

From Marx to Morales: Indigenous Socialism and the Latin Americanization of Marxism

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Over the past decade, a new rise of mass struggles in Latin America has sparked an encounter between revolutionists of that region and many of those based in the imperialist countries. In many of these struggles, as in Bolivia under the presidency of Evo Morales, Indigenous peoples are in the lead.

Latin American revolutionists are enriching Marxism in the field of theory as well as of action. This article offers some introductory comments indicating ways in which their ideas are linking up with and drawing attention to important but little-known aspects of Marxist thought.

Eurocentrism

A good starting point is provided by the comment often heard from Latin American revolutionists that much of Marxist theory is marked by a “Eurocentric” bias. They understand Eurocentrism as the belief that Latin American nations must replicate the evolution of Western European societies, through to the highest possible level of capitalist development, before a socialist revolution is possible. Eurocentrism is also understood to imply a stress on the primacy of industrialization for social progress and on the need to raise physical production in a fashion that appears to exclude peasant and Indigenous realities and to point toward the dissolution of Indigenous culture. [