restaurative in character, which have led Serbia into debtor slavery, which have made it a recolonized country and a protectorate, and which have not proved able to govern rationally and defend Serbia's freedom and independence.

When one compares comprador bourgeoisie in Latin America 20 years ago (which A. G. Frank wrote about) to the modern compradors in Serbia and the Balkans, one can draw the following conclusions:

- in Latin America, the societies were just starting their transition from feudalism to early capitalism;
- Serbia and the Balkans are making transition from socialism to capitalism;
- in Latin America, compradors are recruited from the agricultural class, whereas here they are recruited from the middle class and the nomenclature;
- what compradors everywhere (in the Balkans, in Russia, in Latin America, in Africa, in Asia) have in common is that they are ready to sacrifice national interest for the sake of their own benefit; all of them unscrupulously exploit the workforce and are subservient to the masters of the global power, the megacapital of the TNCs and the world centres;
- comprador bourgeoisie is the agent of the processes of internal colonialization, of dependent modernization and asymmetric globalization in the geospace in which Serbia and the Balkans are situated.

Historical sociology has analysed the emergence and the role of compradors in China, India and Latin America, that were once again nothing more but agents of spreading of the capitalist ways of production and of colonialism in the 19th century.³ It is time our sociologists wrote a contemporary study on compradors in Serbia and in the Balkans. Thus far, only a small number of economists, sociologists and geopolitical analysts have written on the issue, and even when they did that, this issue was not their primary focus. The economists who have written on the given issue are *M. Jakšić, J. Dušanić, D. Cvetičanin* and *B. Dragaš*; the sociologists who have tackled the given problem are: *V. Vratuša-Žunjić, S. AntoniĆ, Z. Vidojević* and *Lj. Mitrović*; eventually, this issue has also been dealt with by the following politicologists and geopolitical analysts – *M. Knežević* and *M. Đurković*. In the article entitled *Compradors*, *S. AntoniĆ*, among other things, says the following: "We often hold the opinion that *our political, media and culture elite* is unique when it comes to the destruction of economy and of the state, to robbing the country of its resources and the cultural war against its own people. If that can be any consolation, a number of similar examples can be found, especially in the history of colonialism. That was actually the time when such elites were termed "comprador" elites. Such elites are today seen as the main agents of the global capital and of its political structures (of the "Empire") in the countries belonging to the semiperiphery and the periphery of the capitalist system".⁴ Their role, AntoniĆ adds, is to secure cultural hegemony and convince the citizens that "in the period of transition the best way of modernization is to hand over all the economy, political and cultural resources to foreigners".⁵

³ See more on this in the books by A.G. Frank and I. Wallerstein.

⁴ See the article entitled "*Compradors*" ["*Kompradori*"] by S. AntoniĆ, "Pečat", Beograd, No. 109., 9 April, 2010., p. 8.

⁵ Ibid, p.8.

I would like to end this paper with a plea for radical criticism of neocolonialism and its pseudoelites currently emerging in Serbia. In that sense, it would also be useful to paraphrase Rene Dumon, a French sociologist: *Serbia and the Balkans will never be able to save themselves if their development strategy and social structures do not get changed and if comprador bourgeoisie and its corrupted pseudoelite at all levels do not get stripped of their power.*⁶

In order to demarginalize its position in the region and in the global division of labour, Serbia needs competent, socially responsible and patriotic elite, with developed self-consciousness. Relying on its creativity, such elite would be able not only to destigmatize Serbia especially in view of the events that Serbia took part in during the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century, but also secure Serbia a new position and role in the contemporary world. Serbia can become the regional leader only through real changes within itself and in its consciousness, through advancement of its economic and cultural potentials, rather than through narcissistic bragging about its importance, which is something that its political leaders, the media subservient to them and the "analysts-aestheticians-propagandists and the PRs" working for those media are doing in order to delude the masses and justify the actions of those in power. It takes time for such elites to form, and it is also important, in such a context, to have a clear orientation in the educational and cultural policy, and in the global strategy of social development. Our future depends on the actions we take today.

In *revolution*, which represents the most radical form of social change, and a creative act (because it liberates the holders of the new production forces and the initiative of the general public, that it gathers together for the sake of development), progressive social classes, as history has shown, have the power to form progressive elites as agents of modernization, democratization, emancipation and creativity. As opposed to this, *counterrevolution*, paves the way for social regression and historic restauration of the conservative classes and elites. What follows after a counterrevolution is an entourage of political intriguants and demagogues, people of dubious character, hypocritical converts and corrupted groups, prone to criminal and antipatriotic acts, making the political sphere look like a brothel, making the Parliament look like a chat-room of no significance, and making the government an executive board of the bourgeoisie. The revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries from the French Civil Revolution and their sociological profile, have been dealt with by K. Marx (see his book entitled *Civil War in France*), as well as by S. Jovanović (*To the Leader of the French Revolution [Vođi francuske revolucije]*).

The "heroes" of the transition currently going on, i.e. of the neoconservative restauration in Serbia and in the world (dubbed "democratic, velvet revolution" by its ideologists) remain to be written about and analysed in critical and objective studies. Some initial sociological works on the issue have already been written by those authors dealing with the reasearch of the role of the elites of disintegration and of the elites in the processes of postsocialist transition.⁷

Transition is a contradictory process of new divisions among and regrouping of social forces. The elites, that articulate the interests of social classes and lead social agents in social struggle and social change, must possess not only professional knowledge, but also devel-

⁶ cited in: Pierre Dockes, *Internacionalna kapitala [The Capital Internationale]*, Školska knjiga, Zagreb, 1977., str.180.

⁷ See the books by K. Kosik, G. Osipov, Z. Golenkova, as well as those by the following Serbian authors: Z. Golubović, M. Lazić, S. Antić and S. Miladinović.

oped collective self-consciousness about social class and the nation they belong to, as well as about the era they live in and the role they should have in the national, regional and global changes. Because, as I. Wallerstein wrote: *"Transition is not a friendly game. It is a fierce struggle for the future and will bring about sharp divisions among us... We are living in transition times and you must know which shore it is you want to swim towards, because otherwise you will drown!"*⁸

NOVA BURŽOAZIJA I NJENA ELITA U DRUŠTVU PERIFERNOG KAPITALIZMA (SKICA ZA SOCIOLOŠKI PORTRET)

Ljubiša Mitrović

Izmrcvarena decenijskim snakcijama i ranjena ratnim intervencijama NATO-a, na talasu i udaru novog neoliberalnog tržišnog fundamentalizma, našla se i petooktobarska Srbija. U radu autor razmatra radikalne promene u klasno slojnoj strukturi postsocijalističkih društava, pod uticajem neoliberalne strategije razvoja i restauracije perifernog kapitalizma.

U fokusu autorove analize su promene u sastavu vladajuće neoliberalne klase, njenih frakcija i elita. Autor se posebno koncentriše na analizu socijalnog položaja kompradorske buržoazije i njene političke elite i njihovog pogubnog učinka po razvoj i budućnost društva Srbije.

Autor istražuje mesto ovih grupa u društvenoj strukturi, sistemu raspodele društvene moći i njihovu ulogu u društvenim promenama savremenih društava Srbije i Balkana. Svoju analizu on dopunjuje komparativnim razmatranjem sličnosti i razlika između klasne strukture balkanskih postsocijalističkih i latinoameričkih društava, nalazeći šta je njihov sociološki zajednički imenitelj.

Ključne reči: *periferni kapitalizam, neoburžoazija, kompradorska buržoazija, satelitska pseudoelita, neoliberalizam, zavisna modernizacija*

⁸ I. Wallerstein, *Opadanje američke moći* [*The Decline of American Power*], CID, Podgorica, 2004. p.178.