



From the Left

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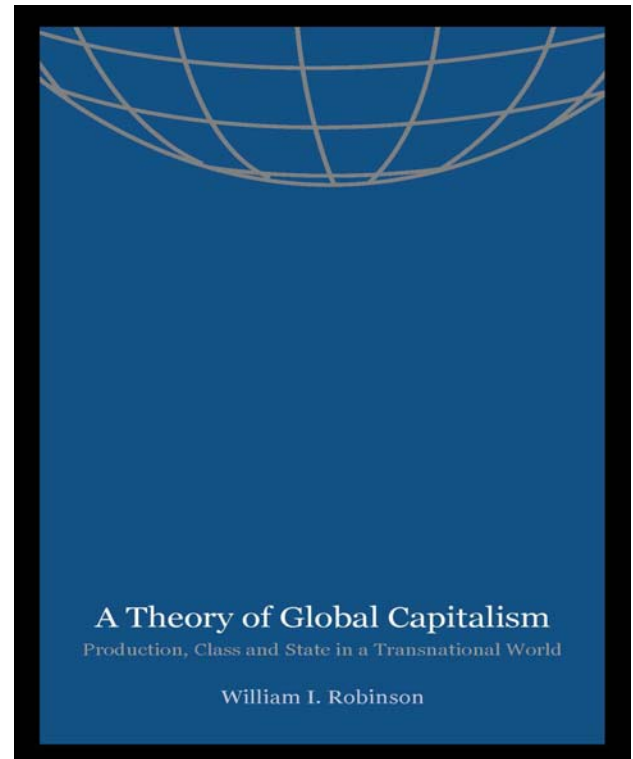
The Crisis of Global Capitalism and the Folly of Conventional Thinking on It

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The nature of change in world capitalism has been hotly debated in recent years, enmeshed with the ongoing debate on globalization, and more specifically and recently, on the putative resurgence of U.S. empire. My views on the nature of these changes revolve around a theory of global capitalism as a new transnational stage in the history of the world capitalism system (for the most recent exposition, see, e.g., Robinson, 2004). This emergent stage is marked by a number of fundamental shifts in the system: 1) the *rise of truly transnational capital* and the integration of every country into a new global production and financial system; 2) the appearance of a new *transnational capitalist class* (TCC), a class group grounded in new global markets and circuits of accumulation, rather than national markets and circuits; 3) the rise of a *transnational state* (TNS), a loose network comprised of supranational political and economic institutions *together with* national state apparatuses that have been penetrated and transformed by transnational forces, and; 4) the appearance of *novel relations of power and inequality* in global society.

It is time to reexamine the theory of imperialism in light of these changes. The dynamics of this emerging stage in world capitalism cannot be understood through the lens of nation-state centric thinking. There is a new relation between space and power that is only just beginning to be theorized, along with novel political, cultural and institutional relations that are clearly transnational in the sense that the nation-state does not fundamentally mediate these relations as it did in the past. This is not to say that the nation-state is no longer important but that the system of nation-states as discrete interacting units - the inter-state system - is no longer the organizing principle of capitalist development, or the primary institutional framework that shapes social and class forces and political dynamics. Nation-state centric thinking informs the widely-accepted claim, rooted in the classical theory of imperialism, that current U.S. interventionism and unilateralism is evidence of a new U.S. bid for world hegemony and a renewed round of inter-imperialist rivalry. This claim is based on the assumption that world capital in

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Gods and Monsters

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In late December, the Democratic presidential candidates appeared on Nightline with Ted Koppel. Koppel began by noting that Al Sharpton, Carol Braun, and Ohio congressman Dennis Kucinich had no money, or at least very little, and asked the three of them when they would face reality and leave the field.

Koppel's question was a surprisingly frank acknowledgment that in America, monied interests – specifically large corporations – have a great deal to say about who can run successfully for public office. Candidates whose messages seem opposed to corporate interests cannot raise large sums of corporate money; they get little exposure in the corporate media, who do not hesitate to dismiss them as unserious fringe candidates hardly worthy of consideration (except, perhaps, as a form of sport). All this, of course, has predictable effects on candidates' poll numbers. Poor polling results for candidates not underwritten by large corporations are then used to justify further marginalization and ridicule. To the American electorate then falls the unhappy task of choosing from among those candidates who have been vetted and approved by capital. This, of course, is a terrible indictment of our democracy.

But there are deeper and more troubling questions to consider. One hundred and sixty years ago, Karl Marx observed that capital stands opposed to ordinary wage-workers like an "alien object," and noted that "the life [the worker] has given to [this] object confronts him as hostile and alien." Just as early societies created gods and then gave those gods the power of life and death over them, so in capitalism: wage labor creates and continually enlarges capital, which, having been given a monstrous sort of life, strides across the globe as an autonomous power, deciding once and for all who will suffer deprivation and who will be enriched, who will starve and who will reap the rewards of idle wealth.

Marx wrote poetically, if bitterly, about the irony of endowing human creations like capital and the market with the autonomy and power to rule over human society like gods. But I don't think even he could have imagined the extent to which his analogy has become literally true. What would Marx have thought of the legal doctrine of corporate personhood? Since the late 1800s, American corporations have not been organizations created by limited charters and endowed with specific powers linked to public purposes; instead American law has defined them as legal persons, and, in so doing, has given them powers that really are godlike.

Unlike flesh-and-blood persons, American corporations are potentially immortal. They can be in many places simultaneously. Like gods, they have no physical bodies, but speak

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through mortal oracles and emissaries. Like gods, they serve their own purposes, which are often mysterious and hidden from human knowledge. Like gods, they are fickle: they giveth and they taketh away. One day they make Western Pennsylvania a prospering industrial center; the next they make of it a barren wasteland of twisted and rusting metal. And because of their godlike powers, equal protection of the laws for corporate persons ultimately serves only to protect them from the rest of us. Like us, they enjoy the right to free speech; unlike us, they are themselves the megaphones through which public speech is possible. Perversely, the megaphone has been given the right to speak for itself, to drown out anyone who would use it to deliver a message that it does not like. And while it is possible to sue or prosecute a corporation, just as a flesh-and-blood person can be sued or prosecuted, it is not possible to imprison a Fortune 500 corporation, even if the crime is murder, rape of the environment, or poisoning of the air.

But despite all these godlike abilities, corporations are unlike other gods in one important respect. Generally, old-fashioned gods reflected human qualities like love as well as hate, compassion as well as retribution. Corporations, it is true, know the language of love, or at least what often passes for love. They know how to seduce us: perfumes, clothes, jewelry, fancy cars. They speak to our most intimate desires.

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Global Marxism: Orientalism in U.S. Sociology and a Century of Filipino Insurgencies Against U.S. Empire: An Essay Commemorating Edward Said's Legacies

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Editor John Foran's introduction: This seventh installment in the "Global Marxism" series is the second not written by myself, and I am grateful to Peter Chua for proposing it. I would welcome others to contribute to the column by contacting me in advance about their ideas (foran@soc.ucsb.edu). This project is an attempt to take the world, especially the Third World, as the subject of Marxism. "Subject" both in the sense of what Marxism as an approach could be about, and in the sense of centering the agency of people in the Third World.

This essay is a fitting testimony to the legacy of the late Edward Said for a global neo-Marxist sociology, as seen through the eyes of Filipino activists and intellectuals. Peter Chua brings to life Said's classic critique of Orientalism and challenges us to not only question the sociological canon) in new ways in the context of U.S. imperialism (always a relevant topic but also our own thinking and practice. Peter Chua is one of the originators of the notion of a Third World cultural studies, and is presently working on a book manuscript based on his award-winning dissertation, "Condom Matters and Social Inequalities: Inquiries into Condom Production, Exchange, and Advocacy Practices."

"The Orient and Islam have a kind of extrareal, phenomenologically reduced status that puts them out of reach of everyone except the Western expert," writes Edward Said (1935-2003) of Orientalist scholarship. He notes that the "evidence of the Orient was credible only after it had passed through and been made firm by the refining fire of the Orientalist's work" (1978: 283). Such statements reflect Said's analysis and severe indictment of the seeming science of the "Orient" – that man-made, imaginary geography from the "Near East" to the distinct Pacific isles – produced by British, French, and U.S. scholars during their respective periods of conquest and empire.

Introduced in the now classic *Orientalism*, Said had hoped his analysis would help the quest for Palestinian justice and an equitable resolution to the blood shed in the region. Moreover, his compelling indictment has inspired many, particularly Third World Marxists, to re-analyze the nuanced relationships among power, knowledge, and the cultures of imperialism.

An area that remains underanalyzed is the conjunctural relationship between the inauguration of U.S. sociology and

the heightened phase of U.S. empire (1870s-1940s). Focusing on one of America's possessions in the "Orient" – the Philippine Islands – and analyzing *rather briefly* the Orientalist practices of early sociology, this essay signals how *constitutive* imperialism and its Orientalist projects have been in shaping the discipline's agenda with respect to such "questions" as blackness, class conflicts, and gendered domesticities. Consequently one needs to start, as I will below, with the turn-of-the-century Philippines to grasp U.S. sociology.

Some may highlight the temporal distance, the "progress" in theory and methods producing substantively better knowledge of the region and its people, and the dramatic changes in the geopolitical relationship between U.S. and the Philippines as evidence of the attenuation of sociology's initial Orientalist tendencies.

I would counter by pointing to the *silence* on U.S. empire and near *invisibility* of Filipinas and Filipinos (including those in the U.S.) in dominant intellectual perspectives, even while the Philippines remained vital in U.S. policy for a century (first as a commonwealth territory, then in WWII, and later, the anti-communist wars in Korea and Vietnam). By dismissing analysis of empire and imperialism as useless and old-fashioned, the recurring gatekeeping practices today in textbooks and journals result in the lack of critical discussion about the Philippines. This lack reprises the legacy of early Orientalist projects.

Another crucial legacy, one which has become evident since September 11, is the "Moro" (Muslim) insurgency in the Philippines. These insurgents once presented challenges to U.S. colonial administrators; now they pose new threats and have been the targets of Bush's Second Front in the "global war on terror" during his military campaigns in, and subsequent occupations of, Afghanistan and Iraq. As a result, this threat requires expert knowledge on Islam and Filipino insurgencies. With the return of U.S. troops to the Philippines comes U.S.-styled Orientalism. Ignoring these legacies and the after-life of Orientalism impair Marxist and other critical projects' abilities today to challenge imperial power on cultural and political fronts.



Orientalism in U.S. Sociology (Continued from page 3)

Educating Missionaries and Accommodating Racialists

The 1890s was a decisive moment for U.S. sociology and U.S. global hegemony. At the start of the decade, U.S. Navy Captain Alfred Mahan laid out in *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History* the military and national-security strategies to gain this hegemony by taking control of the Panama Canal and the islands stretching from Hawaii to the Philippines. In the middle of the decade, the Chicago School of sociology acquired national prominence by gaining department status and publishing the *American Journal of Sociology* (AJS) and began to explore the issues of the Philippines and the U.S. empire. By the decade's end, the U.S. became involved in a military and colonial quagmire in the Philippines, its new possession gained after the war with Spain.

It is notable that the early dominance of the Chicago School – even with its diverse tendencies and many disagreements – served from the 1890s to the 1930s to Orientalize the people of the Philippines and helped build the *missionary power-knowledge apparatus* using social psychology and symbolic interactionism, apparent in their textbooks and AJS articles.

Two recognized U.S. scholars outside the Chicago School examined U.S. imperialism sociologically. Extending Social Darwinism, William Sumner (1913) of Yale viewed imperialist acts as detrimental to U.S. citizens, allowing the state to limit individual liberties and eroding human evolution for what he considered very limited gains. In contrast, eugenicist and apologist Franklin Giddings (1900) at Columbia argued that the “democratic empire” seeks to improve the lives of “barbarians,” justifying the pillage of their resources. Yet Sumner's and Giddings's views on imperialism did not have the lasting impact on the discipline of the Chicago School.

As the founding editor of the AJS and first chair at Chicago, Albion Small provided the critical direction in instituting the missionary power-knowledge apparatus for the new empire. While many have recounted how the Chicago School under Small's leadership strived to forge sociology as a scientific reform-oriented discipline addressing urban problems with a Protestant missionary zeal, no attention has yet been turned to how this zeal was directed at the colonial territories.

For Albion Small, William Thomas, and others in the early Chicago School, regions like the Philippines became the sites for new social experiments in moral “democratic” education (see Small (1898) on Christian ethics). The AJS published a local ethnography with detailed halftone photos that recounts Cebu Normal School principal Samuel MacClintock's (1903) description of the everyday life of the “natives,” their resistance to colonial rule, and the opportunities for educational training. In an earlier issue, Small commented on the need for Filipinos to improve their “mental content” in order to organize a “permanent government” and “order and industry” (1900: 341; also see Rankin 1907).

William Thomas, known for his exceptional work on Polish peasants and race relations, focused more on the social psychological aspects of this moralizing education. He writes: “It is apparent already that a very low state of society is not prepared to accept bodily the standpoint and practice of a very high; the shock is too great, and the lower race cannot adjust. An important question in this connection is the rate at which a lower race may receive suggestion from a higher without being disorganized” (1905: 449). Like Albion, Thomas began to craft the Chicago School's terrain for social psychology: social contact and (dis)organization. In analyses like these, Filipinos and Filipinas living under U.S. imperial tutelage became the empirical “stuff” that helped in vital ways sociology's early intellectual understanding of social psychology.

Subsequently this understanding was woven into the fabric of Charles Cooley's and Herbert Blumer's symbolic interactionism and the race-relations cycle theories of Robert Park and Emory Bordargus. (Future analysis of Chicago School social psychology can consider why and how the shift from colonial empires to accommodating and assimilating race relations occurred, erasing Filipinos and U.S. empire as epistemological objects.)

Recall that Said's analysis of Orientalism was never simply a re-framing of negative stereotyping (or racial prejudice) by those who have no contact with the Orientalized “Other.” Instead the production of Orientalist knowledge originates in the attempts of “experts” to explain and justify imperialist projects. Said was not solely interested in the primitivist accounts offered by anthropologists (such as Chicago School colleagues Jenks, Cole, and Keesing, who also published in the AJS). Rather Said would consider – and this is I think one of his many lasting intellectual contributions – how considerably learned men such as Small, Thomas, Cooley, and Park recycled their understandings of society's “others” and proposed new understandings (a power-knowledge apparatus) to dominate new “others.” For sociology, this has meant the use of reform policies and “conflict resolution” strategies to adjudicate armed conflicts and social inequalities resulting from the U.S. global empire.

A Century of Insurgencies

While U.S. Marxist sociology remained underground during the prominence of the Chicago School, Filipina and Filipino Marxist insurgents who engaged in both armed struggle and theoretical production made some gains, and continued striving for a national-democratic future. Sociology today might consider the lessons to be found the anti-imperialist sociology of Andres Bonifacio, Crisanto Evangelista, and José Maria Sison (Guerrero 1971) as well as a new generation of progressive Filipina and Filipino sociologists around the world. Rather than discarding analysis of empire, “discovering globalization,” and producing clichés like “another world is possible,” progressive Filipina and Filipino sociologists continue to take part in worldwide struggles against imperialist capitalism and wars of aggression and towards genuine socialist ways of life.



Fake Bullet Holes and Ghettopoly: or, From Code of The Street to Code of Consumption

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In his ethnographic study of one of the poorest racially segregated areas of Philadelphia, *Code of the Street*, Elijah Anderson (1999) refers to the code of conduct among the black male urban underclass that requires threatening and occasionally demonstrating an ability to physically harm others. He explains how the staging of a delinquent or thug attitude becomes an alternative strategy of gaining physical safety and protecting money-generating business (illegal drug dealing; e.g., crack-cocaine) when obtaining essentials such as reliable police protection and a livable wage are severely restricted. In other words, inner city violence is explained as a precious form of social capital, or an adaptation to socially structured inequality. Anderson's more general point, however, is that to "go for bad," to act as if one is beyond the law, or to stand against anything that represents conventional white institutions is an understandable (but not morally acceptable) strategy of gaining "respect" in a situation of extreme alienation. The seemingly spontaneous or irrational quality of street violence in the inner city is explained as an expression of the fragile certainty of achieving one's "props" or proper respect when located at the very margins of society; in a society that stigmatizes young black men, in a local milieu of severe and chronic poverty, in an environment where wariness or "watching your back" is an ordinary part of everyday life; and in the more general context of the de-industrialization of the city. One of the points Anderson emphasizes throughout is that young black men of the inner city find their very integrity, self-esteem, and self-identity intricately embedded in the code of the street. Tragedy and necessity combine when the price of gaining safety, respect, and masculine identity, in a situation of extreme social and economic alienation, is to radically and visibly define one's self against anything that is conventional. To do so ultimately means to gamble with one's future and one's life, and to frequently resign oneself to the

fatalistic understanding of an inevitably short life.

It goes without saying that the code of the street described by Anderson—at least from the perspective of those who must live with it—is not a form of recreation, but a form of survival. However, the harsh material realities of violence, illegal drug-dealing, and death have been transformed into a playful and discretionary code of consumption. By code, I mean a *cultural* code, or a way of perceiving, behaving, and communicating in a social milieu, either toward one's own life situation or that of others; but in both cases, from one's own situated position. For some privileged white and middle class consumers who are far removed from the harsh and immediate material realities of everyday poverty, danger, and violence of the inner city, the code of the street is merely raw material for levity, a stylized recreational joke, or an afternoon of monopoly-like game playing. The code of consumption in the narrow context that applies here is then a way of perceiving, behaving, and communicating about the 'street' way of life at a privileged and safe consumer distance from it. A few examples might suffice to illustrate this code of consumption.

PrankPlace.com is one of several on-line catalogue stores featuring fake bullet hole decals and magnets. One advertisement reads: "Turn your vehicle into a Mafia staff car...Our self-stick 'quasi-permanent' bullet hole decals are weather resistant and washable!" Reassuring the consumer of safe and trouble-free urban danger, the advertisement reads further, "Bullet hole decals are very easy to remove, they peel right off any surface." A bullet hole competitor, MAGNEgrafix.com, announces that they "now carry MAGNETIC bullet holes too!" Their magnetic bullet hole 12-pack promises that "drive by look" (with no annoying sticky glues or adhesives, and a .15 mil thick flexible rubber magnet that won't harm your paint job) for only \$9.95 plus

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Fake Bullet Holes and GhettoPoly (Continued from page 5)

shipping and handling. For those who prefer to decorate their bodies rather than cars with bullets (as well as knifing and beating wounds), bizzarefun.com offers simulated injury decals that apply easily to neck, face, chest, thigh, back, leg, arm, hand, and can "turn your body into a war zone."

Similar but more elaborate consumer recreation is found at ghettoPoly.com that features the GhettoPoly™ Board Game, recommended for ages 13 to adult and 2 to 7 "playas," for a price of \$29.95 (plus shipping & handling). The explicit objectives of the game include: "buying stolen properties, pimpin hoes, building crack houses and projects, paying protection fees and getting car jacked." The on-line advertisement reads further, "Not dope enough?...If you don't have the money that you owe to the loan shark you might just land yourself in da Emergency Room." The game contents includes: Game Board, Loan Shark Tray, 40 Crack Houses, 17 Projects, Pink Slip Cards, Ghetto Stash and Hustle Cards, 7 Game pieces (Pimp, Hoe, 40 oz, Machine Gun, Marijuana Leaf, Basket Ball and Crack), Counterfeit Money, and 2 Dice (non metallic). One of the featured "Hustle" game cards reads: "You are a little short on loot, so you decided to stick up a bank. Collect \$75." A featured "Ghetto Stash" card reads, "You got yo whole neighborhood addicted to crack. Collect \$50 from each playa."



While the consumer is culpable for audacious, insensitive, and/or unthinking recreational indulgence in the privileges of physical and economic security, the code of the street has become some of the culture industry's most profitable "raw" material for racially imbued class exotica and/or so many encounters with "safe urban danger." Catering to media-saturated consumers desirous for something "different" and "rebellious," the code of consumption not only includes the commodification of alienated others and their experiences in forms such as fake bullet holes and ghettoPoly, but also in perhaps less controversial forms such as baggy shirts and pants (or expensive designer hand-me-downs and/or beltless prisoner pants), backwards baseball caps (or expressions of defiance and alienation), and big gold chains (or glimmers of hope for "bling bling," or material success, amidst enormous limitations to

it). None of the comments above are to reductively suggest, however, that there are no social psychological benefits to young black men of the inner city, whose street props are now the envied fashion of the white suburban mainstream. However, my critique calls attention to how the code of consumption does symbolic violence to localized expressions of reality; dilutes, distorts, and de-politicizes serious social problems such as institutionalized racism and socially structured inequality; and represents a disturbingly easy discretionary power of privileged consumers to expropriate and transform a code of survival into merely a form of stereotypical, affordable, and optional recreation. ☞

Gods and Monsters (Continued from page 2)

But behind their siren song of seduction lies not love but only implacable financial calculation. They do not feel pity or remorse. They cannot be kind. This amorality makes them extremely dangerous to humans, because the things they care about are ultimately not human things. The fact that we humans depend upon them for our daily bread makes their amorality all the more dangerous to us. "Trust us," they say, but they are not trustworthy. They are not even alive. They are, in fact, the living dead: the literal and legal personification of generations of dead labor. Their faces smile, and they wear expensive clothing, but their eye sockets are empty and soulless.

Fortunately, however, there is one other similarity between corporate gods and other gods: they only control us so long as we believe in their godhood. As long as we take for granted their status as god-persons, their power is impossible to oppose. But we do not have to take this for granted. There is no reason to grant corporations the right to control our public discourse. They may claim to be "good citizens" but the fact is that they are *not* citizens. They cannot be. Corporations do not love America because they are not human and cannot love. And because they cannot love, they cannot be allowed to dictate our public policy.

They do not have children. They do not have to take care of their parents when they get old. They do not have to wonder what kind of a world their grandchildren will inherit. Corporations are our creations. We must not serve them but make them serve us; we must subordinate their values to human values.

This must begin with the elimination of corporate money from politics. We must roll back the legal personhood of corporations, beginning with the corporate right to free speech, upon which all real campaign finance reform has so far foundered. Property ought not have the right to speak for itself, nor should it be permitted to vote with dollars. This means many things, but first and foremost, it means that America needs a system of publicly financed elections in which anyone who can get some threshold number of signatures is entitled to an equal amount of campaign funding and airtime, with a hard cap that every candidate must adhere to. Corporations and industry associations in particular should not be permitted to give money – soft or hard – to candidates, political parties or political action committees, or to pay for political ads. We citizens must be permitted to speak to one another in an arena in which corporate money does not control the agenda – or else our democracy is forfeit. ☞



Condescension in Marxist Theory and Methods

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This timely article deals with the problematic idea of condescension in Marxist theory and methods. By timely, of course, I am referring to the article's relevance to the upcoming theme of the 99th Annual ASA Meeting on the importance of what Burawoy has called "Public Sociologies." On the whole, the article examines what I see as the two fundamental problems associated with Marxist condescension: first, that the public has not had enough proactive input in respect to the development of Marxist thought and, secondly and interrelatedly, that Marxist thought traditionally has not been presented in such a manner that is of much interest to the public. It is important to consider these questions inasmuch as the integrity of Marxism as both a mode of thinking and action is at stake. After all, if it is the case that Marxist ideas have become detached from their social base, Marxism itself would thus seem to have been rendered pedantic and, materially speaking, useless. So, in respect of the more practical side of the discipline, let us engage in an open discussion about condescension, its consequences, and what we can do about it.

The first problem is mainly an ontological one that looks at the nature of Marxism as a system of ideas. Here we are compelled to ask the most important of questions: why are Marxist ideas correct? As I see it, the resolution of this largely overlooked question is absolutely essential for the successful propagation of any theory or method, whether liberal or Marxist in orientation. Without such resolution, there is no basis for adherence to a given political agenda. And so it is that we turn to possible answers.

One. Marxist ideas are correct because Marx said so. It may seem silly, but many a dogmatic Marxist holds this much to be true. I, for one, dismiss this answer altogether, and would encourage others to do so as well. After all, what good is a *social* theory or method whose origin and validity depend upon the assertions of one *individual*?

Two. Marxist ideas are correct because they are grounded in the scientific method. This answer should not be so easily dismissed as the last, but at the same time it should not be viewed as holistically explanatory. On the one hand, that most Marxists follow a scientific (i.e., critical and systematic) method should seem to bolster the overall correctness of the approach. In this particular light, the formation of Marxist ideas would seem to be largely, though not entirely, independent of the Marxist. Of course, this does not mean that Marxists cannot pursue an agenda, but it does mean that in the course of their construction of reality they should pay attention to those findings that are inconsistent

with what they seek to establish. In sum, I would argue that the scientific method is a strong asset of Marxism, but alone it cannot prove, so to speak, the correctness of Marxist ideas.

Three. Marxist ideas are correct because they reflect a reality that most people in the world experience together. Clearly, this would seem to be the one answer for which Marxists should aim. In practice, however, it is often found that the public's more casual (i.e., non-scientific) approach to understanding their social relations comes into conflict with that of the social scientific Left. From my point of view, what's important is that the integrity of Marxism, and that which makes its ideas correct, should be established by the people (rather than by a method alone). But what do we do when our ideas do not correspond to those held by the public at large? This is a very powerful question, and certainly one that cannot be answered definitively here.

Given the limited scope of this forum, this much I can say. To argue that non-Marxist working people suffer from some form of delusional false consciousness is condescending, whether we are willing to admit it or not. At the expense of drawing even further criticism from my colleagues, I may even be so bold as to suggest that the entire concept of fetishism (and later that of reification) is also condescending. Now, for most natural scientists this classic dilemma between scientific knowledge and public knowledge is easily dealt with. For example, in response to the non-scientist who states that the sun *appears* to revolve around the Earth, the astronomer may say authoritatively that, in reality, this is not the case. On the other hand, in response to the non-scientist who states that her wages on the assembly line *appear* to be compensation for a full day's work, the Marxist sociologist cannot so easily say that, in reality, this is not the case. Of course, this does not mean that the Marxist's ideas are necessarily wrong (for she still has the scientific method to rest upon!), but it should suggest that more caution should be taken in the development of her assumptions.

Some may respond that such condescension, if enacted with good intentions, is a superior alternative to lack of activism and indifference to exploitation. Perhaps. Still, we are then left once again to justify the correctness of our ideas, and this will always be a difficult task insofar as Marxist thought is not generally reflected within the larger society. One solution, then, is that instead of being Marxist imperialists who impose upon the working class a certain framework "from above," as it were, progressive academics should

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Condescension in Marxist Theory and Methods (Continued from page 7)

strive to be social facilitators who seek to break down the distinction between scientific and public knowledge by constructing a common reality through closer communication with the non-scientific public. Unfortunately, this cannot be done solely within the university system.

This point brings us to the second fundamental problem in this article, that the presentation of Marxist ideas has in large part not been oriented toward a public audience. I will be the first to admit that I am guilty of this form of condescension. The institutional demands placed upon the scholar call for publication in journals, not in daily newspapers; discussion at academic conferences, not in the street; teaching in the classroom, not in the community. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that we develop our own style of communication that is hardly accepted outside the university system. If we really are to reconnect Marxism to its social base, the unification must be achieved via a common medium. For this reason we cannot continue to write about workers amongst ourselves, and certainly in ways that they do not find interesting. Instead of trying to impress each other with who can write the most *complicated sentences*, we should be focusing on who can write the most *meaningful* ones.

As suggested, I am an integral part of the said condescension. Perhaps even in this article I can be accused of being condescending in the way I distinguish between scientific knowledge and public knowledge. But to be aware of our condescension is the first step in the direction of becoming social facilitators. With this type of awareness we can: (i) get down off our pedestals and (ii) create reality, rather than impose it. ☺

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Orientalism in U.S. Sociology (Continued from page 4)

References

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Lessons From an Almost Successful Run in a Local Election

Karen Bettez Halnon
Pennsylvania State University

Returning to my home one evening last summer I arrived to find the Chair of the local Democratic Party and another concerned resident of our township in my driveway. We engaged in long conversation about the lack of open government on the local Board of Commissioners, the need for the preservation of open space, and excessive commercial development in our community. Finally, the two men explained the reason for their visit. They said that they were looking for a Democrat to run against a controversial appointment to the Board of Commissioners (a Republican who was supported by the entrenched majority on the Board, and with whom she shared membership in a local Republican PAC). After considering the pros and cons for a few weeks (the main detractor being tenure review for Associate Professor next year), I decided to run for the position. If I won alongside another Republican running in one of the other seven wards, the result would be a local historic change on the Board. At the end of the day, when voting counts, four members (versus three) would hold the new majority, a majority that would value open government, low density development, and preservation of public space, regardless of party affiliation. If I won, I would also be the only Democrat on the Board (the last one holding a position from my ward was over twenty years ago). The choice to run for public office yielded several important lessons. Below I briefly recount four of them, giving some intimate details about township politics, but ones that I think provoke more general thought about politics in general.

Lesson One: Republican in Almost Any Case. I was initially confused about why two Republican Board members (and one Republican candidate) with whom I shared nearly identical philosophy, did not simply register as Democrats. However, as I campaigned door-to-door, knocking at nearly two thousand homes over the late summer and early fall, I discovered that many community residents confessed in private that they were “really Democrats” or “Democrats at heart,” but register as Republicans because they “never know what will happen if you need to go to Board for something.” Moreover, in going door-to-door I was promised numerous votes by residents, but they were some times reluctant to put up yard signs for fear of repercussions. Fifty in the end agreed, but often expressed ambivalently to me that they might have to live with the consequences in a township where there is one hundred percent local Republican leadership.

Other factors more fully explain this pattern of *Republican in almost any case*. One of them is that the majority of

the township votes Republican (voting by party, not by person). In some wards, it is virtually impossible to get elected if you do not run as a Republican. Another factor is economic. While the local Republican party and an affiliated Republican PAC wields thousands of dollars for local elections (and one of the Board members challenged in the election—a real estate millionaire—contributed thousand of dollars to his own campaign, having a total expenditure of approximately 13,000 dollars), the local Democrats were able to lend financial support to my campaign of about 200 dollars. That was a generous gesture since they had less than 500 dollars total. This disparity in financial resources translates into more Republican resources for paid campaign workers, signs, Xeroxing, postage, hosting events, etc. Finally, there seems to be a survival factor at work as well. While the Board members who, in my view, share the same general philosophy as Democrats, they remain estranged and dissenting members in their local Republican party. At very least, they win the elections. Differing from what they might understand as my ethnocentric Democrat view, their philosophy seems to be that they need to reclaim the local Republican party from what many disgruntled community residents call “the dark side.”

Lesson Two: Just Because They Don't Show Up Doesn't Mean Their Interests Should Not Be Served. The point of view expressed by one of the Republican Board members challenged in the last election, when I was emphasizing the need for televised meetings, is that if people were interested in local issues they would attend the regular Monday night meetings. At many meetings there are the same small groups of well-known residents and activists. In fact, when someone attends who is not part of the usual groups, it is predictable for members of the audience and the commissioners to inquire directly or indirectly who the person is, and why they are there.

Opposing the majority Board view that televised meetings are not something people want or need, that they are too expensive, and that residents might trip over electrical cords, the argument for televised meetings is that they would accommodate busy everyday schedules; and in doing so, would provide the public with detailed information on township business and give regular public exposure and visual record of the proceedings on the Board. Such proceedings have included rolling eyes at constituents, staring off into space when they are speaking, gaveling them when they speak up or out, making quick decisions on important issues that were apparently discussed in advance—if so, in violation

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Lessons from an Almost Successful Election (Continued from page 9)

of Sunshine laws, ignoring majority input with votes that are diametrically opposed to expressed community opinion, and admitting publicly of ethical (and legal) violations, such as a recent blatant admission of gerrymandering (as in the recent vote to reapportion the township, and in the process, wipe out 5 Republican rivals who are not members of the “dark side.”). Such meetings are nothing less than an exercise in self-control.

In going door-to-door, was in large part an education campaign. Many people had no idea that things were so bad, as least on a regular basis. However, many knew of the televised scandal that involved the revelation that the Commissioner (real estate agent), who was the listed agent on some real estate scoped out in the Township’s development plan, would personally profit thousands from the deal. When an ethics inquiry was in process as a result of outrage by informed opposition, it was given personal legal assistance from the Township Solicitor. Others had long ago given up on the process, stating repeatedly with resignation, “things will never change” or “they’re just going to do whatever they want anyway.”

The fact that so few people show up on a regular basis at meetings may be an indication less of their level of interest than of their immediate priorities: doing homework with children, packing lunches, attending to other family and social obligations, etc. In any case, when opposing views are expressed, those voices are often ignored or subverted, thus giving further reinforcement to the cynical attitude that nothing will change anyway. What I, among many other dissenting voices, have expressed is that community voices need to be served regardless of community attendance at meetings or organized resistance. At very least, with the continued publicizing of dissenting voices via the local newspapers (letters to the editor and coverage of township meeting proceedings), voters may at least vote for change at the polls.

Lesson Three: Interlocks. During the fall, while teaching William Domhoff’s book, *Who Rules America?*, I attended a meeting where the real estate agent Commissioner was self-describing his role on the Board as that akin to being on a Board of Directors. After he finished speaking, I raised my hand and commented that his description was an apropos one, and that it suggested certain problematics. I explained that members of Boards frequently do not simply serve on a single Board but on many of them at the same time. As a result, certain agendas can be advanced indirectly and from multiple directions; and this dynamic raises issues of conflict of interest. I gave him an example, and asked him to think of “Board of Directors” (BOD) as a loosely applied concept. I explained that he was on a BOD as member of the Board of Commissioners, as well as director as a very successful local real estate agent. One of the “agenda” items that could be advanced from multiple directions is the high-density commercial development of our township, an agenda item that he has supported in those two roles. I also mentioned that at

a recent meeting of an advisory committee to the Board of Commissioners (that advises on the implementation of development), I noticed that he was a member of that “Board” too. When I challenged him on this, he said unabashedly that he, as well as another pro-development Commissioner, were appointed to that committee by the Board of Commissioners. I stated back the obvious, “you are the Board of Commissioners!” He then said that they were only two of the committee (or “Board”) of 14. I retorted finally, something to the effect, “It doesn’t take a social psychologist to figure out that your influence is greater than your number.”

The advisory committee had the present task of hiring a Director of Development, a person who would oversee the complete restructuring of the Township’s downtown core. During the summer there was majority opposition on the Board to requiring the hired Director to have a Bachelor’s degree. Somewhat bewildered by this emphatic stance, I read the requirements for the position at a later advisory committee meeting, as specified in the multi-thousand tax dollar development plan. The Director, as indicated by the description, was someone who would have experience in urban development, grant writing, political lobbying, traffic engineering, etc.—and a professional outsider that could negotiate between conflicting parties. The next meeting of the advisory committee where applicants were to be interviewed publicly was canceled with no notice or explanation. It was weeks later that I found out through “the grapevine” that the committee hired a local boutique owner who served previously as head of the Chamber of Commerce and who, not so surprisingly, did not have a Bachelor’s degree, and serves on a Board of Directors with another member of the Board of Commissioners on a local for-profit, low income real estate interest. While the real estate Commissioner lost the last election by a slim margin (to his non-“dark side” Republican rival), he was promoted to a county-wide advisory Board by a County Commissioner (who is also a highly successful mortgage broker). The Board he was appointed to advises broad-based development for the county at large.

Lesson Four: Try, Try Again. I lost the November 4th election for Commissioner by 89 votes. As a registered Democrat and one new to local politics, I remain encouraged. Next time around, two years from now, I will be in a better position. I will have more time, be more well-versed on the dynamics of running a campaign, be a more familiar candidate with a familiar message among constituents, and will use regular postage for campaign mailings (800 pieces of bulk mail for Dems in my ward, with a photo endorsement from a local Democrat Congressman, were lost at the post office until the day of the election).☪

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The Crisis of Global Capitalism (Continued from page 1)

the 21st century is still predominantly organized as *national* capitals in competition with one another.

The current conjuncture points to the crisis of global capitalism. This crisis involves three interrelated dimensions. First, is a *crisis of social polarization*. The system cannot meet the needs of a majority of humanity, or even assure minimal social reproduction. Second is a *structural crisis of overaccumulation*. The system cannot expand because the marginalization of a significant portion of humanity from direct productive participation, the downward pressure on wages and popular consumption worldwide, and the polarization of income, has reduced the ability of the world market to absorb world output. The problem of surplus absorption makes state-driven military spending and the growth of military-industrial complexes an outlet for surplus and gives the current global order a frightening built-in war drive. Third is a *crisis of legitimacy and authority*. The legitimacy of the system has increasingly been called into question by millions, perhaps even billions, of people around the world, and is facing an expanded counter-hegemonic challenge.

This multidimensional crisis has generated intense discrepancies and disarray within the globalist ruling bloc, which has begun to tear apart from the seams under the pressure of conflicts internal to it and from forces opposed to its logic. The political coherence of ruling groups always frays when faced with structural and/or legitimacy crises as different groups push distinct strategies and tactics or turn to the more immediate pursuit of sectoral interests. Faced with the increasingly dim prospects of constructing a viable transnational hegemony, in the Gramscian sense of a stable system of consensual domination, the transnational bourgeoisie has not collapsed back into the nation-state. Global elites have, instead, mustered up fragmented and at times incoherent responses involving heightened military coercion, the search for a post-Washington consensus, and acrimonious internal disputes. In the post 9/11 period the Bush regime militarized social and economic contradictions, launching a permanent war mobilization to try to stabilize the system through direct coercion. But we need to move beyond a conjunctural focus on the Bush regime to grasp the current moment and the U.S. role in it. The U.S. state is the *point of condensation* for pressures from dominant groups around the world to resolve problems of global capitalism and to secure the legitimacy of the system overall.

There are two interlinked components to the Marxist theory of imperialism: rivalry and conflict among core capitalist powers; and the exploitation by these powers of peripheral regions. Hilferding, in his classic study on imperialism, *Finance Capital*, argued that *national capitalist monopolies* turn to the state for assistance in acquiring international markets and that this state intervention inevitably leads to intense political-economic and military rivalries among nation-states. There is a struggle among core national states for control over peripheral regions in order to open these regions to capital export from the particular imperialist

country and to exclude capital from other countries. "Export capital feels most comfortable...when its own state is in complete control of the new territory, for capital exports from other countries are then excluded, it enjoys a privileged position," observed Hilferding (1910:322). Hilferding, Lenin, and others analyzing the world of the early 20th century established a Marxist analytical framework of rival national capitals that was carried by subsequent political economists into the latter 20th century via theories of dependency and the world system, radical international relations theory, studies of U.S. intervention, and so on. This outdated framework continues to inform observers of world dynamics in the early 21st century.

What about the second dimension of the theory of imperialism? In the post-WWII period Marxists shifted the main focus in the study of imperialism to the mechanisms of core capitalist penetration and exploitation of the Third World. Imperialism, if we mean by it the relentless pressures for outward expansion of capitalism and the distinct political, military and cultural mechanisms that facilitate that expansion and the appropriation of surpluses it generates, is a structural imperative built into capitalism. It is not a policy of a particular set of state managers that run core states but a practice *immanent* to the system itself. The imperialism practiced by the Bush regime is nothing particular to a group of neo-conservative politicians and organic intellectuals in the United States and can be expected to continue, notwithstanding particular conjunctures and distinct policies and strategies among elites.

But there is nothing in this imperialism that necessarily links it to a concomitant view that capitalism by definition involves competition among *national* capitalist combines and consequent political and military rivalry among core nation-states. The current (post-9/11) moment may represent some new escalation of imperialism in response to the crisis of global capitalism. *But*, to acknowledge this "new" imperialism is *not* to suggest, as does the received literature these days, the rise of a new "U.S. empire." This literature sees a new U.S. empire competing with other nation-state capitalists. What is remarkable about the welter of recent studies that in one way or another take up the thesis of U.S. empire, national competition and core state rivalry is that none of them show how the U.S. state has acted in recent years to protect and defend *specifically U.S. capital* and to exclude or undermine other *specifically national capitals*. These studies simply *assume* the U.S. state acts to benefit "U.S." capital in competition with other core country national capitals. Yet on what basis we should conclude that the giant transnational corporations as putative beneficiaries of U.S. state action represent "U.S." capital is *not even problematized, much less documented*. That the global capital conglomerates that dominate the world economy represent distinct national capitalist groups is something that must be demonstrated, not assumed, and here the extant literature advancing the U.S. hegemony/inter-imperialist rivalry thesis appear entirely vacuous of empirical content.

(Continued on page 12)



The Crisis of Global Capitalism (Continued from page 11)

What does the empirical evidence indicate? In the first place, it strongly suggests that the giant conglomerates of the *Fortune 500* ceased to be "U.S." corporations in the latter part of the 20th century and increasingly represented transnational capitalist groups (for a summary of this evidence, see Robinson, 2004). Second, the evidence indicates that U.S. policies in this period – such as the imposition of neo-liberal structural adjustment programs and the sponsorship of free trade agreements - by and large served to further pry open regions and sectors around the world to global capitalism. The U.S. state has, in the main, advanced transnational capitalist interests. The Bush regime, for instance, consistently ratified and pursued a policy not of national economic retrenchment but of neo-liberal global market integration. And an analysis of TNS institutions suggests that they act not to enforce "U.S." policies but to force nationally-oriented policies in general into transnational alignment. This is the underlying class relation between the TCC and the U.S. national state. We face an *empire of global capital* headquartered, or evident historical reasons, in Washington. There is little disagreement among global elites, regardless of their formal nationality, that U.S. power should be rigorously applied (e.g., to impose IMF programs, to bomb the former Yugoslavia, for "peacekeeping" and "humanitarian" interventions, etc.) in order to sustain and defend global capitalism. "U.S." imperialism refers to the use by transnational elites of the U.S. state apparatus to continue to attempt to expand, defend and stabilize the global capitalist system. The question for global elites (and the point of contention among them) is, in what ways, under what particular conditions, arrangements, and strategies should U.S. state power be wielded?

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This article is an extract from an essay that will appear in a forthcoming special issue of *Science and Society* on the "deep structure of the present moment." The journal will accept submissions until June 2004. Inquiries may go to rbriden1@juno.com or to dlaibman@jjay.cuny.edu.

William I. Robinson is Associate Professor of Sociology, Global Studies, and Latin American Studies at the University of California-Santa Barbara. His two most recent books are *Transnational Conflicts: Central America, Social Change and Globalization* (Verso, 2003), and *A Theory of Global Capitalism: Production, Class, and State in a Transnational World* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

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Obituary
 T.R. Young
 Editor, *From the Left*
 1995-1998

Longtime friend, member of the Marxist section, and editor of *From the Left*, TR Young, died on February 15, 2004 in Rochester Minnesota, after suffering a long illness.

Young was born in Flint, Michigan, married Dorothy Jean Grace, a childhood friend and has five children from that marriage. Dorothy died in accident in 1981.

Young received an MA from the University of Michigan and his PhD from the University of Colorado at Boulder. Young taught social theory, social problems and social psychology at several colleges and universities around the country including Iowa Wesleyan, Rocky Mountain College in Montana, Southwest Missouri State, Colorado State

University, the University of Colorado at Boulder and the University of Michigan at Flint. He held the post of Distinguished Visiting Professor at Texas Women's University in 1991. In 1992-93, he served as Distinguished Visiting Professor at Virginia Tech.

T. R. Young was founder and director of the Red Feather Institute for Advanced Studies in Sociology [1971] and editor of the Transforming Sociology Series. The Red Feather Institute was born out of the radical politics of the 1960's. T. R. Young became its first and only Director as well as the President of the corporation which holds title to its publications. The first headquarters and first conference of the Institute were at a lakeside cottage in a small resort village, Red Feather Village, 40 miles northwest of Ft. Collins. T.R. Young and others later built a Lodge and living facilities in the Rocky Mountains between 1973 and 1977. The Institute was moved to Michigan in 1988 after Young left Colorado State University.

During the 60s, 70s and 80s, Young was a faculty resource person for student power movements, antiwar activities as well as Civil Rights and the women's movement on campus. Young founded the Martin Luther King Fellowship Fund at Colorado State University the day after King's



assassination. Young taught at Makerere University in Uganda in 1971-72 during the difficult days of Idi Amin and was part of an underground network of scholars which smuggled letters and documents to the US media and to members of Congress concerning human rights violations there. Young was appointed an Honorary Research Fellow at Exeter University in 1980 where he visited the major centers of cultural studies there. In 1985, Young participated in the Semester of Sea Program of the University of Pittsburgh, accompanying 350 students around the world to study social problems and stratification of politics, capital and social honor in Pacific Rim countries, Malay-

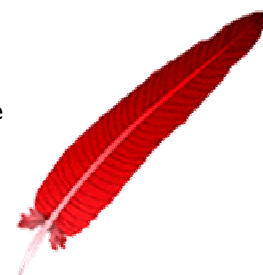
sia, India, Turkey, USSR, Yugoslavia and Spain. Young has visited Cuba, Nicaragua and Mexico several times to learn about social problems and social programs there. In 1987, Young was awarded the Distinguished Scholar Award of the Pacific Sociological Society for his work in the political economy and social psychology of sport.

Among his many publications are *The Drama of Social Life: Essays in Post Modern Social Psychology* (Transaction Publishers 1990), *The Dictionary of Critical Social Sciences* with Bruce, A Arrigo (Westview Press 1999) and *New Sources of Self* (Pergamon Press 1972).

TR, we will miss you.

For more information on TR Young's life and work see

<http://www.tryoung.com>
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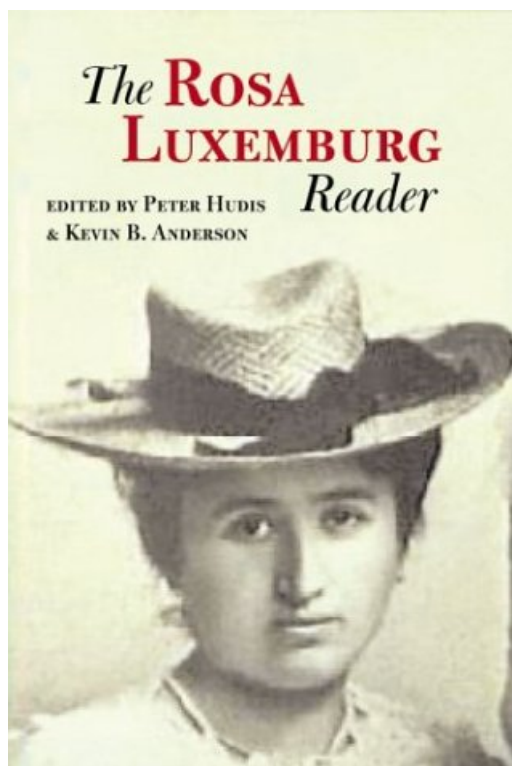
Carles Muntaner PhD, MD is a Professor in the Department of Family and Community Health and Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine at the University of Maryland-Baltimore

People

Jeffrey A. Halley, University of Texas at San Antonio, was Guest Professor at the University of Metz, France, in December 2003.



Book Announcements



“Rosa Luxemburg travels into the twenty-first century like a great messenger bird, spanning continents, scanning history, to remind us that our present is not new but a continuation of a long human conflict changing only in intensity and scope. Her fiery critical intellect and ardent spirit are as vital for this time as in her own. With meticulous care, including valuable endnotes, editors Hudis and Andersen project her in the fullness of her being and thought.” — Adrienne Rich

Among the major Marxist thinkers of the period of the Russian Revolution, Rosa Luxemburg stands out as one who speaks to our own time. Her legacy grows in relevance as the global character of the capitalist market becomes more apparent and the critique of bureaucratic power more widely accepted within the movement for human liberation.

PETER HUDIS is an organizer for the Chicago-based *News & Letters* collective, and co-editor of *The Power of Negativity*, a collection of Raya Dunayevskaya's writings on dialectic.

KEVIN B. ANDERSON teaches political science at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. He is the author of *Lenin, Hegel and Western Marxism*, and the co-editor of a volume of the ongoing *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe* (MEGA).

Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict

*Class, State, and Nation
in the Age of
Globalization*

Berch Berberoglu

ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD PUBLISHERS

Available: June 2004

This book examines the origins and development of nationalism and national movements in the twentieth century and provides an analysis of the nature and dynamics of nationalism and ethnic conflict in a variety of national settings. Examining the intricate relationship between class, state, and nation, the book attempts to develop a critical approach to the study of nationalism and ethnonational conflict within the broader context of class relations and class struggles in the age of globalization.

Berberoglu contends that future studies of nationalism and ethnonational conflict must pay a closer attention to the dynamics of class forces that are behind the ideology of nationalism by examining national movements in class terms. For only through a careful class analysis of these forces and their ideological edicts, Berberoglu contends, will we be able to clearly understand the nature of nationalism and ethnonational conflicts around the world.

Berch Berberoglu is Foundation Professor of Sociology and Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of Sociology at the University of Nevada, Reno.