BOOK REVIEWS

edited by Adam D. Morton

Sebastian Budgen, Stathis Kouvelakis & Slavoj Žižek (eds.)

Lenin Reloaded: Toward a Politics of Truth

Duke University Press, 2007, 337 pp.
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reviewed by Paul Blackledge

Why read Lenin in the early twenty-first century? It is perhaps one of life's ironies that even amongst those who would stand against the condescending tide of what passes for academic wisdom on Marx, perhaps a majority would join in the chorus condemning Lenin to the dustbin of history. If another world is possible, Lenin's alternative, it seems, is not desirable. Against this consensus, the editors of *Lenin Reloaded* propose that a re-engagement with Lenin is not merely desirable, but an 'urgent necessity' for those of us who take the slogans of the anticapitalist movement seriously. How persuasive are their arguments?

A problem that academics have with Lenin, or so argues Jean-Jacques Lecercle in his contribution to this collection, is that he is perhaps the archetypical example of a Marxist whose work refuses incorporation and neutralisation within the academe. If academia still has just enough room for discussions of Marx, Gramsci, Lukács and even Luxemburg, then Lenin, as Alex Callinicos points out in his essay here, remains 'demonised and despised … firmly beyond the pale of the politically acceptable, as much in bien pensant left–liberal circles as those on the right'. Moreover, and partly because of this, Lenin has been parodied and caricatured like no other. Indeed, Terry Eagleton comments that 'absolutely no political current has been so mercilessly caricatured in our time, largely by those piously opposed to stereotyping'.

At the core of this caricature, of course, is the 'Leninist' project of building a vanguard socialist party. According to what Lars Lih calls the 'textbook interpretation' of Leninism, Lenin's project was built upon his contempt for the intellectual capacities of workers, and his subsequent insistence on building a party of professional revolutionaries to bring socialist ideas to the working class from without. Commentators who accept this model have tended either to label Lenin as an 'elitist and pessimist' or as 'realist and insightful', and have generally agreed that his victory gave rise to Stalinism after 1917. If Liberals and Stalinists in the twentieth century could agree on the broad outline of this interpretation of Russian history, the collapse of the Soviet Union apparently consigned Lenin to the footnotes of history. The great strength of Lih's essay, which serves as a taster for his colossal demolition of the textbook model, *Lenin Rediscovered*: What is to be Done? in *Context*

(Brill, 2006),[1] is its contribution to untangling the real Lenin from the myth of Leninism. According to Lih, the central message of *What is to be Done?* was the claim that the Russian proletariat was, at the time of writing, spontaneously awakening to the socialist message, and that it was therefore imperative that socialists should offer 'inspired and inspiring' leadership to this movement. The problem recognised by Lenin, on this reading, was not that the proletariat was insufficiently socialistic, but rather that the so-called socialist intellectuals were too pessimistic about the great potential being showed by workers in struggle. The task facing the left, as he saw it, was to merge socialism and the workers' movement, and like Bunyan's pilgrim, this involved breaking with the cynicism of those 'Mr Worldly Wise Men' whose reformist descendants argued, or so writes Lih: 'don't bother preaching to the masses, they can't be converted'.

If Lih gives a feel both for Lenin's confidence in the workers and his revolutionary enthusiasm, Alan Shandro provides a clear sense of the theoretical issues involved in the concept of socialist leadership. Terry Eagleton suggests that part of the problem experienced by those who attempt a serious discussion of Lenin's politics is that 'it is well nigh impossible to discuss the concept of political vanguardism … in a cultural climate that can perceive no difference between the terms "vanguard" and "elite"'. Shandro addresses this problem through the lens of Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*, in which leaders are divided into democratic and anti-democratic types: 'In the formation of leaders', Gramsci wrote, 'one premise is fundamental: is it the intention that there should always be rulers and ruled, or is the objective to create the conditions in which this division is no longer necessary?' Against the trite dismissals within radical academic circles of something labelled 'leadership', Shandro points out that Lenin's approach involved no simple top-down model, but rather that by 'focussing upon the contradiction between the conscious vanguard and the spontaneous working-class movement, the thesis of consciousness from without enabled Lenin, paradoxically, to situate himself, as a Marxist theorist and political actor, within the class struggle'.[2]

It is this activist interpretation of Marxism that sits at the core of Stathis Kouvelakis's reading of Lenin's philosophical reflections on Hegel, written as he attempted to make sense of the collapse of the Second International. In these notebooks, Lenin underpinned his politics through a root-and-branch break with philosophical fatalism. According to Kouvelakis, he achieved this through a reprisal of Hegel's conception of social scientific laws, which allowed him to 'pre-inscribe subjectivity … at the very heart of objectivity'. A similar point is made by Kevin Anderson, who claims that Lenin's Hegelian Marxism equipped him with the tools necessary to break with Second International Marxism. Highlighting this issue, he quotes Lenin's criticisms of Sukhanov to give a sense of the gap between his thought and even the best of Second International orthodoxy: 'They call themselves Marxists, but their conception of Marxism is impossibly pedantic'.

Developing a parallel point, Alex Callinicos argues that Lenin understood better than any Marxist before him that the 'very unpredictability of history requires that we intervene to help shape it'. More to the point, successful political interventions in history necessarily involve parties. As Daniel Bensaid argues in his contribution, 'A politics without parties (whatever name — movement, organisation, league, party — that they are given) ends up in most cases as a politics without politics: either an aimless tailism toward the spontaneity of social movements, or the worst form of elitist individualist vanguardism, or finally a repression of the political in favour of the aesthetic or the ethical'.

Bensaid's point about parties is inescapable once we engage with the workers' movement

or the anticapitalist and similar social movements from within, and not, as is too often the case with those academics who ironically criticise Lenin as an elitist, at some suitably Olympian remove. Moreover, as Eagleton writes in his paper, given that parties and social movements don't build themselves, the need for revolutionary organisation gives rise to 'the need for those with revolutionary phronesis'. Unfortunately, as the failed revolutions across Europe after 1917 attest, this kind of practical intelligence can not be acquired overnight, and it certainly cannot be learnt by rote. Rather, it develops from the practical engagement of socialists as political actors learning both from our own mistakes, and from the strengths and weaknesses of previous actors. From this perspective, Lenin demands our attention not only because he led a successful socialist revolution, but also because he predicted that unless the revolution spread, it would degenerate. Consequently, if we really believe that another world is possible, then we need to learn creatively (it would be un-Leninist to be pedantic about this point more than any other) from Lenin's attempt to build a revolutionary organisation in the two decades up to 1917.

This book aims to open a space beyond what the editors call the 'unwritten thought prohibition' by which liberal-democratic hegemony is maintained. They argue that too many contemporary leftists 'know there is corruption, exploitation, and so forth, but they denounce every attempt to change things as ethically dangerous and unacceptable'. By pointing us past the myth of 'Leninism', this book challenges one aspect of the academic suppression of really radical thought. Consequently, whatever its faults – Badiou's attempt to reinterpret Lenin as a Maoist being chief amongst them – *Lenin Reloaded* serves a crucial function. While it will never help academics to get research funding, it will surely be of relevance for those socialists who wish to link our struggles within capitalism to the goals of the broader movement against capitalism. For this reason, the editors of *Lenin Reloaded* are to be congratulated, and every reader of this journal should consider buying and read it, following up their reading by engaging with those studies of Lenin penned by, amongst others, Cliff, Le Blanc, Liebman, Lih and Rabinowich alongside Lenin's work itself. If we can agree that the point remains to change it, then we still have much to learn from Lenin and others about how this might be done.

References

Barker, C. et al. (eds.) (2001) *Leadership and Social Movements* (Manchester University Press).

Blackledge, P. (2006) 'What was done: Lenin rediscovered', I*nternational Socialism*, no. 111, pp. 111–26.

Notes

1 For my comments on this book, see Blackledge (2006). I am presently editing a symposium on Lars Lih's book for the journal *Historical Materialism.*

2 Shandro's essay overlaps with themes from his contribution to another excellent collection that takes up this issue: Barker et al.'s (2001) *Leadership and Social Movements.*

Andy Mathers

Struggling for a Social Europe: Neoliberal Globalisation and the Birth of a European Social Movement

Ashgate, 2007, 215 pp.
ISBN: 978-0-7546-4580-1 (hbk) £50

reviewed by Andrew Vandenberg

This book redeems itself with several interesting aspects, but on the whole, it is disappointing. The book's interesting central argument is that because the 'new social-democratic left' (Touraine, Melucci, Gorz, Castells, Habermas, Offe, Beck and Giddens) deploys a Weberian assumption that class is an economic category, it both exaggerates the various forms of a 'new times' thesis and dismisses the labour movement as an outdated actor incapable of forging alliances with the new social movements. A Marxian assumption that class is a comprehensive social relation provides more realistic grounds for strategic deliberations that inevitably include unions. What is disappointing about the book is that the substantial chapters cannot fulfil the promise of this critique, because they look closely at only one actor: namely, a protest movement to achieve a 'social Europe' among the unemployed activists who organised 'European marches' to EU summits from several points around Europe between 1996 and 2000. The analysis of a struggle requires either study of a structure of subordination (class, race, gender), study of a structure of action (rational choice), or study of iterative actions and reactions by contending actors. To study one actor is like studying wives without studying either husbands or the institution of marriage. Mather often mentions other actors and the wider context of capitalism, but offers no analysis of struggle between contending forces or actors.

The introductory chapter notes that the European marches were about social protest rather than social partnership. The European Trade Union Confederation kept its distance, but the organisers did garner support amongst various radical unions. The chapter also notes that where Touraine disparaged the European marches, Bourdieu supported them enthusiastically. The next chapter offers a series of excellent précis of arguments about, first, the shift from an industrial to a post-industrial order (Touraine, Melucci, Gorz, Castells), and second, the crisis of modernity (Habermas, Offe, Beck, Giddens). This leads to the well-grounded conclusion that a contrast between 'old' and 'new' social movements operates with a gradational Weberian concept of class as an economic category. After these concise and lucid opening chapters, Chapter 3 offers a less interesting discussion of critical ethnography and Touraine's four types of intellectual. In a dozen cities around Europe, the author interviewed a total of thirty-seven activists in German, French and English, collected many pamphlets and diverse documents, perused many websites, and participated in many meetings, demonstrations, actions, and press conferences. In the next three chapters, a comprehensive picture of an emerging actor is presented from the insider's perspective of an engaged activist who is also a trained researcher and skilled interviewer.

Chapter 4 describes the efforts of unemployed activists to organise 'European marches' by unemployed people to Amsterdam, Cologne and Nice from many places around Europe between mid-1996 and the end of 2000. A second shortcoming of the book arises in the way Mather draws on the work of Sidney Tarrow, who has written about the formation of transnational social

movements. This is obviously pertinent to the transnational aspect of the European marches, but Mather deploys Tarrow's arguments in a shallow way. He seems to be unaware of Tarrow's leading role in an extensive effort with collaborators Doug McAdam and Charles Tilly (McAdam, 2001) and a host of followers to comprehensively revise the North American approach to the study of social movements. Since the mid-1990s, Tarrow and colleagues have developed an approach that eschews both structures and agents in favour of studying relations between actors, repertoires of contention (marches, rallies, strikes) and sites of contention (streets, other public places, institutions, workplaces). Their 'relational persuasion' resembles Bourdieu's work, and had Mather looked into the rich literature that Tarrow and others have been developing, he might also have looked much more closely not only at other actors but also exactly at what caused the emergence of the European marches. I cannot help wondering whether students and other young people who had lived, worked, travelled in, and learnt the language and culture of other countries were the people who brokered negotiations between various unemployed movements, Trotskyist groups, anarchist networks, militant unions, women's networks, and immigrant groups from several countries. Such brokerage may have resembled the way taxi drivers dispersed a revised tribal oath of commitment across diverse groups and regions of Kenya, and thus brokered the rise of the Mau Mau rebellion in the 1950s (McAdam, 2001).

Chapter 5 gives an interesting account of the unemployed marchers' emerging sense of active citizenship as they negotiated the logistics, participated in various demonstrations along their way, and debated the problems of individual isolation, the impositions of workfare and the 'dismal days' of social exclusion imposed by neoliberal public policies. Chapter 6 looks more closely at the content of arguments between the organisers about exactly how a social Europe would differ from the neoliberal 'unsocial' Europe. The chapter outlines the context in which leading European states and the EU were implementing austere budget cuts according to the requirements of convergence around policies consistent with a single currency for the EU. Unfortunately, the focus of the chapter on the conflicts and difficulties of reaching agreement within a loose network of diverse organisations precludes any closer discussion of how, when or why governments, the EU Commission, elected members of the European Parliament, train corporations, supermarket chains, employer and industry bodies reacted to the success of the European marches and the associated blockades of train stations and supermarkets demanding free travel and food for the protestors. Chapter 7 returns to précis the ideological and strategic implications of arguments advanced by leading members of the new social-democratic left, supplemented by discussions of Bourdieu, Waterman, Moschonas, Negri and Hardt, André Brie (a political scientist and member of the European Parliament), Mandel, and Callinicos. Mather navigates around the hackneyed phrases of Trotskyism and lucidly restates his case for regarding class as a comprehensive social relation in order to build a viable image of a civilised, social Europe among social movements of bottom-up protest against neoliberalism, the bogus internationalism of top-down cosmopolitan institutions, and the supposedly democratic institutions of social–liberal welfare states. The book is interesting, but it could have achieved much more.

Reference

McAdam, D., S. Tarrow & C. Tilly (2001) *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge University Press).

Andrew Mullen

The British Left's 'Great Debate' on Europe

Continuum, 2007, xv + 352 pp.
ISBN: 978-0-8264-9366-8 (hbk) £70

reviewed by Gerry Strange

This book provides a comprehensive survey of the British left and Europe in the post-Second World War period. Its main purpose is to explain what the author, Andrew Mullen, identifies as three fundamental or 'tectonic' shifts in the British left's approach to and evaluation of 'Europe' in relation to Britain and the socialist project since 1945. The study comes with a ringing endorsement from Tony Benn. While the book's thrust is historical and empirical, it is nevertheless driven by an underlying set of partial political judgements, or an underpinning perspective on the left and Europe. This is that while, in principle, a socialist project for Europe can be envisaged (as indeed it was on the left during the 1940s and 1950s), the history of *real* European integration has been driven by overarching US capitalist interests, often pursued covertly and with force. Such has been the dominance of the US project for Europe — conceived as an open-door 'grand area'- — that it is unrealistic to suppose that European integration in its current *form* could conceivably provide a basis for the advance of socialism. Furthermore, EU integration has, by design, actively and fundamentally weakened British sovereignty — a process that will need to be reversed if a nation-state socialist alternative is ever to be successfully pursued in Britain. Britain must disconnect from many of the processes of integration in which it has become enmeshed during the postwar period if socialism is ever to be resurrected here or in Europe.

This study's greatest strength is undoubtedly its effective marshalling of empirical evidence over an extended time period (1945–2007). This evidence is drawn from a variety of sources, including left party and trade union official documents and reports, interviews with key political actors and official government documentation. In presenting the central empirical evidence, many of the thirteen chapters in the core Part 2 of the book ('The British left and European integration') follow a standard format by which the evidence, drawn from four main sources — the Labour Party, the TUC, the big trade unions and the wider British left — is presented. In many ways, these sections of the book, while extremely useful for reference purposes, stand alone from the rest of the text as straightforward reportage of formal decision-making by various policy-making bodies. In this sense, they do not add to and, in many respects, detract from the book's overall narrative. Indeed, a large part of the formal reportage sections of Part 2 might have been presented as a stand-alone appendix.

Beyond the book's empirical depth, a number of other features are worthy of commendation. In particular, the range of historical coverage (1945–2007) is new and impressive for a single-volume study. This enables the author to structure a long-term historical conceptualisation and understanding of the British left and Europe around what is referred to as 'three tectonic shifts', each marking a fundamental change in the left's conceptualisation and/or evaluation of the efficacy of the relationship between Britain, socialism and Europe. These policy shifts, each defined by 'transformations in the balance of power between the anti- and the pro-EU forces, themselves linked to competing social forces at the global,

European, national and institutional levels', are broadly consistent with previous research, notably if, like the author, one is concerned to trace the historical trajectory of a broad left consensus. Equally, though, there is always the danger that a concern to find consensus where there is none can distort history for the sake of apparent coherence.

Mullen's clear sense of historical perspective also provides for a largely convincing use of a neo-Gramscian framework to help illuminate and identify the various social forces that have actively contested the idea of Europe, and also why it is that some versions of this idea have seemingly succeeded at the expense of others at particular historical conjunctures. For example, as Mullen shows, during the period 1945–1970, a united Europe was for many decades only an idea but one around which very different conceptualisations of Europe — as a socialist force, an imperialist third force, an independent bloc or a dependent bloc incorporated into the US-led and -dominated postwar world order — competed. It was the outcome of this contestation — which, according to Mullen, was the victory of the US project for Europe — that best helps to explain why growing left enthusiasm for the EU (the first 'tectonic shift') rapidly reversed in the early 1970s (the second 'tectonic shift'). Similarly, towards the end of the book, Mullen speculates that left enthusiasm for the Delorsian 'social Europe' of the late-1980s and early 1990s (marking the positive outcome of the third 'tectonic shift'), may dissipate as the EU consolidates neoliberalism, again at the behest of the USA and its global capitalist allies, marking a fourth 'tectonic shift'.

If this study's primary strengths are its empirical detail and its largely successful broad historical narrative, its weaknesses (and these are quite significant in my view) are on the theoretical side. In this respect, there are two problems with this study. First, the theoretical elements, in so far as they are present, are not well integrated with the historical–empirical narrative of the book. Thus, in the book's relatively short introduction (pp. 1–9), a sub-section entitled 'The existing literature' does little beyond listing, albeit comprehensively, the quite extensive and diverse previous studies that have dealt both theoretically and empirically in one form or other with the British left and Europe. At no point, however, beyond the introduction, does the book critically engage with or interrogate the various theses associated with this literature: notably, different theoretical conceptualisations of integration, its meaning and its future implications. Surely a critical understanding of the processes of integration is imperative in any attempt to comprehend left assessments of Europe? The only explicitly theoretical chapter in the book is the penultimate Chapter 17, 'Theorising the British left and European integration' consisting of thirteen of the book's 352 pages. The first part of this chapter is devoted to very briefly outlining five alternative theoretical approaches, only one of which — 'the political economy approach and Coxian historicism' — is adjudged broadly satisfactory. The author then indicates in some five pages how his own historical framework of 'tectonic shifts' can be viewed as an application of Coxian theory. In my view, this brief statement of the Coxian approach and its application to the study of the British left and Europe could have been more appropriately incorporated into the book's introduction, while the prior 'discussion' of alternative approaches adds absolutely nothing to this study, and might more reasonably have been omitted altogether.

The second theoretical problem with the book relates to what in my view is the author's uncritical adoption of the Coxian international political economy (IPE) framework, as well as the author's interpretation of this approach, which is often rather partial (too focused on US dominance and insufficient in its consideration of the implications of US hegemonic decline). This

means, first, that the author overemphasises politics and political agency in the determination of European integration, failing to anchor this analysis in a broader appreciation of economic and political *structures* and the dynamics of international capital accumulation as well as in more deep-rooted political processes. Consequently, there is a tendency to over-identify core structural processes such as globalisation and European integration itself, with *specific* political agents (especially the USA) and projects. For example, contemporary EU integration is simply identified with a US and global elite-sponsored project of transnational neoliberalism. Hence no attempt is made to critically interrogate the relationship between integration as such, as form, and *neoliberal* integration as a particular *contentisation* of integrational structures. In short, Mullen's study, in common with many other neo-Gramscian analyses of the efficacy of European integration for the left, essentialises neoliberalism into core aspects of integration as such, thereby foreclosing positive left engagement with the contemporary EU project. These are clearly issues for fundamental theoretical debate with implications for an understanding of the left and Europe. It is a failing of Mullen's otherwise commendable study that such debate is studiously avoided.

Huw Beynon and Theo Nichols (eds.)

Patterns of Work in the Post-Fordist Era: Fordism and Post-Fordism

Edgar Elgar, 2006, Vol. I: 494 pp.; Vol. II: 645 pp.
ISBN: 978-1-84542-324 7 (hbk) £285

reviewed by Sheila Cohen

Work, it seems, has been 'rediscovered' via the 'flexible production model'. According to one contribution to this two-volume collection on new management techniques like 'just in time' (JIT) and 'total quality management' (TQM) have 'given labor a central role. The "rediscovery" of labor is a key element in initiatives in many countries to reorganise production' (Carillo: 472, Vol. I).

If this is indeed the case, the publication of this huge work is timely. For some of us, of course (including its editors), labour needs no 'rediscovery'. For others, the causes and trajectory of, for example, the decline in trade union organisation are unclear. 'Policy makers debating these issues are like firefighters idly wondering what started the blaze while the house burns to the ground' (Kapstein: 127, Vol I). Some real firefighters, like those attacked by New Labour in 2003, might be able to shed light on this question.

Why the implied 'invisibility' of labour pre-TQM, and why the obscurity of causes for its decline as an organised force? One seminal contribution attributes to the 'half right' ('those who think the New Right is half right') 'a one eyed view … that invites the epithet "consumerist" just as surely as the epithet "workerist" … was invited by some Marxists' (Nichols & Davidson: 583, Vol. II). The notion that the consumer has subsumed the worker in today's 'post-industrial' world would indeed lead to mystification as to the sustained bedrock of exploitation, intensification of labour and class aggression underlying the siren voices of the shopping mall.

And indeed, if the central question posed by this collection is whether work patterns have changed significantly in the 'post-Fordist'

era, the substance of the contributions can be summed up in one 'measured' conclusion quoted by the editors. 'The picture emerging from the empirical data … make it possible merely to suggest a "neo- rather than a 'post'-Taylorist or Fordist concept"' (Huys et al: 28, Vol. II). A contribution on the subject of the clothing industry supports the characterisation of 'an emerging neo-Fordist mode of control as simply another stage in scientific management' (Taplin: 46, 51, Vol. II), while in meatpacking, 'Specialisation … has meant the intensification of mass production principles, not their abandonment' (Novek: 118, Vol. II). Rather more pithily, 'contemporary lean forms of work organisation in North American manufacturing have been called "Fordism on amphetamines"' (Baines: 484, Vol. II).

Countless contributions attest to the persistence if not of 'Fordist', then of Taylorist methods of work organisation, even where the prototypical assembly line has been replaced by 'cellular' or team-based forms of production; the latter an almost universal development. Even in centres of the most seminally 'postmodern' labour processes, such as in retail, it emerges that 'most major high street multiples have tended to cluster around a Taylorian mode of organising employment … they … practice an intense division of labour [and] a pronounced centralisation of command, surveillance and control" (du Gay: 347, Vol. II).

Along these lines, the increasingly 'target-driven' culture evident throughout the section on state employment repeats the pressures of routinisation and standardisation in areas previously regarded as autonomous, creative or even 'caring'. A researcher on social work writes, 'For the first time in my experience I was listening to social workers describe their work as if they were in a factory' (Jones: 552, Vol. II), and a social worker herself invokes the image of the assembly line: 'every person and family is different. We can't treat them all like little chocolates on an assembly line' (p. 489, Vol. II). Emphasising the decidedly Fordist pressure on labour time, a social-work manager snorts, 'empowerment — who has time for that?' (Jones: 485, Vol. II). Indeed, throughout the world of employment, the integration of workers into post-Fordist initiatives such as teamworking has, it seems, less to do with 'empowerment' than with economic and managerial compulsion. 'As one Dagenham manager put it: "when you've got them by the balls, the head and heart soon follow"' (McKinley & Starkey: 357, Vol. I).

And yet all is not as hegemonic as it seems. The serious contradictions that snake like fissures beneath the management-speak of 'empowerment' construct, at the very least, a 'neo' world of quasi-dominant management techniques and control, where common sense battles with the slick mantras of the corporate world. At its most concrete, this syndrome is illustrated in the description of 'modularisation' provided in a pivotal article in the collection: 'Modular mass production: High performance on the low road', by Jody Knauss (Vol. II). Here, Knauss describes succinctly how the 'empowerment' promise of teamworking shrinks to a pragmatic restructuring of assembly-line production in a system of 'modular mass production' defined as 'neither a move to high performance nor merely an unambiguous intensification of the existing Fordist order'. Here, workers are indeed reorganised into small groups or 'cells', but while this restructuring raises productive efficiency, it fails to increase worker autonomy or control; moreover, modularisation 'not only increases the intensity of the work [but] for some … has affected pay' (p. 135), not to mention promotion opportunities.

Such opportunities (or otherwise), along with other elements of work than the purely production-related, are of course considered in this collection. One of the best contributions in the first volume, co-authored by Beynon, exposes the miserable truth in government and employer 'reskilling' rhetoric: following on from the widespread 'delayering' of organisations in the neoliberal era,

opportunities for promotion and work-related training have diminished significantly. This is obscured (or so it is hoped) by a dulcet discourse of 'skills acquisition', which in reality simply reproduces as 'training' skills that workers already have. A particularly wounding aspect of this, for relatively unskilled workers, includes processes of 'development' or 'acting up' in which, for example, shop assistants may be requested to cover for managers without pay in a process that offers them the deceptive prospect of quasi-training and promotion. As one retail worker vividly described it, 'half the time they just use you for a mug. One of the girls … was coming in doing extra hours for them, going on different departments, helping them out and everything. And when the big shake up came of moving people around, they just left her' (Grimshaw et al: 312–13, Vol. I). At a telecoms company, likewise: 'It's demoralising isn't it? You do it for two years, then you're thrown back into your original job … How many times do you take being kicked in the teeth?' (p. 313).

As always, quotes like these serve to remind us that few can express a critique of 'patterns of work' more succinctly than workers themselves. The voice of the worker punctures all the pretensions of 'customer service' and 'quality' ideology with the simple statement 'This comes from the top, they're striving for a good image while at grass-roots we're still in survival mode' (p. 444, Vol. II). And it rings out loud and clear with a call-centre worker's comment: 'I have yet to encounter any evidence that management … regard their staff as anything other than telephone-answering automatons' (p. 221, Vol. II); while a Benefits Agency worker expostulates, 'There are different messages coming at you all the time. They want quantity then they prioritise quality … teamwork then specialisation … we don't know what we have to do to get it right' (p. 450, Vol. II).

So far, so negative. One contribution on 'Excellence, HRM and TQM in retailing' (Rosenthal et al., Vol. II) challenges the 'critical' literature in this field, arguing that the authors' own findings 'lend little support to the traditional criticism that, if management objectives are realised, they are achieved through some combination of sham empowerment, work intensification and increased surveillance', (a useful summary). These authors publish positive results from their survey of retail employees, showing strong endorsement by 'front-line staff' of the company's customer service initiative, and a 'noticeable', while 'fairly limited', increase in the discretionary content of jobs and scope for autonomous decision-making.

Understandably (since this was not their focus), the researchers place little emphasis on retail employees' terms and conditions of work. Yet another contribution in the same section (du Guy, Vol. I) highlights intriguing contradictions between the 'subjective' sphere focused on by management and the objective questions of low pay and long hours that continue to produce high levels of labour turnover in retail. Thus, while on the one hand, 'the emphasis has been on … flexible, easily substitutable sales-floor labour with little attention being paid to the detrimental effects … in terms of labour turnover, motivation and commitment', on the other, 'the paradox of "lifestyle" marketing is that it is now this very commitment and motivation which is required from staff in order to ensure the delivery of "quality service"' (p. 353). There is, it appears, only one way to square the circle, and that isn't to raise shopworkers' pay. Rather, it is to win over the hearts, minds and whole personalities of retail and other service workers.

This issue — essentially the question of 'emotional labour' famously highlighted by Arlie Russell Hochschild's manifesto *The Managed Heart* (1983) — resurfaces predictably in the section on that extraordinary twenty-first-century phenomenon, the rise of the call centre. Here, the excellent work of Taylor et al. proves the most salient in a disappointing set of contributions, highlighting the central

role of work intensification in terms of a 'fiercely target-driven organisation of work which was often emotionally demanding' (p. 224). Along similar lines in the equally crucial area of financial services, Terry Austrin's paper describes in gruesome detail 'work practices … [which] include the requirements to smile, use the customer's name frequently, engage in slightly broken (good) eye contact and convey the message "I care"' (p. 311). Most of all, the important business of customer beguilement is conducted via the smile. In another example, 'managers placed goldfish bowls full of 10 cent pieces on bank counters beneath the tellers' positions. Beside the bowls they placed signs instructing customers to help themselves to 10 cent pieces if the teller did not smile at them' (p. 310).

One might expect the workers concerned to object to this treatment, and indeed the action 'led to protest by tellers who felt that control of the transaction had been passed from them to the customer' (p. 310). While a relatively mild response (how about, instead, outrage at the company's insistence on, in Austrin's words 'this calculated disciplining of the body'?), the tellers' reaction introduces us to another major theme: worker resistance. In a scenario of pervasive contradiction between 'empowerment' myth and 'low trust' reality, forms of worker response bordering on and occasionally exploding into outright class conflict surface throughout the collection. Staying on the subject of the smile, the section on customer service furnishes us with the wondrous example of the 'smile strike', in which desk clerks in a large hotel 'had been so angry about the prospect of being anonymously observed by shoppers that one shift staged a "smile strike", treating each and every customer that day in a rapid, affect-less fashion' (p. 411, Vol. II).

Compared with some examples of what is labelled 'resistance' in this collection, such action is positively syndicalist. Conceptions of resistance appear to have morphed under the influence of Michel Foucault into a bland mish-mash barely differing from worker — or indeed human — response of any kind. It may well be true that 'in Foucault's analysis, power inevitably calls forth resistance and the two are inseparable' (Rosenthal et al: 365, 387, Vol. II), but it's a funny kind of resistance. Examples within this conception include a case in which a hotel worker 'resisted' a client's racist behaviour by 'herself engineer[ing] a particular arrival procedure for the racist guest in order to avoid any further harrassment' (p. 393, Vol. II). Along similar lines, auxiliary workers in a nursing home 'resisted' the rigours of their exhausting, low-paid labour by treating their elderly clients like objects: 'Forcing breakfast into someone's mouth every morning, and dressing and washing them in silence, was a resistance to working with difficult things/objects' (p. 470, Vol. II). Again, in the 'caring' professions, social workers in Canada are described as 'resisting' their government's increasing commodification of services by … working unpaid overtime. One worker rather admirably describes her unpaid labour as making 'society less cruel, which in these days is an act of resistance itself' (p. 494, Vol. II); although at least here, the worker self-defines her act as resistance rather than having it so defined by over-eager theorists. While morally commendable, again the strategy appears to play directly into management's hands rather than undermining any of these strategies of commodification.

The work of John Holloway, represented here in the essay 'The red rose of Nissan' (Vol. I), provides perhaps the most class-aware way of acknowledging resistance within subordination while recognising that this resistance need not be mechanistically exploitation-related. During the 1970s, Holloway notes, the majority of strikes were not about pay but conditions of work and, quoting a British Leyland chairman's 1976 report, 'the desire to make a protest' (p. 369). While this may sound patronising and dismissive, particularly from such a source, it reflects the reality that class resistance against capital is often a variety of the 'scream' of

which Holloway eloquently writes elsewhere (Holloway, 2002). Or to put it another way, 'the issue is [often] not the issue' (Brecher, 1997: 282).

Though Holloway's analysis is marred by a kind of 'underconsumptionist' analysis of worker resistance — 'The key principle [for capital] is the conversion of the frustration of the workers into monetary demands and the harnessing of those demands in such a way that they become a positive force for capital accumulation' (p. 381) he recognises that 'both management and the state depend on the successful exploitation of labour'; and that 'It is therefore the conditions of that exploitation, the struggles around the process of work, that are key' (p. 385). Other important insights are that defeat need not be inexorable, and that the undermining of the hegemony of capital is rooted in its own contradictions: 'The Nissan strategy is proving very effective, but there are still major obstacles to its success. It is hard to imagine that the happy party guests will go on smiling for ever, when the party is based on their exploitation' (p. 388). Ah, that smile again …

As Thompson and Ackroyd point out, speaking of the 'Fordist' era, 'We now know that workers learned to bend the bars in those particular iron cages. Why should the current crop of new management practices be any different?' In a point light years away from Foucault, they go on to argue, 'We are not saying that resistance … is always present in the same force or form. But it is there if researchers have the time or inclination to look'. One example given is of a non-unionised call centre in which workers carried out 'silent strikes' and go-slows, amongst other tactics (p. 115). Similar points could be found in Laurie Graham's (1995) study of a non-unionised US car company.

So what about the union? This ancient vehicle of opposition to exploitation gets comparatively little attention in *Patterns of Work in the Post-Fordist Era.* As always, such neglect does not reflect the preoccupations of management. Multi-skilling, for example, could be seen as 'principally a means of breaking down "multi-unionism"' (Greig: 77, Vol. II), while Tickell points out that the use of zero-hours and similar contracts for bank staff 'is also part of a conscious policy to reduce the influence of unions' (p. 293, Vol. II). For Austrin, the issue comes up through the classic dynamic of management policies pushing previously conciliatory workers towards independent organisation. 'This is not to argue that retail banking management are rushing to join their employees in trade unionism but to recognise that the undermining of their traditional resources has produced moves in this direction' (p. 304, Vol. II).

In considering 'patterns of work', are we focusing solely on its organisation — the labour process; or does the discussion include those classic trade union issues, pay and conditions of employment? In an important contribution, Bob Carter argues inter alia that labour-process analysis may not apply directly to state workers, who do not produce surplus value. Yet this sidesteps crucial questions of subsistence and labour intensification, which are illustrated only too powerfully in the very next contribution, 'Change in the Benefits Agency: Empowering the exhausted worker?' by Foster and Hoggett (Vol. II). These overworked and underpaid employees appear overwhelmingly 'proletarianised' in a situation in which 'the measurement of individual throughput times linked to the processing of benefit claims … was compared by some of our interviewees to "factory piece-work"' (p. 449). However logical the positing of state labour as in some way connecting with 'a commitment to services which are determined by need' (Carter: 436), the experience not only of these harried civil servants but of the Canadian social workers cited above suggests a pervasive neoliberalisation of even the most 'caring' of labour processes. Yet the recognition of some of the contradictions exposed in this collection can offer hope that the bare bones of the cash nexus thus revealed may strengthen the class basis for resistance.

If I have one central criticism of this almost indispensable collection, it is of the mysterious age of so many of the articles. Even in the final section on the 'Future of work', two contributions hail from the early 1990s. As the editors will know, nothing changes as fast as the nature of work under capitalism. But as their collection also reveals, the unchanging objective of capital, surviving pre-, post- and neo- dimensions of Fordism, remains. The centrality of profitability is summed up neatly in one by no means radical contribution on the 'interactive service sector', which concludes that 'employers exert control over the content and performance of … jobs … for very traditional reasons — sales, market share, and profit' (McCammon & Griffin: 321, Vol. II). Amongst the many thousands of words in this 1,139-page collection, perhaps those should be the last.

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John Foran, David Lane and Andreja Zivkovic (eds.)

Revolution in the Making of the Modern World

Routledge, 2008, 306 pp.
ISBN: 978-0-415-77183-2 (pbk) £22

reviewed by George Lawson

It is fast becoming a cliché to observe that the contemporary conjuncture defies easy summary. Soothsayers apart, it is clear to most observers that very few of the ways we have of characterising the post-Cold War era — as imperial (whether US or otherwise), as underpinned by the deep grammar of globalisation, or as the first act in a new Cold War that pits the West against the Rest — are without fundamental contestation.

As it is with the difficulties of accurately mapping contemporary world politics, so it is with the study of revolutions. This is hardly a surprise: for many analysts, revolutions fit snugly into modernity, acting as its locomotive, doppelganger or curse accordingly. As such, if we have now become or are becoming postmodern, so revolution both as concept and as process should either recede from view or morph into something that reflects, defines or perhaps constitutes our new times. Indeed, it is the multiple, much disputed, often uncertain place of revolutions in the making of the modern world — and whatever has come after it — that this volume sets out to explore.

To some extent, the book is a success. The editors have assembled an impressive cast-list of contributors, many of whom deliver diverting assessments of debates surrounding the relationship between revolution and (post)modernity. Fred Halliday provides a captivating essay on the promises and shortcomings of revolutionary internationalism; Krishan Kumar writes elegantly on the continuities and ruptures in the meaning of revolution; while Alex Callinicos forcefully rebuts claims of a revolutionary multitude, making the case for a continued commitment to revolutionary

strategy and politics. Other chapters add to our understanding of some significant and often neglected dimensions of the revolutionary experience: the mixed record of gender and revolution; the importance of a revolutionary notion of terrorism; and the role of narrative in telling revolutionary stories.

But the volume is not without its problems, and some of them are fairly major. First and foremost, the book does not add up to more than the sum of its parts. In fact, at times, *Revolution in the Making of the Modern World* appears just as fragmented as the post-modern revolutionary subject some of the contributors seek to assess and, on occasion, to valorise. Although the introduction establishes a set of guiding themes for the book as a whole — the relationships between revolution and modernity and identity and globalisation respectively — this is neither established with any great conviction, nor carried through into the individual chapters. The result is an inconsistent affair, even when set against the unevenness that often marks edited volumes of this kind.

Second, although it is a painfully easy task for a reviewer—and a painfully frustrating one for an author—to critique paths not taken and to highlight gaps that could have been filled, some lacunae are worth mentioning. Although there are a number of chapters on the meaning and salience of a 'post-modern' form of revolution, none look in any great depth at revolutions before the advent of modernity, early modern revolutions, anti-colonial struggles or the link between democratisation and revolution — the latter something routinely abused by transitologists, and of particular empirical relevance in the contemporary world. Nor does the swallowing up of debates about '1989 and all that' within a category of 'democratic drama' or via issues such as the use of information technologies by revolutionaries give the volume a sense of balance. Chapters on how best to situate 1989 within the broader currents of world historical development, the 'colour' revolutions of 2003 and 2004, and perhaps even an exploration of neoconservatism as a revolutionary ideology, would have added to the depth and breadth of the volume, giving it a clearer sense of demarcation from its competitors and adding value to the product as a whole.

Overall, the lack of a systematic engagement with the big issues facing the study (and practice) of revolution in the contemporary world means that this volume has done little to enhance the field more generally. Most disappointingly, the volume does not sufficiently address its core *problematique* — the place of revolution in the making of the modern world — let alone provide us with the tools to assess the future of revolution in our uncertain times. In his foreword to the book, Göran Therborn (p. xiv) asks, 'Have revolutions made the modern world? Or has modernity made revolutions?' By the end of the book, we are no further along in terms of answering Therborn's question. As such, readers will have to cherry-pick their way through a volume which, in the final analysis, promises more than it delivers.

Maryam Panah

The Islamic Republic and the World: Global Dimensions of the Iranian Revolution

Pluto Press, 2007, 232 pp.
ISBN: 978-0-745-32621-4 (hbk) £45

reviewed by Kamran Matin

Maryam Panah offers a refreshingly different and powerful account of the causes and consequences of the Iranian Revolution. Drawing on recent developments within Marxist international relations theory, Panah goes against the extant literature's grain of methodological essentialism/culturalism and adopts a reformulated historical materialist approach, central to which is a sustained emphasis on the dynamic and mutually conditioning interrelation between international structures and processes, and domestic socioeconomic and politico-cultural relations and institutions. The worldwide spread of capitalist modernity, Panah argues, is always mediated by the pre-existing geopolitical structures of the international system (p. 7). The interaction between the geopolitically mediated capitalist sociality and non-capitalist social formations therefore subverts the developmental unilinearism central to various editions of development and modernisation theory. Challenging the homogenisation credo of the orthodox approaches, Panah argues that the specificities of pre-capitalist states, class-structures and cultural inventories codetermine the process of capitalist development and its specific outcomes. Panah then systematically reilluminates Iran's modern political history under this theoretical light, and provides a novel interpretation of (post)revolutionary Iran — one that refuses to be transfixed, analytically, by either the 'cultural turn' or the emaciated base–superstructure causality.

Panah begins with an analysis of Iran's externally induced 'primitive accumulation', i.e. the 1960s land reforms. She argues that the combination of US support and oil revenues invested the Pahlavi state with a high degree of autonomy *vis-à-vis* domestic exploiting classes. Consequently, the land-reform project it was externally impelled to undertake was distinct in two main ways. First, the political power of the landlord class was significantly diminished while its capacity for economic reproduction remained largely intact. Second, the coeval industrialisation projects were highly capital-intensive, involving significant state and foreign ownership. As a result, the sociopolitical impact of the growing labour surplus was exacerbated, while a small capitalist 'state class' emerged that had strong links with foreign and especially US capital. The economic dependence of the emerging domestic industrial capitalist class on the state further reinforced the political supremacy and power monopoly of the state-embedded capitalist class.

Importantly, the impact of this process of state-led capitalist development on the traditional centres of power, i.e. the *ulama* (clergy) and bazaar-based mercantile capital, was uneven: the erosion of their political power was rapid and deep, while their economic bases and institutional presence were less affected. In fact, in a paradoxical way the Pahlavi state's 'revolution from above', Panah argues, triggered a process of financial and bureaucratic centralisation and rationalisation within the Shia establishment (pp. 40–1), a pillar of Iran's traditional sociopolitical structure. The resulting strengthening of the financial and organisational structures of the Shia *ulama*, Panah argues, was crucial to the success of

their nationwide exercise of corporate power and the imposition of ideological hegemony on the discourse and leadership of the re-emerging political opposition to the Pahlavi state.

Panah identifies another particularly pronounced effect of Iran's specific international temporality on the emerging popular resistance to the Pahlavi state. Engaged in an ideological rivalry with secular forces both right and left, the Iranian *ulama* was closely exposed to the populist anti-imperialist language of the revolutionary and anti-colonial movements of the late-1950s and 1960s. Consequently, they adopted and adapted their rivals' discourse to a great extent, which significantly extended the social reach of their political appeal. Thus secular contenders became the mentors of Iran's embattled radical Shi'ism. Popular susceptibility to this emerging revolutionary Shia discourse was significantly facilitated by the Pahlavi monarchy's close association with the US, whose key role in the 1953 coup against Musaddiq was acutely fresh in the collective memory of the Iranian people. By the late 1970s, Khomeini's charismatic hegemony over within the growing anti-Shah revolutionary coalition was so prevalent that nationalist and leftist forces did not openly challenge it. It was this hegemony that was later transformed into a *de jure* political leadership by Khomeini and his followers through a combination of tactful political manoeuvring (e.g. the seizure of the US embassy in Tehran) and systematic suppression of their secular and religious rivals.

Once victorious, Panah contends, the Iranian revolution in turn impacted on the regional and international states system. Khomeini believed that the 'Islamic state in one country' was condemned to defeat, hence the young Islamic Republic's drive for 'exporting revolution'. According to Panah (Chapter 4), it was essentially this revolutionary principle articulated through an Islamic–populist discourse that set in motion a region-wide policy of containment of which Iraq's invasion of Iran in 1980 was the most important instance. More broadly, it led to the transformation of the USA's 'twin pillar' policy of the 1970s into the strategy of 'dual containment' (of Iran and Iraq) in the 1980s.

The international containment of the Iranian revolution was, Panah argues, paradoxical in its outcomes, however. Externally, it enormously augmented the military power of the Ba'ath regime in Iraq, which came back to haunt US interests in the region following the end of the Iran–Iraq war. Internally, and more importantly, the growth of 'war populism' mobilised a broad spectrum of social groups behind an emerging small state elite that presided over, and directly benefited from, the increasing 'concentration of the means of coercion, production and distribution' within the state. Nonetheless, there were, Panah maintains, definite limits to the socioeconomic reproductive capacity of this new state elite. For, peculiarly, it commanded an essentially capitalist economy that was largely isolated from global capitalism. Rafsanjani's economic deregulation and privatisation reform programme of the 1990s, largely in line with 'structural adjustment' programmes prescribed by the IMF and World Bank, was therefore a conscious attempt to resolve this structural contradiction.

But the post-war economic reforms also involved a (seemingly) strategic retreat from the revolutionary populism and transnational Islamic solidarity that had been central to the revolutionary mobilisation. This was justified through the reconstruction by Khomeini of the classical jurisprudential Shi'i concept of *maslehat* to mean 'national expediency' (p. 129). The introduction of maslehat, Panah argues, amounted to the formalisation of the state's primacy over the revolution. However, this added a new contradiction to the ideological and legitimating bases of the Islamic state. For although *maslehat* institutionalised the ability of the state class to (temporarily) suspend even the first-order Islamic ordinances in order to secure the overall viability of the

Islamic Republic, it also came into direct tension with the revolutionary discourse and slogans that had been the original basis of Khomeinism as a distinct variety of Islamic populism.

Moreover, representatives of the social constituency that materially benefited from the erstwhile populist–interventionist state and ideologically despised the reform-rooted *nouveaux riches* maintained a strong presence within Iran's power structure. Crucially, these included large sections of the Islamic Republic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), whose leading commanders occupy high positions within the current Ahmadinejad administration. According to Panah, it is this contradiction that underlies the post-war 'reform and reaction' cycle and the pre-emption of a conclusive 'socialisation' of the Islamic Republic into the international system. The failure of the reform movement under Khatami and the emergence of Ahmadinejad's populist radicalism must, Panah soundly contends, be seen against this backdrop. By the same token, the direction and content of political change in Iran depends both on the sociopolitical dynamics internal to Iran and the policy and actions of the West. What is therefore certain, Panah judiciously concludes, is that the potential and momentum of the existing indigenous movement for progressive change in Iran are seriously damaged by the imperial designs of the USA and its allies.

Trenchant, terse and timely, Panah's book is an invaluable contribution to contemporary critical scholarship on Iran. But the theoretical implications of Panah's argument go beyond the Iranian case. For Panah strategically anchors her analysis in a causal complex that emerges from the interface between the specific intra-societal socioeconomic and politico-cultural structures and forms, and the wider and more general international tendencies and contingencies. And this causal complex has, arguably, always been implicated in all instances of the worldwide processes of modern capitalist transformation. But Panah remains rather coy about the need and rationale for a deeper theoretical articulation of this national–international nexus. Nevertheless, her adroit anatomy of (post-) revolutionary Iran throws into sharp relief the theoretical direction towards which historical-materialist categories need to be reoriented in order to adequately account for the developmental heterogeneity of the modern world. All the same, Maryam Panah's book is a must-read for all students of Marxism, international relations, and Iran's modern political history.

Nicola Short

The International Politics of Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Guatemala

Palgrave, 2007, 187 pp.
ISBN: 0-230-60051-4 (hbk) £42.50

reviewed by Ralph Armbruster-Sandoval

There has been widespread celebration — as well as consternation in some quarters (most notably inside the Bush administration) -— about the rise of the so-called 'Latin American' left over the past few years. Ostensibly leftist or social-democratic/ democratic-socialist presidents currently rule in Venezuela, Ecuador, Chile, Brazil, Bolivia, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay. Some analysts believe that the war in Iraq has provided a temporary opening (meaning that the US has been distracted and not completely focused on the region, with the possible exception of on Venezuela and Colombia) for

these governments to emerge. While this claim may have some validity, what is most striking about the discourse surrounding the 'Latin American' left is that it is most decidedly a 'South American' phenomenon. There are no leftist governments in power in Central America save for Daniel Ortega and the Sandinista Party in Nicaragua, and Ortega's progressive and personal credentials have become deeply tarnished ever since the FSLN (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional) lost the historic 1990 elections.

Why hasn't the left been more effective at obtaining 'state power' at the national level in countries like El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras in particular, all three of which experienced tremendous conflict and violence in the 1980s? This is a crucial question, and one that scholars and activists should be addressing. Nicola Short's theoretically engaging book does not explore it directly, but her text does help us understand how Guatemala essentially remains the 'land of eternal tyranny'.

Short's main contribution is her brilliant problematisation of the Guatemalan 'peace process'. That process and the ensuing accords (on the role of the military, indigenous rights, socioeconomic issues, etc.) that resulted from the negotiations have been generally widely praised for resolving a bloody, genocidal civil war that lasted forty-two years (1954–1996) and cost 200,000 people their lives. Short claims that while the peace accords were symbolically and literally important, they did not basically disturb the 'heart of the matter': a deeply traumatised and divided society marked by tremendous racial, class and gender inequality. Many researchers have hailed the accords (particularly the agreement on indigenous rights) because they solved the most pressing problem of state terrorism and extreme violence. While it is true that death squads no longer roam the streets and the countryside, and that farm workers, students, workers, indigenous people, women, poor people, unionists and priests are no longer being tortured, disappeared, and massacred, the bigger problem — capitalism — has not been addressed or even named.

The problem, as Short points out (borrowing from Antonio Gramsci), is that the Spanish Conquest helped facilitate a certain 'ensemble of social relations' that lasted for 400 years. Guatemalan elites created a 'disarticulated' economic system that relied heavily on a dependent, mostly landless and indigenous agricultural labour force. In classical and possibly anachronistic Marxist language, the 'means of production' were held by a tiny ruling class that happened to be either European or 'ladino' (of mixed indigenous and European descent), while the working class was largely indigenous. That system sparked periodic uprisings, but none toppled the regime or transformed the ensemble of social relations until 1944–1954, when Guatemala experienced its first 'spring'—a decade-long period of reform. During those ten years, labour unions were legalised, democratic elections took place, and agrarian reform was introduced. The latter in particular alarmed the USA, which overthrew President Arbenz in a CIA-backed coup. The subsequent, counter-insurgent regime ruled in a brutal and ruthless manner over the next four decades. Guerrilla and 'popular movement' organisations challenged these policies, especially in the late-1960s and late-1970s, but this prompted an even harsher response. Whole villages were wiped out, and the entire population was terrorised. 'Total war' eventually made Guatemala a pariah state on the international scene—a fact that, combined with military corruption and an economic crisis in the late-1970s and early 1980s, prompted neoliberal elites to push for a 'return to democracy'. This is where Short's analysis becomes both particularly compelling and somewhat problematic. Most mainstream analysts assumed that Guatemala's political and economic leaders, as well as the USA, the United Nations, the European Community and other international actors, were all genuinely interested in establishing a truly democratic government. This wasn't accurate.

In Gramscian terms, 'common sense' tells us (the wider public) that ruling elites care about 'democracy' when in fact, on a national, regional, and transnational basis, they are more concerned about maintaining and extending their power and privilege. William I. Robinson (1996) thus calls 'democratic transitions' like the one that took place in Guatemala a 'polyarchic transition', because it did not substantially change what Short would call the 'ensemble of social relations'.

Short relies on Robinson's work, but she challenges it too. From her perspective, what took place in Guatemala from the early 1980s until the civil war finally ended in 1996 was a Gramscian 'passive revolution'. As she states, 'overall, the peace negotiations can be understood as a "passive revolution" of elites, who were able to manage key aspects of the post-conflict society in their interests while maintaining a coercive apparatus for the state' (p. 6). In other words, a revolution 'from above' took place in Guatemala in the 1980s and 1990s that saw state terrorism virtually disappear; but racial, class and gender inequality persisted, along with staggering levels of hunger, misery, unemployment and unequal land distribution. The peace process thus brought about much-needed peace, and human rights violations are rare; but economic violence persists, gang violence has in some ways gripped the country (and region), and political violence still exists, targeting everyone from Archbishop Juan Gerardi, who was murdered in 1998, to trade unionists, one of whom was killed protesting the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) in 2006.

From one perspective, the situation looks better. The massacres and disappearances have largely stopped; but people are still dying, from guns and from poverty, and living under extremely challenging circumstances. Guatemala's 'peace process' thus did bring about peace, but it only benefited a small segment of the population. Short repeatedly points out, in order to illustrate this point, that the Socio-Economic Accord (reprinted in its entirety in one of the book's two appendices) was repeatedly watered down, but still it did not pass. The much-heralded Indigenous Rights Accord never passed either. Short claims, in contrast to Robinson, that not only the USA constrained the Guatemalan peace process, but that international actors did too (p. 108). This is undoubtedly true; but the USA plays a powerful and influential role in those institutions—the United Nations, IMF, World Bank, etc — a fact that Short, curiously, overlooks. In the end, I did not see too much dissimilarity between Short's and Robinson's analyses. I do not want to give the impression here that Short has not presented anything new—in fact, she provides a unique and innovative approach, relying almost entirely on Gramsci to explore why the Guatemalan peace process did not bring about substantive change. But it was simply never designed to do so. It was designed to consolidate the power of neoliberal elites on a national and transnational level. Despite that, a 'social democratic' president, Alvaro Colom, took power in January 2008, promising a 'government with a social focus' (Hernandez Pico, 2008: 37).

Thus it would appear as if Guatemala might finally be turning 'left', as its southern neighbours have done. While it is still far too early to tell what will in fact happen, one might have assumed on the basis of Short's analysis that such an outcome would never come about. Short cogently told us the truth (the peace process was a passive revolution), but not the whole truth—resistance is always possible. I would have appreciated not only a Gramscian critique of the peace process, but an analysis of the possibilities for transformative change and a discussion of post-Gramscian politics and opportunities for change that do not necessarily rely on capturing state power (Day, 2005).

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Boris Kagarlitsky

Empire of the Periphery: Russia and the World System

Pluto Press, 2008, 374 pp.
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reviewed by Rick Simon

The Russia of Vladimir Putin and his personally-chosen but popularly-elected successor, Dmitri Medvedev, has begun to provoke considerable interest and, indeed, disquiet about the kind of state that has emerged since the collapse of communism. Usually, such discussions are limited to the period since 1991, but this is an inadequate timeframe in which to grasp the complexities of Russia's development. In his latest book, *Empire of the Periphery*, the prolific Russian Marxist Boris Kagarlitsky seeks to provide a much longer historical perspective on the nature of the Russian state with the first book-length treatment to utilise world system analysis (WSA). Indeed, such is Kagarlitsky's focus on Russia's historical development that comparatively brief attention is directed to the post-1991 period. For the fullest picture of Kagarlitsky's thoughts on contemporary Russia, this book should ideally be read together with *Russia under Yeltsin and Putin* (Kagarlitsky, 2002), in which he describes Russia as practising a form of peripheral capitalism, but without the world-system theorisation.

In *Empire of the Periphery*, Kagarlitsky provides a sweeping survey of a thousand years of Russian history, resurrecting the work of the doyen of Russian Marxist historians, Mikhail Pokrovsky, along the way. From the establishment of Kievan Rus' in the ninth century, Kagarlitsky builds a convincing picture of how Russia's engagement with embryonic European capitalism, entailing a growing world system of trade and global division of labour, locked it into a pattern of development that reinforced feudalism and prevented the emergence of capitalist relations of production. Kagarlitsky therefore dismisses the oft-repeated argument that Russia's development was significantly retarded by the Tatar invasion and subsequent occupation between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, contending that it simply reinforced an already-existing pattern of relationships. Those intending to modernise Russia suffered from the delusion that their actions could end Russia's peripheral status. The great 'Westerniser' Peter the Great constructed St Petersburg as a 'window on the West' and renovated Russia's archaic state, but only succeeded in furthering rather than overcoming Russia's dependence. At the same time and, Kagarlitsky argues, as a consequence of its peripherality, Russia expanded eastwards and southwards, defeating and incorporating less economically developed peoples into an imperial state — an empire of the periphery.

When Russia did begin to industrialise in the late nineteenth century, it could only happen with the assistance and for the benefit of the more advanced capitalist states in Western Europe. Moreover, the emergent Russian bourgeoisie was dependent internally on the landowners' semi-feudal exploitation of the peasantry. Lenin and Trotsky were correct, Kagarlitsky suggests, to argue that the

working class was the only social force capable of promoting Russia's development. Thus Russia's incapacity, as a consequence of its position in the world system, to challenge core capitalist states — or even an emerging one like Japan — led, in 1917, to the crisis and overthrow of the Tsarist state.

The failure of the revolution to spread to more advanced capitalist countries meant, however, that the Bolshevik regime also became constrained by Russia's position in the world system and its dependence especially on grain exports. It was the crisis of grain collection, Kagarlitsky argues, combined with global economic crisis in 1929, that produced the sudden shift to forced collectivisation and industrialisation, since it was primarily grain exports that funded the purchase of essential Western technology. Once that initial technological hurdle had been overcome, it became possible to utilise import substitution to disengage the USSR from the global economy. By the 1960s, however, declining economic performance prompted reform of the planning system and, when that ran into the ground, increasing re-engagement with the global economy, particularly through energy exports as an alternative to reform. *Perestroika* then reinforced this trajectory, opening up the Soviet economy to the pressures of global capitalism and bringing about its collapse.

Kagarlitsky discusses WSA in an opening chapter, accepting some criticisms of its methodology: for example, its overemphasis in the development of capitalism on the role of global trade and exogenous 'shocks' such as the Black Death. Instead, capitalist development should be viewed as a consequence of mutually reinforcing exogenous and endogenous processes. His acceptance of the USSR as a non-capitalist system also represents a break from the predominant WSA view that it was capitalist by virtue of the role it played in the world system.

My major criticism with respect to Kagarlitsky's usage of WSA is that he adopts a simplified version, which is reduced purely to the core–periphery relationship. In doing so, he omits one of the richest elements of WSA, which is the notion of *semiperipherality*. Although there are differences between writers in the WSA tradition about the precise nature of semiperipherality, Immanuel Wallerstein (2000 [1974]: 94) has argued that Russia's economic and state development by the beginning of the nineteenth century marked it as a semiperipheral state. Indeed, Russia would seem to comprise a classic example of a state in an intermediate position, on the one hand subordinate to the core, but on the other, able to act in a core-like way in respect of less-developed regions.

My other main criticism of Kagarlitsky's discussion would be that, in various works over the past fifteen years, he has argued that contemporary Russia represents a form of 'restoration' in which the Soviet elite has successfully transformed itself into a new capitalist class. This seems to be too one-sided an analysis. Combining aspects of WSA with the Gramscian concept of passive revolution and its core element of 'revolution/restoration' provides a more dialectical reading of post-Soviet transformation. Post-communist Russia has been characterised by the emergence of a new and very weak bourgeoisie (the 'oligarchs' in the main were not former *apparatchiki*), together with a restructuring of the power of elements of the old elite. Bourgeois weakness, the need to create unity between elites based on different relations of production, and insertion into the global economy via natural resources have ensured that, particularly under Putin, the state has played a dominant role — but one unlikely to transform Russia's position in the world system.

Overall, therefore, Kagarlitsky, through his usual impressive scholarship, provides a superbly enjoyable reading of Russian history; but in emphasising his main message, he neglects some more subtle elements of analysis.

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Owen Worth

Hegemony, International Political Economy and Post-Communist Russia

Ashgate, 2005, 183 pp.
ISBN: 0-7546-3757-3 (hbk) £60

reviewed by Richard Connolly

This book attempts to place the development of post-communist Russia within a wider international context, arguing that events in Russia 'cannot be understood without understanding those developments that have occurred at the global level' (p. 5). In order to attempt this, Worth employs a neo-Gramscian framework that uses Russia as a test case to 'help to add greater emphasis to the study of neoliberal hegemony' (p. 4). With this in mind, Worth sets out to provide a bridge in 'understanding the national/global dichotomy of hegemonic relations as it draws from both the Coxian framework of analysis and that which has been offered by area specialists' (p. 5). This emphasis on the international dimension in post-communist political economy is welcome given the fact that many accounts often neglect the importance of factors at the international level of analysis. Using Russia's reintegration into the world economy as a case study enables Worth to focus on the degree of freedom that the Russian state enjoyed in negotiating its reintegration within the global order, thus bringing attention to the interplay between international and domestic variables in accounting for developments within Russia. Unfortunately, while the aims of the book are laudable, many who do not agree with the neo-Gramscian analytical framework may feel that the execution falls short in several important areas.

Chapter 1 outlines the neo-Gramscian conceptual framework used by Worth throughout the book. Here, positivist approaches to international relations (IR) and international political economy (IPE) are critiqued, and in particular the hegemonic stability theory advanced by realist and liberal scholars. In their place, Worth proposes an approach that mixes elements of the works of Antonio Gramsci and Robert Cox, with the main emphasis placed on the concepts of hegemony (the process by which a ruling class exerts control over society through building consent, rather than resorting to coercion), and *trasformismo* and Caesarism (passive and non-passive responses at the national level to the hegemonic project). Here, it is suggested that the strategies employed by rulers to enforce the neoliberal hegemony are contingent on the unique circumstances prevailing within a given society. It is the focus on how state–society relations within individual states mediate the effects of neoliberalism at the international level that is a strength of this book. As Worth argues, many existing studies within the neo-Gramscian and Coxian tradition are too 'top-

down and even reductionist' in their understanding of the effects of hegemony on states. Worth seeks to provide a more balanced approach, albeit from within a firmly neo-Gramscian framework.

Chapter 2 describes how the twin processes of globalisation and neoliberalism characterised a new stage of capitalism in the 1990s — one in which the powers of regulation of markets were transferred from the sovereign state to international agencies and institutions such as the World Trade Organization. The process of globalisation — presented by its proponents as a 'natural' and 'irreversible' force, the logic of which is one of 'common sense' — is in fact, Worth suggests, a socioeconomic formation created by key self-interested organisations (p. 44). Chapter 3 moves on to discuss the manner in which opposing ideological traditions within Russia have historically resulted in Russia's opposing Western-inspired socioeconomic projects, the culmination of which was the formation of the Soviet Union. Worth then outlines the flaws that were inherent within the Soviet Union and the reasons why this model ultimately failed to create a credible alternative to the world hegemonic order.

The post-Soviet period and the interaction between the global economy and domestic organisations within Russia are discussed in the final three chapters. The years between 1991 and 1999 are presented as a period in which Boris Yeltsin, with the assistance of international neoliberal intellectuals, Russian plutocrats and the occasional use of authoritarian measures, moved Russian society towards a point in which the global neoliberal hegemony was only weakly rooted in Russia. This failure to embed the neoliberal project within Russian society led to the emergence, in the 1990s, of diverse sources of ideological contestation, and these are discussed in Chapter 5. These 'counter-hegemonic' discourses are categorised along a somewhat simplistic *zapadniki–derzhavniki* (Westernisers–nationalists) spectrum. Worth argues that the failure of Gorbachev and Yeltsin in introducing social democracy and a neoliberal order, respectively, was due to the fact that both projects, rooted as they were in the cosmopolitan tradition of the *zapadniki*, did not appeal to a strong constituency in Russia. Chapter 6 discusses Vladimir Putin's first few years in power. Here, it is argued that Putin succeeded in co-opting a more diverse range of Russian social forces than had Yeltsin, ensuring that Russia increasingly conformed to the norms imposed by the international neoliberal hegemony.

There are several flaws in Worth's argument, both conceptual and empirical. Worth suggests that the ideology of neoliberalism precedes and facilitates the material process of globalisation. This would seem to confuse the direction of causation. The process of globalisation (i.e. the increased flows of trade and capital between states) has been proceeding apace since the end of the Second World War, with the ideology of neoliberalism only gaining prominence much later. Indeed, this might explain why neoliberal ideas have often floundered in Russia, a country that is only integrated with world trade patterns in a very patchy manner (i.e. primarily as an exporter of primary products). An appreciation of the varying degrees of reintegration with the world economy that have occurred across the Russian economy might point towards explaining why certain ideas have been successful or otherwise in Russia. Most of Russia's successful export sectors are primary product 'enclaves' (Wade, 2004), characterised by monopolistic or oligopolistic market structures, and owned by either (increasingly) the state or Russian plutocrats. Either way, such interests hardly constitute fertile ground for the emergence of neoliberalism as a hegemonic force in Russia. Indeed, the argument that neoliberalism has become more accepted in Russia since Putin's time in office is also spurious. After two or three years of relatively liberal economic policy, Putin's Russia has developed a very distinctive form of capitalism far removed from that

associated with the neoliberal paradigm, characterised by increasing levels of state ownership in 'strategic' sectors, the abuse of property rights (with the Khordorkovsky case being one of many), and the exclusion and ill-treatment of foreign investors (particularly in the energy sector). If anything, this is indicative of a country that is rejecting neoliberal ideas in many areas, and developing its own form of state capitalism. Overall, this book might appeal as a case study in the application of neo-Gramscian IR/IPE theory, but its treatment of political and economic transformation in Russia is less effective.

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Andrew Kliman

Reclaiming Marx's *Capital*: A Refutation of the Myth of Inconsistency

Lexington Books, 2007, xvii + 230 pp.
ISBN: 978-0-7391-1852-8 (pbk) £18
ISBN: 978-0-7391-1851-1 (hbk) £45

reviewed by Andrew McCulloch

The status of Karl Marx's theory of value has always been a matter of contention. Some writers have regarded this important regional theory of Marxism as a central weakness and even as its Achilles heel, which either requires correction or exclusion from the Marxist canon. Others, such as Andrew Kliman, have claimed that Marx has been (sometimes wilfully) misinterpreted. Some time ago in the last century, Kliman and several others established an international working group on value theory (IWGVT). Not unexpectedly, it was a deeply divided group, and its members were forced to hammer out a set of guidelines for debate. Kliman has evidently tried to follow the group's admirable guidelines, but perhaps not always successfully. A reading of this book suggests that what chiefly divided the group was whether Marx valued production inputs and outputs simultaneously in his system or whether, as Kliman argues, Marx was a temporalist whose labour theory of value necessarily resulted in valuing outputs and inputs differently. They were also divided over the question of whether or not Marx had a single system of values and prices or a dual system — that is, whether or not there was a 'transformation problem' of values into prices.

This lucid text is written for those Marxists like myself who would never have joined the IWGVT, and who have not immersed themselves in value theory but nonetheless would like to know what is at stake and what is going on when Marxists disputing value theory metaphorically tear pieces off each other. Kliman believes that he has imposed a limitation on himself in addressing this particular audience. That is, he assumes that those who are not professional economists and proficient in algebra would not be able to follow or profit from a treatise that expressed all its main propositions and arguments in mathematical language. I am sure that he is right, although he has retained some illustrative algebraic formulations. The drawback, he suggests, is that his arguments here necessarily lack complete precision when

put into words. Thus this book is a primer. It offers the opportunity for some of us to try and understand the principles of this fierce debate, and for others, it offers an introduction that they can then follow up.

Kliman is at pains to point out that he is not claiming that what he understands by Marx's value theory is necessarily true. What he is arguing is that within Marx's work, there is to be found a consistent theory of value. If the theory were not even consistent then it could not possibly be true, and would not merit the effort of using and testing it. The book, therefore, attempts the recovery of a consistent theory that can be rationally attributed to Marx on a sympathetic, that is a hermeneutic, reading of the whole of the key texts. This reading is the basis for a research programme which has not yet been properly developed and funded.

Kliman's central claim is that the 'key tenet' of Marx's theory is that in the capitalist production of commodities, their 'value is determined by labor-time' (p. 13) — that is, of course, socially necessary labour-time. Moreover, Marx is a single-system and not dual-system theorist: 'that is, the values and prices of his theory are determined interdependently' (p. 13) and not independently. In Marx's system, three equalities, therefore, are maintained within a capitalist economy. These are that 'total profit and total surplus value [are] both equal', as are the 'total price of production and total value', and as are 'the economy-wide price and value rates of profit' (p. 28). 'Marx attached great importance to these three **aggregate equalities**, holding that they confirmed his value theory' (p. 28, bold in the original) and therefore they are axiomatic for Kliman. Armed with these and some other assumptions, Kliman demonstrates a temporal single system interpretation (TSSI) of Marx; refutes the idea that Marx was a simultaneist; defends the claim that there is a tendential fall in the rate of profit; and dishes out hidings to simultaneous, dual-system, physicalist and new interpretations of Marx on value. Some of these interpretations can demonstrate commitment to one or two of these equalities, but only the TSSI can demonstrate all three.

Along the way, some very famous names get a pasting: Böhm-Bawerk, von Bortkiewicz, Brenner, Desai, Mandel, Okishio, Roemer, Samuelson, Sraffa and Sweezy — and in some cases, a rather comprehensive one. For instance, 'Bortkiewicz did not prove that Marx's account of the value-price transformation is internally contradictory; (simple) reproduction can occur when input and output prices differ. Hence, there was no logical need to correct Marx's account; the so-called "correct solutions" are actually alternatives to his' (p. 207). Morishima's (and Roemer's) 'fundamental Marxian theorem' is also dispatched because 'it does not prove that surplus labor is either necessary or sufficient for the existence of profit. On all simultaneist interpretations, Marx's theory implies that there can be profit without surplus labor, and vice versa' (p. 207). This is high-quality argument that is impressive in its close reasoning, even if it is perhaps a little too relentless. (There are not many jokes.) Towards the end, it appears as though Kliman's patience is wearing thin, and the adjectives used to describe his opponents' false conclusions become a little more barbed ('absurd', etc).

Not all of my questions were stilled by this book. There is still something that, despite my fundamental sympathy with the law of value, I cannot quite put my finger on at the heart of the labour theory of value. Essentially, the argument that the value of commodities is determined by labour-time is an argument by elimination: rationally, there is nothing else that could determine the relative value of commodities. Such arguments cannot be conclusive, and I thought that Kliman rushed over his account of the production of value and surplus value. He also airily mentions inflation many times, but does not directly deal with the topic in a satisfactory way. I would also have liked Kliman to have addressed more clearly what

politically was at stake in the competing interpretations.

These are minor blemishes in a book that, once I had started reading it, kept me from reading anything else until I had finished it. It sets a standard for his opponents and does what its title claims to do, and thus it raises the stakes in this area. For me, its stature compares with that of Norman Geras's (1983) *Marx and Human Nature: Refutation of a Legend*. No doubt a rejoinder is in preparation. It will have to be very good.

Perry Anderson

Spectrum: From Right to Left in the World of Ideas

Verso, 2005, xvii + 398 pp.
ISBN: 1-85984-527-4 (hbk) £25
ISBN: 1-85984-527-4 (pbk) £15

reviewed by David Neilson

Perry Anderson's S*pectrum: From Right To Left In The World Of Ideas* is not the book I thought I was going to be reviewing. I had imagined that Anderson would build on the work of writers like Bobbio (1996), Bourdieu (1991) and indeed on his own (1998) essay, 'Sense of the Left' in order to develop a systemic discursive framework of left/right political space. In fact, *Spectrum* is a compilation of essays written by Anderson about intellectuals who are divided across different ideological positions, from right to centre to left. All the chapters are based on essays originally written for the *London Review of Books*, from the early nineties to the recent present, and the requirements of that publication partly explain the range and style of the essays. Rather than being based on a planned structure of political space represented by selected key thinkers, the book's structure has been designed after its key components have already been written, and for purposes other than *Spectrum*. The contingency of political space is mirrored in the text. Still, a discernable framework, rationalized *ex post facto* in the foreword, underpins the book's structure.

The essays are densely packed with far-ranging yet tight insights and analysis, from personal and historical contextualisation of his subjects' thinking to rigorous and complex but clear and economical critiques of their main ideas and theories. Refreshingly, Anderson's traditional style of analysis of political ideas spans disciplinary perspectives from intellectual biography to philosophy, politics and history, with consistent references to a political economy of capitalism, albeit not as rigorous as the other perspectives, also interwoven into each account. Overall, Anderson provides a scholarly, thoroughly researched, lively and meticulous set of accounts that furnish the reader with a fascinating insight into Anderson's inside picture of the political spectrum of the Anglo–European metropolis and its intellectual milieu.

The book comprises three main major sections entitled 'Politics', 'Philosophy' and 'History', which move from key writers on the right to those on the centre and the left. The first section analyses and compares key intellectual figures on the political right: Michael Oakeshott, Leo Strauss, Carl Schmitt and Friedrich von Hayek, as well as providing accounts of Ferdinand Mount and Timothy Garton Ash. The second and shortest section, on the philosophical centre, offers sharp, compact accounts of John Rawls, Jürgen Habermas and Noberto Bobbio, followed by a

comparative analysis of their forays into the field of international relations. The final and longest section, on left history, rolls out a cast of mostly Marxist historians — Edward Thompson, Robert Brenner and Eric Hobsbawm — though it also includes philosopher Sebastiano Timpanaro, sociologist Göran Therborn, and novelist Gabriel García Márquez. The question of those who have been left out is rationalised by Anderson with reference to other books he and others have written, which fill in the gaps (pp. xiii-xiv). Thus the structure of political space in the world of ideas is not given a comprehensive representation within this book, though it stretches the imagination to consider how one might realistically achieve such a goal.

The first section lucidly reveals the political mentality of the right as it considers the problematic of state power in relation to mass democracy. Rather than providing yet another 'new left' account of neoliberalism, Anderson gives a broader, twentieth-century perspective of right political theorising that usefully puts the current neoliberal project into a broader historical context. As in the other sections, Anderson concentrates on intellectuals whose lives and works span much of the twentieth century, and he also considers the linkages and contests of thought between generations. The reader gets a clear sense of the enduring continuity of themes that occupy the minds of the political right. Hayek's master neoliberal narrative is placed in the context not only of a half century of his writing, but also within the context of his predecessors, contemporaries and successors. Instead of simply denouncing the right, Anderson develops genuine critiques that engage constructively with these thinkers.

According to Anderson, the centrist intellectuals reviewed here used to be on the moderate left. As centrists, they are more philosophical because they draw from both left and right and seek consensus rather than contestation and partisanship. Although Anderson provides a useful rationale for this view in the foreword (p. xv), there is a kind of *ex post facto* pragmatism about it. He provides an excellent summary account and contextualisation of Bobbio's work. However, Anderson does not apply or develop the complicating potential of Bobbio's *Left and Right*, which in particular points towards a distinction in political space between the transhistorical and the historical, and to a framework for thinking about the centre. On the one hand, the moderate left has always and continues to represent a centrist politics of compromise-seeking consensus. On the other hand, as represented in the works of these three writers, though they are shifting over time as well, the moderate left was historically at the centre of political space during the long boom, but it is more clearly to the left of a centre within the current neoliberal model of development that has moved historical political space to the right. Nonetheless, Anderson's accounts of Rawls, Bobbio and Habermas provide concise and helpful critiques. Further, the comparative discussion of the three writers' commentaries on the major twists and turns of international relations through the second half of the twentieth century in particular, offers a valuable window into thinking about the links between the *realpolitik* of international relations and broader political philosophical concerns such as democracy, justice, inequality, and consensus at the international level.

The final major section, concentrating mainly on Marxist historians Thompson, Brenner and Hobsbawm, most clearly represents the milieu and affinity of Anderson himself. For me, this section is the most entertaining because it contains fascinating insider intellectual biographies of key twentieth-century figures in the English socialist elite; but it is also the most disappointing from theoretical and programmatic points of view. Anderson ably represents the high culture of English Marxism through his accounts of these formidable historians. For them, a general Marxist orientation provides the problematic for 'doing' history in any orthodox sense. Yet,

and this is apparent to some extent in Anderson's work as well, these writers are not 'readers of Marx' Marxists. They are not rigorously applying the tools of Marxian political economy or class theory, and they are primarily historians of the past rather than historians of the future. Although this assessment may be exaggerated, it points on balance to an emphasis and a preoccupation that is defeatist in a political sense. While the right and to some extent the centre, in Anderson's accounts, are focused on contemporary problems of governance and society, the left looks back as if it is not relevant to the present. Instead of taking the opportunity to begin a new long march for socialism, there is only an old New Left embrace of a sense of honour and steadfastness in the face of defeat:

> The last essay, in keeping with the way its author [Eric Hobsbawm] has written of *Age of Extremes*, as with the reality of the period, is entitled 'The Vanquished Left'. But to be defeated and to be bowed are not the same. None of these writers have lowered his head before the victors. If a dividing line is wanted between what has become the Centre and remains the Left, it would lie here. (p. xvii)

Anderson's own view is too understated. A scholar of his calibre could have provided an introduction and a conclusion that more clearly stamped both his sense of the political spectrum and his own New Left world-view, which is implicit in his deep and acute deconstruction of such major thinkers of the twentieth century. Instead, there is a short though useful foreword and two final essays under the section title of 'Debts', both of which seem to be there because they do not fit anywhere else. Nonetheless, despite its not being the book I had hoped for, it is an important reference and point of departure for thinking about political space in the world of ideas.

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Giovanni Arrighi

Adam Smith in Beijing: Lineages of the Twenty-First Century

Verso, 2007, 420 pp.
ISBN: 978-1844671045 (hbk) £25

reviewed by Andrew Robinson

This book is a creditable attempt to situate the present world in the history of the world system, and to predict a developmental trajectory for the near future. Its perspective follows on from the conclusions of Giovanni Arrighi and Beverley Silver's (1999) *Chaos and Governance in the Modern World System* that the world's geopolitical and economic systems operate in cycles, each of which is identified with a particular hegemon or leading state, and a particular dominant economic form or sector. On this analysis, US hegemony, like its

Venetian, Dutch and British predecessors, is now coming to an end after around a hundred years (p. 231). This book extends the analysis provided by this approach more extensively to the current situation, and in doing so, it deploys readings of Adam Smith, David Harvey and Joseph Schumpeter to conceptualise the world market and the issue of 'spatial fix'.

The focus of the book is on transitions between global hegemons. A hegemon, in Arrighi's sense, combines the achievement of interest-based consent from other dominant forces with a leading economic sector and development path. According to Arrighi, the USA has gone into hegemonic crisis because of the failure of its development model for the global south, and the so-called 'war on terror' 'has already precipitated the terminal crisis of US hegemony' (p. 162). With the US option eliminated, avoiding 'chaos' depends on the capacity of China, India and other southern states to find an equitable and ecologically viable developmental model (p. 10). Arrighi seeks a 'new global leadership' in East Asia to provide 'system-level solutions to the problems left behind by US hegemony' (p. 165).

So why is China, in particular, put forward as a potential new hegemon? First, China is the best hope for a spatial fix given its size and population; and this is happening already, Arrighi argues, via infrastructure investments (p. 220). Second, unlike the other East Asian powers, China is not a US vassal or a city-state, and it depends less on the USA than the USA depends on China (p. 8). Third, China is the pioneer of a new model of economic organisation. The rise of network production and smaller businesses had led to a shift of economic power to East Asia as a hybridisation of market-based, non-capitalist development with Western-style capitalism (pp. 145, 171). Finally and most crucially, Arrighi argues that China offers a distinct development path to lead the world out of capitalism. Suggesting that the character of a society as capitalist depends on the expropriation of direct producers, the formation of a specifically capitalist class (as opposed to market social relations), and the subordination of the state to capital, Arrighi indicates that China might become a non-capitalist market economy, building on an Asian tradition of non-capitalist market economies. China's hegemony will be a continuation of the alternative path of 'industrious revolution' that Asia was pursuing prior to its being forced into a capitalist world order by temporary Western military superiority.

Arrighi believes that China retains aspects of socialism based on egalitarian land distribution (pp. 15–16). He claims that the tradition of the Chinese Communist Party continues to be based on a distinctly Chinese form of Marxism-Leninism, which is 'democratic', deliberative and peasant-based (pp. 373–4, 376). He argues that China has refused to follow neoliberal prescriptions, avoiding unemployment and implementing reforms gradually instead of by 'shock therapy', emphasising a national interest in stability (pp. 14, 354–5). Rather than doctrinaire neoliberalism, Chinese policies emerge from a 'pragmatic approach to problems of governance' (p. 368). The Chinese approach is also credited with being ecologically aware, though not yet sufficiently so (p. 388–9). The approach is egalitarian and decentred, based on township and village enterprises (TVEs), which have encouraged local development and are a continuation of the Maoist heritage of the Cultural Revolution, building on a backdrop of rural infrastructure, education and land reform. TVEs have allowed China to avoid dispossessing the peasantry and hence kept up the industrious revolution model of a non-capitalist market (pp. 361–4, 370–1, 375). Furthermore, the basis of Chinese success is not simply cheap labour but the quality of labour — a success story for communist education. China's advantage is due to 'low-price, high-quality labour' (p. 365). Arrighi almost idealises the Chinese model, likening it to Smith's idea of a market harnessed and

constrained to serve the national interest. He claims it provides a new development path attractive to other nations. Hence, the rise of China could lead to a 'new Bandung' that 'can do what the old one could not', creating a 'commonwealth of civilisations' on an economic basis (p. 384).

The strength of this book is its critical perspective on the position of the USA in the world. Defying the widespread tendency to reify geopolitics as a special sphere, Arrighi links international events clearly to their economic context in a world system characterised by global flows and relations. The difficulties come with the attempt to construct an alternative. There is a deep asymmetry of method between the discussions of the USA and China. While the discussion of the USA is deeply critical, the reading of China is reminiscent of realist and problem-solving methodologies. Modelled on China's potential rather than its current status, Arrighi's discussion cannot but be a speculative gamble. There is the big question of the sustainability of Chinese growth, which Arrighi does not address. Similarly, regarding rural dispossession, the prediction of massive urbanisation — which Arrighi endorses — suggests that it is indeed happening, just at a slower rate than if full-scale neoliberal policies had been adopted.

A reader could be induced to think that Arrighi is idealising the situation in China, presenting an overly rosy picture of localised, egalitarian, ecological development that ignores important counter-examples. The Chinese development strategy also includes a range of elements — massive development projects such as the Three Gorges dam, large-scale urbanisation, the concentration of economic activities in coastal 'global cities' and export processing zones — that go against any idea of egalitarian, ecological, energy-light, socially inclusive development. And this is before one even considers the political context in China, and a state attitude to self-valorisation by workers and peasants that may even overshadow the USA's in its cruelty and repressiveness. Quite aside from its desirability, it is not clear that Chinese hegemony is even possible at this point. Despite a few concentrations of high-tech industry and the globalisation of some coastal regions, in many respects China remains a firmly peripheral country within the world system. Arrighi's showcase example of China's distinct model — that of the TVEs — is typical of peripheral countries, where labour is kept cheap by the linking of low-paid infrastructure to non-capitalist rural economies, which subsidise low wages by meeting reproduction costs. It is not clear how China today has anything like a leading sector that would give it a persistent market advantage. Granted, it has economic networks, but it hardly has the exclusive claim to these that the USA had to multinationals in its early years; and the products they are making are very much at the peripheral end of the world trade system. As for the industrious revolution development path, it might have existed once, but has it really survived several centuries of colonialism, imitative Westernisation and state 'modernisation' intact?

One can indeed concede that the Chinese state is prone to restrict capitalistic processes in order to preserve stability. This is not, however, something unusually socialist. It is not unknown for states of all kinds to act in this way, whether by backing down in the face of revolt, conceding to popular demands to head off possible unrest, pursuing cronyism and patronage as means of integration, or subordinating the economy to state development goals (the developmentalist state is hardly a new phenomenon). This 'national interest' is really the interest of the state elite in retaining its own power.

It is all very well to predict different trajectories in the world system, but what is missing from such a perspective is transformative agency. And while a peaceful transition to a new hegemony might be preferable to a long drawn-out swansong of US empire, the point is surely not to side with either, but to construct a way to break out of

the cycles of capitalism entirely. Even supposing there will be a new hegemon in the form of a state, there is no particular reason why this hegemon should be egalitarian or ecologically friendly. The assumption that it will be is wishful thinking on Arrighi's part. Granted, it would need to be so in order to solve the problems inherited from the previous hegemons — but which hegemon has ever, in fact, solved these problems? One must surely look beyond the system for transformative alternatives to it.

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Benedict Anderson

Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination

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reviewed by April R. Biccum

Benedict Anderson's follow up to *Imagined Communities* takes us back, in historical detail, to the *fin de siècle* anti-colonial mobilisation in the Philippines. The focus of Anderson's study are the connections made between two nationalist insurrections in Cuba and the Philippines through a dense interpersonal network of novelists, activists and scholars with near-global reach, and it thus weaves a complicated web of personalities, documents, events and narrative. In *Under Three Flags*, Anderson offers us a work of history and a close reading of key figures, their seminal texts, and detailed accounts of their production and circulation. Anderson's study is anchored around three Filipino men who were instrumental to Filipino nationalism, and who were engaged in this dense, transcontinental exchange of letters, pamphlets, articles, academic studies and novels. Anderson's detailed account of the lives and works of novelist Jose Rizal, anthropologist and journalist Isabelo de los Reyes and coordinating organiser Mariano Ponce comprises a complex combination of literary criticism, sociological and political study and historiography that includes Anderson's own translations of texts and detailed erudition of archival material.

Anderson returns us to the theme of print media explored in *Imagined Communities*, and his study demonstrates the importance of the novel form to burgeoning nationalisms — a fact also explored through postcolonial theory. Anderson sets out to supply us with a 'political astronomy', attempting to 'map the gravitational force of anarchism' between opposing poles of nationalism as they emerged at empire's end. Anarchism, for Anderson, overcomes many of the shortcomings of Marxism, which were apparent at the time of Anderson's focus and have continued to echo through debates between neo-Marxism, anti-imperialism, single-issue movements and identity politics. Anderson is drawing our attention to the textuality of these encounters across time, space, language and culture in an era he refers to as late-nineteenth-century 'early globalisation'. His point is that this is the first time in history that such a transglobal coordination of political events has become possible thanks to the technology and circulation of print media and the mobility of

cosmopolitan, elite, and multilingual personalities, all connected in some way or another to the hub of European anarchist activism. The very slight argumentative frame of Anderson's account is that it is through this transglobal 'imagined community' that activists on different continents learned how to 'do' revolution, and that the most reliable allies of Filipino and Cuban anti-colonial agitators were this hub of European anarchists. I say 'slight argumentative frame', because while Anderson emphasises it in the introduction, any evaluation or analysis of the importance of this claim falls away completely in his dense reading of events, texts and personalities. But in fact, this is an important claim for a few reasons.

First, because of the kinds of schisms that have occurred in the last twenty years in the academic left with the rise of post-structuralist epistemological frameworks across the social sciences. Post-structuralism has had a particular impact on postcolonial theory, which has quite broadly examined the historical, sociological, geographical and literary configurations of anti-colonial, nationalist and postcolonial state formation. These histories have highlighted the incommensurabilities of anti-colonial mobilisation and the framework of classical Marxism, which has produced a scepticism toward postcolonial studies on the part of contemporary Marxist scholars, exacerbated by the post-structuralist inflection of much postcolonial scholarship. This has led to in-field schisms and to formerly-Marxist-turned-postcolonial theorists such as Robert Young writing the history of postcoloniality in a way that inscribes an organic affinity between the complex tradition of Marxism and the anti-colonial imagination (Young, 2001). Anderson's claim that it is anarchists' activism that had the most affinity with anti-colonial nationalists complicates any easy assumptions about counter-hegemonic activity in the metropole, particularly because there are fundamental ideological differences between Fabian socialists, Marxists, and anarchists that bear out different relationships with the periphery, from solidarity to assimilation to further intervention. This simultaneously corroborates and problematises both postcolonial critiques of Marxism and the assumption that anti-colonialism is a singularity of sentiment, either in the metropole or in the periphery.

The second reason Anderson's claims are important has to do with the ambivalent relationship between communications and globalisation that is a function of the multiple interfaces produced by the networked character of its territorial configuration. Anderson stresses that readers will 'not be mistaken to find resonances with their own time', because some of the same patterns we witness today will have their origins in his study. The networked patterns of communication and transportation of capitalist globalisation that enable its patterns of accumulation are the same networks that can be deployed to recapture surplus (i.e. the shadow economy), and can be hijacked to service counter-hegemonic or counter-insurgent activities: witness the 'Battle of Seattle' or the phenomenon of 'cyber-conflict' (see Karatzogianni, 2004). The network bears an ambivalent relation to capital and empire — something eloquently demonstrated by Anderson's study and born out by contemporary developments. The question, then, is one of historiography. Given the voluminous recent literature on both globalisation and empire, it seems that historicity is in crisis. While Anderson's locus of study is certainly legitimate on its own terms, his claim that 'early globalisation' begins at this juncture would surely be called into question by many historians of the *longue durée*. The migration of people, ideas and the networks these furnish are as central to nineteenth-century empires as they are to twentieth-century globalisations. This has implications for whether one theorises contemporaneity as a 'new' US imperialism, or as an empire bearing continuities with empires past (see Mabee, 2004). Following the

emphases of much postcolonial theory, it seems that one could say that it is more than that history-writing has political implications; rather, it is that writing history is itself politics. In this sense, every account of politics has embedded in it a narrative of history, and every account of history works to delineate subjective agency, making Anderson's lack of a more abstracted level of analysis and evaluation a significant shortcoming.

At a moment in which the figure of empire has resurfaced, it seems prescient to focus instead on a close empirical analysis of anti-colonial mobilisation. In so doing, Anderson deftly demonstrates both the complexity of the characters, locations and movements, and the way globalisation exceeds the twentieth century in its scope and origin. Anderson illustrates the push and pull of three spheres of influence, several acts of betrayal and different trajectories of critique and alliance, which should easily give the lie to statist assumptions about how international relations were conducted prior to the Second World War. The truly global span of Rizal and company's communicative stretch and alliance resonates profoundly with contemporary issues of migration, citizenship, extra-territorial allegiance, economic remittances, and diasporic mobilisation in today's war on terror.

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Göran Therborn (ed.)

Inequalities of the World: New Theoretical Frameworks, Multiple Empirical Approaches

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reviewed by Gerard Cotterell

This collection of chapters edited by Göran Therborn seeks to widen the discussion of inequality beyond its usual focus on income distribution. In doing so, Therborn does not seek to deny the importance of income inequality, but rather looks to expand the scope of the debate. The book begins with an introductory chapter by Therborn which, on its own, is worth the price of the book and which, for those seeking to understand the issue of inequality, is an ideal place to start.

Therborn's aim is to provide an analytic framework within which to understand inequality. He begins by arguing that the issue of inequality is best understood when it is conceptualised in the plural — as 'inequalities'. Inequalities, Therborn suggests, have three primary dimensions: inequality of life and death (vital inequality); the unequal treatment of humans as persons (existential inequality); and inequality of resources, which has a wider definition than just income inequality and includes such things as education and social networks. The mechanisms that operate to enforce these inequalities are *distantiation*, *hierarchisation*, *exclusion* and *exploitation*. Of

particular importance is distantiation, which refers to the process whereby some people 'get ahead' because they work harder or are born into an environment that gives them more assistance so that they 'outcompete' those without the same advantages. Therborn argues that this mechanism of inequality is often overlooked. Interestingly, and controversially for many readers of this journal, Therborn suggests that 'exploitation is currently much more rare than Marx would have suspected' (p. 11). He arrives at this conclusion by defining exploitation somewhat narrowly as 'a categorical division between some superior and some inferior people, whereby the former unilaterally or asymmetrically extract values from the latter' (p. 12).

Following this outline of the sources and drivers of the multiplicity of inequalities present in the modern world, Therborn then provides data to illustrate his argument. He finishes on a positive note by arguing that 'the actual existence of low-inequality societies indicates that a commitment to global equalisation, while controversial, is not utopian' (p. 51).

The remainder of the book is organised into two sections. The first, entitled 'Varieties of inequality', contains five chapters covering a diverse set of topics: the extent of health inequalities in the world; the different definitions French and US workers attach to cultural memberships; the extent of economic change and social mobility; the connection patterns of non-standard employment relationships and inequality in the labour market; and the linkages between knowledge and inequality. These chapters are all cross-country comparative analyses, and among them, two contributions are worth noting.

The first is by Michael Hout and is entitled 'Economic change and social mobility', and it examines changes in social mobility in the USA, Russia and Ireland. Hout argues that understanding the extent of social mobility is important since, when challenged about the consequences of inequality, conservatives argue that the impacts are overstated 'because today's inequalities are undone by tomorrow's social mobility' (p. 119). After analysing changes in mobility in these three countries, Hout concludes by noting the important role government can play in shaping the structure of opportunities available to people. Hout's chapter is also a useful example of how to explain research that involves complicated statistical methods in understandable language. The second chapter of note in this section is that by Kalleberg, who examines non-standard employment relations and labour-market inequality. Kalleberg highlights both the positive and negative aspects of the growth in such non-standard relations, noting the need for further cross-national research on the consequences of these changes for workers.

The second section, entitled 'Case studies', contains four chapters comprising single-country studies examining various aspects of inequality in Brazil, China, Russia and France respectively. These chapters provide sound evidence for Therborn's claims, in the opening chapter, of the multiple aspects of inequality and the need to understand these different dimensions.

I have three minor criticisms to make of the book. First, when dipping into a collection of chapters in an edited book, the reader is never sure whether to expect a set of tightly linked contributions or the other extreme, a series of vaguely linked chapters. Therborn's book falls much closer to the first than the second of these but still lacks an overall sense of coherence, and the contributions the individual chapters make to the overall impact of the book is varied. In particular, with some chapters it is hard to understand the basis on which they are included. For example, Chapter 3, which examines how French and US workers define their membership of their respective cultures, stands out in this regard. This is not to criticise the content or quality of the chapter; rather it is to query its inclusion. The second minor criticism arises with the reproduction of graphs and tables in some chapters. In some cases, (e.g. p. 168), the quality of these is poor and the labels are

very difficult to read without magnification. Finally, the edited chapters are drawn from contributions to sessions at the World Congress of Sociology held in Brisbane in 2002, which means that the contributions are dated in some respects.

However, these comments aside, the book does make a substantial contribution to the debate about inequalities, particularly as mentioned above in relation to the opening chapter by Therborn, by alerting the reader to the many dimensions of inequalities that exist. Most particularly, it serves to widen the debate about inequality away from its usual focus on income distribution, often the preserve of economists, into a wider domain.