Towards a Class-Struggle Anthropology

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Abstract: Dancing between review and argument this paper lays out a foundation for a class-struggle anthropology—that is, an anthropological practice that can be linked to the ultimate goal of achieving a classless society. To this end we will review those anthropologists who have gone before us, pulling out those works of theirs that we see as critical in (re)building a class-struggle anthropology. As part of this process we discuss the relationship between what has stood as Marxist anthropology in North America, the idea of socialism, the political development of the world working class during the nine decades since the October Revolution, and the challenges of intellectual continuity in the face of differing generational experiences of Marxist anthropologists. Ultimately we argue that a progressive anthropology necessarily involves political activism in our work, communities, and schools.

Keywords: Marxism, class struggle, political economy, social justice

Résumé : Alternant entre le synopsis et l'argumentation, cet essai met en place une fondation pour une anthropologie de la lutte des classes, à savoir une pratique anthropologique pouvant être reliée au but ultime qu'est la réalisation d'une société sans classes. À cette fin, nous faisons un survol des anthropologues qui nous ont précédé, et de ceux d'entre leurs travaux que nous considérons cruciaux pour la (re)construction d'une anthropologie de la lutte des classes. Ce faisant, nous examinons les relations entre l'anthropologie marxiste en Amérique du Nord, l'idée du socialisme, le développement politique de la classe ouvrière mondiale au cours des dix décennies qui ont suivi la Révolution d'octobre, et les défis de la continuité intellectuelle face aux différentes expériences générationnelles des anthropologues marxistes. Finalement, nous soutenons qu'une anthropologie progressiste implique nécessairement l'activisme politique dans notre milieu de travail, nos communautés et nos écoles.

Mots-clés : Marxisme, lutte des classes, économie politique, justice sociale

"The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles."
— Karl Marx and Frederick Engels,
The Communist Manifesto

"The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it."
— Karl Marx, *Theses on Feuerrbach*

For Marx social class is at the centre of understanding and organizing social change. As interpreted by Lenin the working class, organized by its politically advanced vanguard, constituted the path toward emancipation and the realization of human potential. Rosa Luxemburg emphasized——among other things—the critical power of the combined force of the working class, engaged in a general strike, in overthrowing capitalism. Trotsky, through his analysis of combined and uneven development and the thesis of permanent revolution, pointed the way forward toward a global socialist society (even if the revolution began in the most backward of countries).

Anthropology, by contrast, has tended to draw upon the more conservative theoretical frameworks of mainstream scholars such as Emile Durkheim or Max Weber to construct models of society that highlight ways of building and or maintaining "community" connections and social functions (Patterson 2001). This is not, of course, to say that there are no important anthropological contributions which draw upon Marx—there are some.[1] In this essay we detail in broad stroke the history of Marxist anthropology in North America (which for us includes Mexico, the United States, and Canada) and, in so doing, point the way forward towards a class-struggle anthropology, with the ultimate aim of achieving social justice and the elimination of a class-based society.

To carry out the task that we have set for ourselves we balance between review and argument. For our review we have selected pieces that are critical for engaging in our project of a class-struggle anthropology. Because we

are social activists engaged in the social justice movement *and* practising professional anthropologists engaged in the arcane world of publish or perish we have focussed on those anthropological writers and works that we have found contribute toward our project in terms of their intellectual and practical contributions.

For our argument we draw upon the classical call for a class-struggle social science that is intent on reinvigorating hope for a better, more just world.[2] This is a social science that places its analytical eye and its political hopes upon the working class as the pivotal social agent of change and upon the ruling class as the agent of reaction and deception. In so doing we draw directly from the corpus of theory inspired and informed by the writings and political engagements of Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels. In this essay we have attempted to avoid the endless internal debates within Marxism and focus instead upon the ways in which Marxism as theory and practice has informed anthropology. Nonetheless, it would be remiss if we did not at the very least lay out the core concepts of Marxist theory so as not to be waylaid later on in the paper over potentially unfamiliar phrases or concepts new to the 21st-century ear.

First and foremost Marxism is a theory and a practice united in the objective of achieving a classless society. As a theory, Marxism is a body of conceptual tools that allows an informed analyst an effective mechanism by which to make sense of the myriad ways and means the ruling class of a particular society deploy to hold onto their privileged position in society (see, for example: Ollman 1971; Mandel 1969). Chief among Marxism's central concepts is that of social class—defined at its most basic as one's place relative to the means of production, the tools, machines, and knowledge used to transform the world around us into things usable by humans. While primarily focussed upon the workings of capitalism, Marxist theory has also been used to understand the workings of kin-ordered and tributary societies (Wolf 1982, 1999).

As practice, Marxism, through the identification of the key problem of class-divided societies, which is the exploitation of the majority by a minority that controls the ability of society to produce goods and services, suggests ways and means of overthrowing the rule of the minority by the majority. Here the primary focus is upon the social conflict between and among classes. Marxism holds that conflict to be an inevitable part of the economic laws of motion of an expansionary system built on economic competition between capitalists for the social surplus and between workers and capitalists for the social wage.

However, this inevitable economic competition is ultimately underwritten by what Marxists often refer to as "leadership" or the political means and will to fight. There can be various aspects to this leadership. It can be over competing blocs of capitalists fighting each other by leading one working class to slaughter another in war. It can be a "race to the bottom" that reduces the percentage of the surplus that goes to use values (what Marxists refer to as the rate of exploitation). Alternatively, as Marxists advocate and fervently desire, it can be class struggle emerging from a conscious working class that has the political means and will to increase its power over production, eventually fighting for the eradication of classes and thereby the privileges associated with private property: what Marx called class for itself.

To this end we will review those anthropologists who have gone before us, pulling out those works of theirs that we see as critical in rebuilding a class-struggle anthropology—that is, an anthropological practice that can be linked to the ultimate goal of achieving a classless society. As part of this process we discuss the relationship between what has stood as Marxist anthropology in North America, the idea of socialism, the political development of the world working class during the nine decades since the October Revolution, and the challenges of intellectual continuity in the face of differing generational experiences of Marxist anthropologists. In so doing we recognize that much of what we say below is not new, not innovative, and not original in anyway except—perhaps—in its attempt to "confront the present" (Smith 1999), with a new synthesis that addresses the perpetual crisis, and growing economic disparities that characterize the current period.[3]

There are no road maps for what we are trying to do because there is so little in the way of contemporary attempts to synthesize Marxist anthropology into a coherent body of work. Ultimately we argue that a truly progressive, class-struggle anthropology necessarily involves political activism in our work, communities and schools. We are not attempting to provide the definitive synthesis of Marxism and Anthropology, nor finally resolve the contradictions between professional scholarship and political commitment, but rather to provide a provisional history of a present that needs, badly, to be confronted by class struggle. As anthropologists we would like to contribute to this project and hope that we can at least provide a prolegomenon for further research and a more complete synthesis of that which is both Marxist and anthropological.

The "Short Twentieth Century" and Marxist Anthropology

In 1995, Eric Hobsbawm coined the now well-worn phrase "the short twentieth century" to describe the period from

1914 to 1989, which, he argued, marks the boundaries of the major challenges, conflicts and ideological themes of 20th-century history. While we share Canadian writer Ellen Meiksins Wood's (1998) concern with the excessive periodizing of contemporary social theory and the connected problem of multiple generations of "new pessimists" declaring an end to history and a crisis of modernity every couple of decades (Wood and Foster 1997), we also recognize the scholarly wisdom of Hobsbawm's connection between a 75-year global class war[4] that was the end result of the first inter-imperialist world war and the political, social, and intellectual alignments that emerged from the October Revolution.

It is, of course, easy to find harbingers of the October Revolution in the pre-World War I period and continuities between the challenges of the Cold War and the contemporary period (Wood 1998). However, even if, as Ellen Meiksins Wood asserts, 1989 does not mark the end of an epoch of capitalism and its attendant class struggles, it does mark the collapse of huge states that covered most of the old world. It also marks the disappearance, degeneration, splintering, and ideological disorientation of political parties that wielded tremendous influence in the world working class and a crisis of legitimacy for viable alternatives to capitalism. The terrain of political struggle has changed in dramatic ways and we claim the right to join Eric Hobsbawm in using 1989-91 as a heuristic boundary.

As scholars for the Marxist generation of 2000, most of our intellectual development derives from the social science of this short 20th century that is now a decade and a half in the past. The scholars who mentored us through the process of doctoral studies were beneficiaries of the remarkable, nearly millenarian, optimism about progressive social change that characterized the period of early adulthood for what has come to be called the generation of 1968 (Kurlansky 2004). Having done their doctoral research during the heady days of the 1960s and 70s their research was able to explicitly engage broad struggles for social change and even revolutionary transformation as it happened in the "traditional" field sites of anthropology—Africa, Asia, Latin America, or the so-called fourth-world of Aboriginal or Indigenous peoples.

Beginning first with India, China, and Korea the grand movements of decolonization and anti-imperialist nationalism forced anthropologists to reconsider anthropological practice. The existence of two global superpowers defined largely by their differing economic systems provided a geo-political space in which newly independent nations in Asia, Africa, and Oceania, and older, former colonial nations in Latin America and the Caribbean were able to negotiate political and economic advantages by pitting the USSR and the U.S. against each other. Crumbling Euro-American empires made it more difficult for anthropologists to gain access to the so-called Third World on their own terms, as the human subjects of anthropological inquiry were becoming agents in their own right and were claiming control over both the right to speak for their peoples and the right to determine who had access to them (see Menzies 2001: 26-29).

In particular, the unprecedented global expansion of access to education and the opening of universities to the working classes both of imperialist countries and of the former colonial world provided intellectual platforms and scholarly careers to those who might, in a previous generation, have simply been the subjects of anthropological, sociological and ethno-historical studies. Anthropologists could no longer take for granted the fact that their field informants would never read or publicly comment on their work; they often had to share a stage with them and fight for a place in the field site. This was as true for studies here in North America, as it was for exotic places where "servants of empire" had once studied "men in grass skirts."

The expansive optimism of the day gave much room for progressive anthropologists to define themselves by and to participate in the political conflicts and struggles of the short 20th century, but the era of naïve fieldwork—if such a beast ever existed—was over. If one did gain access, the ethical content of one's work was open to question. In North America, for example, the participation of U.S. anthropologists in intelligence activities during the Vietnam war threatened to break apart the American Anthropological Association (see Vincent 1990: 310; Wolf and Jorgensen 1970), domestic disputes over "anthropology at home" touched off political firestorms over the culture of poverty in the United States (see Marcus in this volume; Leacock 1971) and in Mexico, the 1968 generation challenged anthropology's longstanding ties to the Mexican state (see Lomnitz 2001; Warman et al. 1970).

Perhaps most important among the many global political events that were coming together to democratize the academy, undermine old certainties and raise new questions about the relationship between ideas and action was the defeat of the U.S. army in Vietnam. By the late 1960s it was becoming clear to most of the world that the United States could not win its war in Vietnam. Several U.S. governments had done everything short of using nuclear weapons, yet the North Vietnamese government and the insurgency in the South were only getting stronger. The emergence of a defeatist wing of the Democratic Party and the officer's corps in the U.S. army during the late 1960s

and early 1970s (Burner & Marcus 1999), shook the intellectual foundations of world capitalist hegemony.[5]

In the anthropological profession the cracks in imperial hegemony yielded radical reappraisals of the discipline. Most notably, Dell Hymes (1972) *Reinventing Anthropology* (1972), Talal Asad (1973) *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*, Arturo Warman et al. (1970) *De eso que llaman antropología mexicana* and Kathleen Gough's (1968) important *Current Anthropology* article "New Proposals for Anthropologists" (Gough 2002) sought to redefine the field in such a way as to make anthropology relevant as an agent of social change. These critiques relied on the personal commitment of the anthropologist to radical change, exhorted the anthropologist to act as an agent of social change and warned of the dangers of doing anthropology too close to the influences of the state. It was these calls for a new and partisan anthropology that could contribute to broad and rapidly emerging progressive social change that drove the work of many of our mentors, and drew us and our colleagues of the generation of 2000 into the orbit of older scholars whom we regarded as part of the solution, not the problem.

While there was nothing as spectacular as the U.S. defeat on the battlefields of Southeast Asia during our coming of age, we did witness and participate in such events as the mass popular uprisings against U.S. cruise missiles in Europe during the early 1980s, the British coal miners' strike of 1984, Operation Solidarity in British Columbia in 1983,[6] the revolutions, popular uprisings and guerrilla struggles of Central America and Southern Africa, and the worldwide battle against privatization and the withdrawal of the welfare state that occurred in the wake of the global economic contraction, following the collapse of the Mexican peso in 1982. Many of us came from student politics and sought careers that could accommodate and help sustain our political commitments. For those of us who had drawn Marxist lessons from the many defeats of the 1980s, the scholars who were most exciting to us were those who were explicitly working within the Marxist tradition and were concerned with key questions about the political development of the working class.

In particular two figures stand out as the intellectual progenitors of Marxist anthropology in North America: Eric Wolf and Eleanor Leacock. Wolf and Leacock shared an intellectual commitment to putting sound scholarship in the service of emancipatory politics. Taken together we would argue that they represent the two most significant Marxist anthropologists of their generation. Wolf has, in concert with his students, placed the critical role played by social labour in the production of culture on the anthropological agenda (1982, 1999). Leacock, a committed activist who paid for her politics, has been central to linking issues of gender and race to the power play of social class in contemporary society. Any serious attempt to build a class-struggle anthropology must necessarily come to terms with the work of these two Marxist anthropologists.

Wolf stands as a founding figure of American Marxist anthropology for having forced the discipline to honestly engage the historical profession and for having published foundational Marxist, Marxian and crypto-Marxist anthropological analyses over six decades from 1952 until 2001 (Marcus 2003). However, it was his 1982 magnum opus, *Europe and the People without History* (1997), and the series of articles and speeches that preceded it on peasant revolution and the rise of capitalism (drawn together posthumously by his widow, Sydel Silverman, Wolf 2001), that drew aspiring Marxist anthropologists from around the world to study with him. Though Wolf was engaged in a variety of forms of political activism, including helping to start the anti-Vietnam war teach-in movement (Schneider 1999), risking his career over revelations that his colleagues had used field data to aid the U.S. war effort in Southeast Asia (Wolf and Jorgensen 1970), and supporting a variety of attempts to democratize the profession (Schneider 1999), his principle contribution was in making Marxist anthropology theoretically viable. Unashamedly Marxist in methodology, Eric Wolf's work in the last two decades of the short 20th century provided an intellectual guide book for scholars seeking their own Marxist explorations and explanations.

Wolf's emergence from the Marxist closet that the 1950s McCarthyite United States had imposed was a slow and painful process, the final results of which are just beginning to be debated (Barrett et al. 2001; Marcus 2003). However for Marxists of the generation of 2000, Eleanor Leacock provides an unambiguously activist influence, inspiration and intellectual genealogy. It was she who best defined the place of the Marxist scholar, engaged in political movements that informed her scholarly work and scholarly work that informed her political commitments. In an autobiographical reflection in the preface to her 1981 volume, *Myths of Male Dominance: Collected Articles on Women Cross-Culturally*, she reflects that "political activity" was "enormously important in helping me keep my feet on the ground both theoretically and personally." She went on to say in the same comment that it had "not let me forget, as academics tend to do (if they ever learned it in the first place), that oppression and exploitation by sex, race, and class are fundamental in the contemporary world, and that theories which ignore this reality are meaningless if not downright destructive" (Leacock 1981: 5).

Her groundbreaking work in the late 1940s and early 1950s on the ability of humans to exist in cooperative economic arrangements directly confronted the McCarthyite academy (Leacock 1954) at great personal expense to her career (Sutton 1993). In the 1960s Leacock contributed to the debate over poverty in the United States, taking up questions of education, training a generation of radical teachers in anthropology (Leacock 1969), and confronting what she believed was an attack on the black section of the American working class (Leacock 1971; also see Marcus' contribution to this volume). Finally, in the 1970s and 1980s Leacock published extensively on the relationship between imperialism and gender inequality (Etienne and Leacock 1980; Leacock 1986) and ultimately raised questions that remain fundamental starting points for contemporary discussions of the relationship between capitalism, patriarchy, gender inequality and women's liberation (Leacock 1963, 1972).

There have, no doubt, been many North American anthropologists who have been members of Marxist political parties, most prominently Oscar Lewis, who is reputed to have been a member of the Communist Party USA (see Marcus's article in this volume) and there were several important founding figures of North American Marxist anthropology from the generation that came of age during World War II, in particular, Sidney Mintz, Stanley Diamond, Elman Service, Paul Kirchoff, as well as Leslie White and Alexander Lesser (who were somewhat maverick figures from the first decades of the short 20th). However, it is our belief that to a certain degree virtually all the Marxist anthropologists of the generation of 1968, upon whose shoulders our efforts stand, are somewhere between Wolf the theoretician, fighting for Marxist methodologies in uncovering the strengths, weakness, and rhythms of the capitalist mode of production, and Leacock the activist, fighting for an explicitly proletarian political project that took up powerful counter-hegemonic names and strategies outside the academy.

If the generation that trained us had the best of parents in these two, we can probably thank what Eric Wolf might have described as the interstitial place that Marxism holds in the North American academy. Unlike European Marxists for whom the question of affiliation (or rejection of affiliation) to a powerful Moscow aligned communist party or a vast and bureaucratic socialist/social democratic party created remarkable opportunities to influence mass struggles, as well as powerful pressures towards intellectual adaptation to immediate political concerns, our professors grew up in something of a barren wasteland where there was little orthodoxy and much room for exploration. They benefited from the privileges

of backwardness and explored a variety of issues in heterodox, counterintuitive and often highly original ways.

Amongst this group are several scholars whose work is of particular relevance for our project of a class-struggle anthropology. While the individuals that we have highlighted below are a few among many, they are representative of those aspects of what has passed as Marxist anthropology that have the most to offer our contemporary project of a class-struggle anthropology. While any such grouping is—to a certain extent—an act of arbitrariness, we would point to three key themes at the core of the contribution of this group of anthropologists: gender; nation building and national liberation; and class struggle.

Karen Brodkin's theoretical work, like that of Leacock, helps us rethink the relationship between class, race, and gender in anthropological inquiry (Brodkin Sacks 1974, 1989). Her empirical work demonstrated the centrality of "gendered" and "raced" sectors of the working class that have typically been ignored by the trade union movement. Stephanie Coontz's contributions to post-Leacock discussions of the relationship between family, private property and the state have set the theoretical standard by which all work on Marxism and gender should be measured (Coontz 1992; Coontz and Henderson 1986). Nash, in addition to helping invent the notion of an anthropology of work and having put the class struggle of indigenous, Trotskyist tin miners on our collective radar (1979), has also made a contribution to a Marxist anthropology with her insightful study of impediments to class consciousness in the United States (1989).

Mexicans like Roger Bartra (19743, 1978, 1979, 1982), Luisa Paré (1977), Angel Palerm (1980), Hector Diaz Polanco (1977) and the Marxist pre-Hispanic archaeological school (Olivera 1978, Carrasco 1978; Nash 1980) contributed empirically and theoretically to our understanding of the rise of capitalism and the attendant problems of building nation states and working classes in the Third World, both through their scholarly work that has been translated into English and through their influence on Canadian and U.S. Marxists such as Wolf, Roseberry and Nash. However, this important influence is too often missed due to the lack of bilingualism among many North American academics. We still await an English translation of Arturo Warman and his colleagues' 1970 classic *De Eso Que Llaman Antropología Mexicana* (On What They Call Mexican Anthropology—our translation), which helped start the critical anthropology movement.

Richard Lee, Joseph Jorgenson and James A. McDonald, the first working with indigenous peoples in Africa, the latter two with indigenous peoples in North America,

have each contributed to a Marxist anthropology that is relevant for indigenous struggles of national liberation. Lee, most noted for his work in the Kalahari with the Dobe Ju/'hoansi (Leacock and Lee 1982) has played a critical role in advancing a Marxist anthropology of and for indigenous peoples. Jorgensoen's pioneering work linking dependency theory to Native American Studies, challenged conservative conceptualizations of indigenous peoples as existing outside of history (Jorgensen 1972; Jorgensen and Lee, 1974). McDonald, working with members of the Kitsumkalum First Nation (a northern BC Tsimshian community), has demonstrated through nearly three decades of collaboration that a Marxist influenced anthropology has clear relevance for today's First Nations' struggles (McDonald 1994, 2004).

Kathleen Gough, Gavin Smith, and Gerald Sider have made significant contributions to our understanding of class struggle and the ways in which these struggles manifest themselves in the "messiness" of real life. Gough's work draws attention to the role that we, as practitioners, must play in the wider world within which our research and writing occurs. Long before it was popular to call attention to the reflexive role of the anthropologist, Gough called upon the professional guild to align self-consciously with the oppressed and exploited against the power of the imperialist state. Smith and Sider, both working with rural peoples, have elaborated the ways and means through which issues of struggle link to the material conditions of the everyday and either deflect or lead to explicit class conflict.

In Canada, Gavin Smith and Richard Lee have almost single-handedly created a vibrant pool of Marxist influenced Canadian PhDs.[7] Smith's work, first with peasant struggles (1989) and, more recently, on the possibility of a politically engaged anthropology (1999) has provided us with the theoretical and empirical basis upon which a class-struggle anthropology can be built. While others have focussed on the defeats of the 1960s and 1970s, Smith constantly reminds us that words must be backed up through action (1991).

Kathleen Gough is perhaps most noted for her political involvement in the 1960s/1970s anti-war movement and her Trotskyist political activism, though we should not overlook her more "'traditional'" anthropological work on kinship and the family (see, Gough 1981; Price 2004: 307-326; Schneider and Gough 1961). At Simon Fraser University[6] Gough's name came to be identified with criticism of the McCarthyite tendencies of universities, displeased by what their more radical faculty might say or do. One of a group of seven faculty members who were fired, or denied tenure, or refused contract renewal in the early 1970s,

Gough's experience should remind us that the gossamer web of academic freedom can be easily torn when the powerful take issue with what we may dare to say.

Sider's work has explored the "messiness" of the social world and the play of human actors within and against the movement of history.[9] Drawing on fieldwork sites as disparate as outport Newfoundland (2003) and rural sharecroppers in North Carolina (2003), Sider points to the ways in which historical processes intersect with the particularities of local contexts (see also, Sider and Smith 1997). Sider has done much to raise foundational questions about the self-consciousness of the working class, through broadening and deepening the relationship between anthropological and historical knowledge.

If the early scholarly life of the generation of 1968 can be defined by the almost millenarian optimism of that year which filled the space between Fidel Castro's jeep rolling into Havana amidst cheering crowds in 1959 and supporters of the United States dropping off helicopters trying to escape Saigon in 1975, their later life seemed to be measured by defeats and disappointments. It is beyond the scope of this essay to describe the long retreat from the heady 1960s, or weigh in once again with a laundry list of the many communist parties of the world that went down in bloody defeat through attempts to co-exist with their capitalist enemies, or socialist parties that helped manage capitalism through a crisis. Suffice to say that on a global scale the political leadership that did exist and the mass consciousness that created it, was not prepared for the extent to which the capitalist class and its state(s) retained the ability and desire to use every resource up to and including atomic bombs to prevent anybody from getting in the way of the accumulation of capital.

A permanent employers' offensive began to shred the welfare state and ratchet up the rate of exploitation internationally in the late 1970s (Munck 2002)[10]. Such names as Thatcher, Reagan, and Pinochet were the stars of this new class struggle from above, but much of the world followed suit, with neo-liberal austerity often imposed by lesser figures, sometimes from the left or the communist milieu, such as Mitterand in France, Hawke/Keating in Australia, and most spectacularly Gorbachev and Deng in Russia and China respectively. Despite dramatic rises in overall social productivity and societal wealth, the job opportunities and funding possibilities for academics became much more restricted. Academe was, for the first time in human history, largely a working-class profession filled with wage earners primarily dependent on their salaries.[11] As was the case with the rest of the working class, expectations declined and struggles often became mute or simply defensive.[12]

Despite the defensive quality of this period there were many important attempts to pull together and generalize the lessons of Marxist anthropology (Bloch 1983; Fluehr-Lobban 1989; Godelier 1978; Hakken and Lessinger 1987; Medina 1982; Mintz, Godelier and Trigger 1981; Nelson and Grossberg 1988; Palerm 1980). While many of us studied these texts closely, the revolutionary optimism had gone almost before it started, and we found ourselves looking more towards discussions by the best of the generation of 1968 for the reasons for defeat. Many of them went back to Marxists such as Mariátegui, Gramsci, Lukacs, and Williams who had theorized the problems of transforming civil society (Crehan 2002; Lowy 19932). Others who had probably been less serious about their radicalism or perhaps more disappointed, took a turn towards Wittgenstein, retreating into a postmodern world in which the word trumped the act, thought preceded existence, and discourse defined the core of theorizing. One should note, for example, the work of Laclau and Moufee (1985) and the bitingly effective critique by Ellen Meiksins Wood (1986).[13] Declaring the past as positivist and the present as contingent, they came to define social science as an almost purely Weberian struggle over meaning, often separated from history and the material limitations of human life. For some, who followed the path of Foucault, this took the form of a dark but socially progressive Weberian struggle to deconstruct dominant discourses, building endless walls of sand to hold back the rough ocean of meaning (Butler, Laclau and Zizek 2000; Hardt and Negri 2000; Lyotard 1984).[14] For others who were less tied to the soul of the generation of 1968 but more tied to the structuralist methodology, the end of "modernism" with its progressivist narratives, mass production, and giant "fordist" factories belching smoke and exploiting thick-necked industrial workers, released them from the bonds of working-class ideologies (Gorz 19832; Murray 1990; Touraine 1988) and allowed them to ascend like Kafka's bucket rider "into the regions of the ice mountains...lost for ever" (Kafka 1988) to any tie to materiality and the project of the working class.

A particularly interesting example of this postmodern tendency to cut anthropological writing loose from the moorings of material life emerges in Rapport and Dawson's *Migrants of Identity* (1998). In his essay in this volume, Dawson discusses identity and community in a devastated post-Thatcherite coal-mining town in England, through contrasting images of the parochial and the cosmopolitan, the local and the international, homogeneity and diversity, and movement and sedentarism. Wandering in the social wreckage of the great 1984-85 coal-mining strike that brought all of Britain to the brink of civil war and sealed the fate of such towns Dawson de- and re-imagines the British working class in its former central heartland.

In his discussion of the poetics of death and belonging, Dawson reduces social class to a performative and symbolic set of identity markers that are almost entirely mental. At the end of the essay, Dawson leaves us with a picture of an aging people whose approaching death neatly mirrors and acts as a stand-in for the death of a coal-mining town: natural, inevitable and bittersweet; thus largely assuming the political, economic and ideological environment in which this poetics of death and belonging has emerged. For Dawson the most important characteristic in this town is its residents' agential abilities to imagine their own moving identities in the future and beyond the material confines of the coal town: "home bodies and migrant minds" (Dawson 1998: 220).

Where progressive British academics such as Rapport and Dawson were liberated from the constraints of "objectively defined" social class by floating off an empty bucket full of symbols, dreams and other working class chimera collected in the wreckage of defeat, scholars on the North American side of the Atlantic did not even have to return to the scene of defeats of the twentieth century in search of new and more motile identities. With little of the longstanding and deeply embedded political organization, social consciousness or "working class culture" of the British working class, the U.S. and Canadian working classes often simply vanished in anthropological writing into a seamless web of individual and particular meanings, "resistant" and not so resistant "identities," and the ever shifting deterritorialization (Appadurai 1991) and transience (Clifford 1992) generated from anonymous locales and de-historicized circumstances where the silence of the working class is less remarkable then at the site of battles between Thatcher's army and Scargill's miners. In an ironic twist, a whole generation of anthropologists answered Kathleen Gough's call for *new proposals* by a radical engagement with text, simultaneously subverting and adopting Gough's critique of anthropology as the "child of Western Imperialism" (1968: 403-407).

After the Fall

When the Berlin Wall came down in 1989 most historians agreed that it was the end of one period and the beginning of another. Some commentators called it globalization, others post-modernity, and U.S. president, George Bush Sr., described it as a "new world order." U.S. political scientist Francis Fukuyama (1989) attempted a more precise definition in his article "The End of History?" where he argued that mankind's evolution through monarchy, fas-

cism, communism, and other political ideologies was finally over, and Western liberal democracy would be "the final form of human government." He went on to argue; "economic calculation, the endless solving of technical problems, environmental concerns, and the satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands" would replace the conflicts over big ideas of the past.

For a time it seemed that Fukuyama was right. The Soviet Union peacefully dissolved, Palestinians and Israeli Jews signed a peace accord at Oslo, Irish Catholics and Protestants agreed to settle some of their differences, and South Africa achieved black majority rule under the pro-capitalist, African National Congress. There was still, as Fukuyama had predicted, ethnic conflict, civil war, and a few isolated dictatorships, but the ideological battles that had characterized the mid-20th century seemed to have faded from memory. Though violent, these conflicts appeared to be Fukuyama's "technical problems to be solved." In 1991, an international coalition of more than 20 countries, many of whom had been enemies only a few years earlier, joined forces to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation, as multinational peacekeeping forces fanned out across the globe.

The "economic calculation" described by Fukuyama set the tone for the 1990s. Economists sharing Fukuyama's triumphalism claimed that cyclical economic downturns were a thing of the past. Trillions of dollars flowed into the U.S. stock market and into "emerging" economies like Indonesia, Malaysia, South Korea, and for a time Argentina, where free trade policies ended protectionist tariffs and forced the sale of state sector industries, drawing new capital to modernize aging inefficient productive facilities and forcing the layoff of redundant workers. As new wealth was created, skyscrapers and modern metropolises grew in places like Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta while many inner cities "gentrified" in the advanced industrial world (Smith 1996). The information superhighway created a "new economy," producing "dotcom" millionaires, software billionaires, and millions of CEOs, MBAs and workplace "day-traders."

But most of the world's population missed the boom, experiencing it instead as displacement, poverty and blocked ambition. Despite the triumphalist optimism over "the death of communism" and a "peace dividend" driven economic boom in the 1990s, tens of millions of people continued to die each year of preventable or treatable diseases. Neo-liberalism and structural adjustment further institutionalized the war of everyone against all by raising rates of exploitation and pitting neighbour against neighbour for tightening resources. Many took the traditional path out of misery, leaving home and family to migrate to a wealthier region. Mexico lost millions of peo-ple to the United States, as the 1994 devaluation of the peso brought landless peasants, laid off workers and suddenly impoverished professionals to the United States (Camarota 2001; United States Congress 2004). In other parts of the world, millions of people joined ethno-nationally defined movements and militias that fought over whatever resources remained in the many desperately undercapitalized countries across the planet (Suny 1993).

As the battle between communism and capitalism—the two great universalist futures offered by modernity in the short twentieth—began to recede people across the globe increasingly looked to what Eric Wolf has identified as the defensive alternate path to modernity: counter-enlightenment localism (Wolf 1999). For some, like Bulgarians, who elected their British born former king as prime minister in 2001, neo-monarchism promised the return of an imagined national past (Vassilev 2001). Others, like anti-globalization protesters at the 1999 "Battle of Seattle," wanted to return to a time when products and communities were more locally or nationally based. Ethnic and nationalist revivals like the Mayan movement in Guatemala seemed immanently understandable after a three decade war of extermination by the army against Marxist oriented indigenous guerrilla fronts (Friedlander 2000; Hale 1997, 1999; Smith 1991). Many yearned for a world ordered by ancient religious principles that could be imagined locally, rather than in corporate headquarters in the United States, France, Germany, Japan or the U.K.

On the morning of September 11, 2001, a series of co-ordinated suicide attacks by 19 fundamentalist Muslims in hijacked jetliners killed almost three thousand people and destroyed one of the great symbols of universalist modernity and the future, the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. Suddenly Fukuyama's (1989) "centuries of boredom at the end of history" were being replaced by Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations" (Huntington 1993). Though the people who had destroyed the World Trade Center and the Pentagon emerged from movements previously supported by the United States government that had fought the Soviets in Afghanistan,[15] such terrifying symmetries were no longer important. Throughout the world Left and Right cast off much of the remaining language of Marxist internationalism, enlightenment humanism, and the rhetoric of compassion that often surrounded the welfare state and terms like "the West" and Islamic civilization became hegemonic in the absence of a broader belief that there might be a unification of humanity around "failed meta-narratives." Instead of endless centuries of boredom, dystopian predictions emerged for "war without end."

Now More than Ever

In face of this onslaught, many radical scholars have retreated from their ideals of a society based on justice not power and co-operation not competition, seeing little promise in the current period. Despite huge defeats of those who have claimed to represent these ideals, there is reason for hope. Now more than ever, it is possible and necessary for radical anthropologists to return to the source of utopian energies since the 19th century: the world working class. In the cleared field of post-Cold War political consciousness there are new opportunities to draw balance sheets on past mistakes, strengthen the explanatory power of our work and write and make history.

If there is anything that is to be learned from the postmodern turn it is that all anthropological practice is aligned. Alignment is, in this sense, merely an admission that the participants of a particular social formation cannot separate their production (i.e., ethnographies) from the social relations of which they are a part. As Raymond Williams pointed out, several years in advance of postmodernism, alignment "variously expresses, explicitly or implicitly, specifically selected experience from a point of view" (Williams 1977: 199). He went on to argue that to deny alignment is to grant implicit commitment to the dominant social order, which is also an alignment. Commitment, if it is to mean anything "is surely conscious, active, and open: a choice of position...commitment is a conscious alignment, or conscious change of alignment" (Williams 1977: 200, 204).

For Marxists the relationship between consciously aligned theory and action is the principle purpose of social science. What Wilson (1972) referred to as "acting and writing history" is similar to Marx's insistence, in "thesis 11" of his 1845 "Theses on Feuerbach" that "the philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it" (Marx 1969: 15). It is the goal of Marxist anthropologists to influence the development of society by contributing to the consciousness of the world proletariat, and contribute in some small way to its transformation from "a class in itself" to "a class for itself." This task has become both easier and more difficult.

It is obviously more difficult because of the crisis of legitimacy of Marxism and Marxian visions of how to order society. The world proletariat has probably not been so unable to constitute itself as "a class for itself" since the middle of the 19th century. However, it is easier because, as a class in itself, the world proletariat continues to grow in its size and importance. The existence of an objective working class in itself, defined by relationship to the means of production and bourgeois property relations, has never been more clearly manifest or more internationally ubiquitous. If there is any validity to the Kautskyian idea of globalization that has become popular with contemporary leftists, it is its recognition of the internationalization of the world working class and the greater penetration of capital and direct market relations to the most distant capillaries of the world system, some of which are experiencing such phenomena for the first time, but many of which are ending long hiatuses from the market.

Along with the late 20th-century expansion of marketisation, there has been a concurrent increase in interdependence for the world working class. With the threat of communism removed, and in the presence of the most massive devalorization of capital since World War II, the technological downsizing of key industries and commercial concerns throughout the world, has come the impoverishment of the most educated and skilled working classes in the world (particularly those of the former communist camp). With each year the fears and weaknesses of one national working class directly brings down the wages of another. Whether the method of reducing the social wage as a percentage of the social product is accomplished through national currency devaluations, wage reductions, decapitalization of infrastructure in the form of factory closings or NATO bombing sorties, job sharing, starving of poor or ethnically defined populations, lengthening of the work day/week, reduction in funding for education healthcare and other collective use values, or other economic "shell games," there seem to be few of the mid-20th-century complexities that previously bedevilled our analysis of the capitalist mode of production. In the new world order, the uneasy stalemate between capital and labour that was so often mediated by strong welfare or security states and the threat of communism is gone and everywhere there is directional, class-based action from the capitalists, where an injury to one is an injury to all, everyday and on a global scale.

But it is not just immiseration and vulnerability that makes the world working class look so much like an objectively definable social class. Despite the orgy of bourgeois pundits crowing about Marxism proven false and ex-Marxists declaring that strikes do not work in the information age, the post-Cold War era has been a time of greatly increased class conflict and working-class rebellion. There are daily protests against neo-liberalism throughout the globe and relatively frequent general strikes since the end of the short 20th century. In the last few years there have been remarkable working-class fight-backs. There have been general strikes and national industrial actions in not

so surprising places like Argentina, France, Nicaragua, Bolivia, South Africa, South Korea, Indonesia and Ecuador. There have been surprising actions like the successful International Brotherhood of Teamsters 1997 strike in the United States, the Puerto Rican general strike of 1998, and the many waves of *maquila* shutdowns in Northern Mexico.

Throughout the Americas there has been a level of labour disturbance and violent confrontation with the state over the social wage that in a previous era might have led to a currency crisis, capital flight and the use of napalm. This high level of social conflict has barely been noticed in world financial markets and has been treated with malignant neglect by capitalists and their governments throughout the hemisphere. An example of this is Argentine president Carlos Menem's response to the August 1997 general strike attempt and national march on Buenos Aires. Instead of revamping the death squads, he flippantly suggested that Buenos Aires could use the tourist dollars. Again, in 2001, when the Argentine economy collapsed and the country spiralled into anarchy, with burning, looting, and alternate currency systems springing up in barrios and regional towns, the United States refused to produce a genuine "bailout" and the Argentine army remained unfazed and largely uninterested in a process that removed presidents and destroyed all faith in the government. Even the recent election of left/populist presidents across "America's backyard" in Venezuela, Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina and possibly Mexico next year, seems to only raise a few eyebrows in Washington.

The burgeoning anti-free trade protest movements, united in their opposition to liberalized trade and the international organizations that negotiate, finance, and govern such trade such as Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the International Monetary Fund have been able to grab media attention. Multinational media corporations seem to revel in displaying images of youthful, energetic protestors gathered in carnivalesque displays of opposition to the economic agenda of the ruling classes. Yet, there has been a negligible response in world financial markets. As with the massive strikes and protests by working people, corporate and political leaders seem unconcerned and dismissive.

This is where the strange disjuncture between objective conditions and subjective consciousness comes in. There was a time when a few hundred peasants marching on a Latin American capital or a hundred thousand workers marching through Paris would cause a crisis of the state. However, in the post-Marxist world, the capitalist class is generally sure that no matter how disruptive a strike, social struggle, or act against the government, they can outlast the working class. After workers and students interrupted the meetings in Seattle the ruling class responded with a taller fence and a larger zone of exclusion in Quebec City.

This renewed confidence in bourgeois rule is probably not misplaced either. As one Paris member of a strike committee during the French working-class uprising of December 1995 was quoted as saying in a New York, *Village Voice* article, "we have got Paris, but where do we go from here?" With no viable alternative vision for social distribution besides the market and no other way of organizing production besides wage labour and capital, working-class struggles are defensive, even when they are victorious.

Materialism Unashamed and Unbound

As the world working class continues its uneven but inexorable growth, even such states as Israel and Pakistan, so deeply infused as they are with religious ideology and fratricidal nationalism, offer some cause for hope. They both have large and highly dissatisfied working classes with what we believe are objective material interests in turning on their leaders and recognizing commonality with their Palestinian and Indian class brothers and sisters. It certainly will not happen next Tuesday, but it could happen. This is where we not only accept the label of economic determinism thrown at and often denied by Marxists, but actually embrace it.

For two writers who have spent the preceding pages and the last two decades waging an ideological struggle for a Marxist academy, we clearly are not suggesting that everything can be reduced to money and immediate economic interest. We reject the reactionary behaviourist fantasy that as the misery of the working class rises, so too will class consciousness and class struggle, or similarly, that rising standards of living necessarily yield declining class politics. Clearly ideas count and the present level of misery in this world is quite high enough, even in our own relatively privileged sections of it. In our experience the weaker and poorer our class is, the less ability there is to project class power and the consciousness that necessarily underwrites it (Menzies 1997). No political force has ever won a battle or a war by increasing its weakness and misery.

Instead we are attempting to ground the future society in the Marxian idea that to be human is to engage in conscious social labour that produces wealth. This is the social undercarriage of human life and we identify the crucial politico-ideological battles in which humans engage

across the planet as, in some way, related to this underlying definition of being human. We remain convinced that if there are indeed clashes of civilizations on the horizon, it will only be because our social class is so deeply weakened by the 40 years of imperial unity in face of the post-World War II Soviet threat and the subsequent triumphalism of their defeat of USSR, that we are unable to create and disseminate our own counter-hegemonic ideological class projects in face of myriad large and small elites reorganizing us into rival armies and re-dividing the bounty of production.

The anti-fascist and anti-colonial "masses" that were often celebrated as the subject of history (as in Mao's statement that "the masses make history, the party leads") during the short 20th century have been replaced by the fanatic, nationalist logic of great protectors of our balkanized selves such as George Bush Jr., Jacques Chirac, Osama bin Laden, Ariel Sharon and Atal Bihari Vajpayee. We have been left with little choice but to look for better, rather than worse protective masters. In such an era the mass of humanity is trapped in terrifying, tessellated political categories such as "the Muslim street," "Schindler's Jews," "Old Europe," and, of course, the pre-New World Order standards "nation," "race" "ethnicity," civilization and "the West."[16]

In rejecting such ideological divisions in the world working class and looking to the deeper levels where we are united, we recognize the importance of the enlightenment and French revolutionary dream of a secular universal "humanity," but stand at a critical distance from this ideology of expanding capitalism. As with the feudal/tributary mode of production (Amin 1980) which spread for thousands of years, eventually bringing most of the old world into its orbit, the capitalist mode of production has found its way to every spot on the planet. While productive forces continue to improve and fixed capital continues to grow, there is little geo-demographic room left for expansion. In two inter-imperialist wars and numerous anti-colonial revolutions the world has seen that the only way for newcomers to get into the imperial club is murder, and usually on a grand and ghoulish scale. Perhaps the last geo-demographic frontier for imperial capitalism is the "limitless markets" of mainland China, where it is easy to imagine a third inter-imperialist war starting over the spoils of capitalist restoration.

In such a world of uneven development, where the Anglo-American capital bloc resolves its governance problems "top down" from air planes, European and Japanese national capital blocs quietly rearm and continue with their political economic war of position, and all manner of blocked elites and their political constituencies across the

Third World froth with murderous rage, we believe that there are no Oskar Schindlers in the White House, in Downing Street, or anywhere else, who will genuinely protect an abstract "humanity" through what Hitler called "the night and fog of war." We see this as an age of war, consolidation, and crisis for the world capitalist system. Following Wolf who looked at three modes of production in crisis and observed that "at this millennial transition, the human capacity to envision imaginary worlds seems to be shifting into high gear" (Wolf 1999: 291), we expect the coming period to be one that is continually unsettled by purveyors of myriad "imaginary worlds" in both the heartlands of imperialism and the resistant provinces of the former colonial world.

Though we recognize the best of intentions in many, if not most, humans, such voluntary appeals to moral suasion as compassion, humanity, liberty, brotherhood and equality only go so far in face of a mode of organizing social labour and a logic of production and ownership that is built on the war of everyone against all in a race to accumulate capital. If we are ever able to fulfill the purpose of social science and consciously build a better "imaginary" world, it should be built upon the solid foundation of social class. We claim material interest and the struggle against economic, political, and "species being" alienation, based on the human being as conscious social labourer and political animal, as the only "realistic" future.

It may not seem likely in the present, but we are sure that it is necessary in the future, otherwise, we have the world to lose. Though many of the ideological concerns and conflicts have changed since the short 20th began, we stand on the same economic determinism that led Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, Vladimir Lenin, James Connolly, John Maclean, and Kate Richards O'Hare to reject the first inter-imperialist war as an elite attempt to resolve who would own the social labour of the world capitalist system. People, who are so intimately, and more importantly, inherently interconnected in their interests as the world working class, must find ideologies that enable them to fight for themselves, rather than against themselves.[17]

When a pharmaceutical factory in Iraq or the Sudan or an automobile factory in Serbia is destroyed from above, it instantly lowers the price of labour, as well as the productive capacity and the overall class power of a national working class, diminishing the power of the entire world working class by just a little. If this logic suggests economic determinism, then so be it. Many of us of the generation of 2000 watched in horror throughout the 1970s and 1980s as the national trade unions of the United States and Canada aided the U.S. government in purging

so called "communist sympathizers" from the Latin American union movement. With each dead, disappeared or marginalized radical unionist the power of labour dropped just a little. When the tipping point finally came and quantity moved to quality, we found ourselves in a new world order, where workers of the South had lost so many of the gains they made in the short 20th century that the workers of the North came under threat. When the North American Free Trade Agreement finally appeared in 1994 the battle was already lost. North American workers had no space in which to negotiate, little sense of solidarity, and stood against the agreement with the ideologies of their misleaders and masters. Canadians protested losing their jobs and social system to low-wage U.S. workers who were portrayed as lacking civil culture or a healthy sense of entitlement. In the United States, the fight against NAFTA involved a similar rhetoric directed at Mexicans and compounded by traditional forms of Anglo-racism. Finally, in Mexico, which did have the lowest average labour costs in North America, Mexican trade unionists demonstrated against jobs heading north to be "stolen" by what were portrayed as ignorant peasants rushing to U.S. owned *maquiladoras* in northern Mexico and compliant U.S. workers in the Southern United States, who lacked the class-conscious traditions of the Mexican industrial union sector that had won some of the highest industrial wages in the Third World during the short 20th century. In the days before agency became an issue of discourse, this was sometimes referred to as false consciousness. In face of such a tessellated working class, we pose the basic Marxist idea that, regardless of the small or large size of a salary, an injury to one wage earner is an injury to all.

Making Our Own Future

If there is one crucial fact of the post-Marxist academy it is the lack of predetermined historical outcomes. The evolutionist notion that history is an inexorable meta-narrative, unfolding from here to there, has been laid to rest in a climate of global millennial pessimism and scaled back political expectations. This is one of the insights that post-modernists recognized even before the fall of the Berlin Wall: those all encompassing structuralist theories that explained everything do not really work and tell us very little that would be useful for writing and acting history. It is time to bring back history, the soul of Marxism for theory and praxis.

We would argue that the USSR was not defeated by the inevitable superiority of a market economy, the lack of incentives under communism, or the Hegelian unfolding of the spirit, but rather by a group of historical actors who were more adept at creating and managing social consciousness, exerting political will and leading vast social forces. There was no inevitable capitalist victory, nor a teleological workers' utopia waiting over the horizon. There was history made by real humans in groups, exerting their wills under inherited historical circumstances, in the name of their interests or perceived interests.

For Marxists this lesson in the role of consciousness in history should force us to abandon the evolutionism, functionalism, positivism and unconscious behaviourist economic determinism that came to call itself Marxism for most of the short 20th century. For many years, Marxist method has been diminished by the positivist evolutionism deriving from the influence of the two main Marxist leadership tendencies in 20th-century history.

The first of these Marxisms was tied to one of any number of Workers' States (Albania, Yugoslavia, Russia, China, etc ...) or progressive experiments in national liberation. In its classic form this Marxism substitutes a chosen socialist or "anti-imperialist" Jerusalem for the interests of the world proletariat and posits an evolutionary track to communism based on that state's outstripping capitalism in some combination of industrial production and progressive development as proven by life expectancy, women's participation in the labour force, athletic prowess, or the number of doctors and teachers per person. This might be described as "the build a better tractor road to socialism." In this road the forces of production reduce the working class to techno-environmental spectators, waiting for the efficiency of socialism to usher in the workers' utopia. Any betrayal of the world working class is justified as long as it can be described as "providing space" for the chosen state and its people to evolve.

In anthropology this tendency has given us the muscular materialism of Leslie White and the scientific positivism of Marvin Harris, and in broader academic writing, structuralist theories such as "dependency" (Frank 1966; Rodney 1981; Wallerstein 1974), communist party "stage theory" typologies (Toledano 1944; see Lowy 1992 or Vitale 1972 for a critical discussion), "Kondratieff cycles" and "the long wave" (Kleinknecht, Mandel, and Wallerstein 1992; Kondratieff 1984; Shaikh 1992; Webber and Rigby 2001) and philosophical structuralism (Althusser 1977; Poulantzas 1974) that suggest the possibility of an autochthonous road to Third World tractor heaven. The substitution of structure for politics and the extreme dependency on objectivist political economy that are connected to these grand portraits of structures of accumulation often missed exactly the question that Marxist academics should have been asking; who is organizing whom for what and how can scholarship be connected to the polit-

ical life that "writes and acts history"? It is this underlying evolutionary approach that has enabled post-structuralists, who no longer see tractors and factories, to believe that socialism has arrived through the back door in the form of post-Fordist, post-working-class flexible specialization, and post-class mercantile driven consumerist utopias (Gorz 1982; LaClau and Mouffe 1985; Murray 1990; Touraine 1988) or pose darker Durkheimian dystopias that present us with network societies and information feudalism (Castells 1996; Drahos and Braithwaite 2003).[18]

The second main tendency has generally been connected to social democracy and workers' parties. This tendency posed evolution as what E.P. Thompson called *process*. In this process there is a gradual evolution from capitalism to socialism based on increasing rationality and self- awareness of the working class. Thompson, in his introduction to *The Making of The English Working Class* actually went as far as to define the existence of the working class in terms of consciousness. Instead of building more tractors these Marxists tried to smooth the conflicts between capitalists and workers, with the goal of avoiding a direct confrontation. They feared that such a clash would result in a dramatic defeat, giving working-class rule a bad name and causing a devolution in socialist consciousness.

This tendency did not bleach out the political agency of the working class quite as much as the tractors to communism variety. However, the gradualist/culturist road to socialist consciousness implied that the world would one day wake up realizing that when it went to bed it was already socialist. In this case consciousness makes socialism grow in the fields as the tractors were expected to have in Stalin's USSR or "Great Leap Forward" China. It was the job of such social democrats to nurture this delicate consciousness, even when it has meant prioritizing the electoral fortunes of the World War I era German SPD over the lives of millions of French and English workers by voting war credits or prioritizing support for the Unidad Popular electoral coalition in Chile over sharpening political contradictions and arming the workers who would eventually die in the *cordones industriales* while fighting General Augusto Pinochet's national army. In the current period, the absence of a working-class socialist consciousness releases those who follow this approach from their now thankless task and allows for the rise of "new labour" and the postmodern of the particular. In a phenomenological world, where theory can only emerge from the grounded aspects of everyday life, consciousness is what you make of it and how you use it.

What these two tendencies shared was a faith in evolution and an inability to envision creating fractures and

historical disjunctures. As with the less patient and more subjectivist brand of Marxism that found its expression in Guevarist adventures in the jungles of the Third World, these two tendencies were fundamentally uninterested in the conscious political organization of the vanguard of the working class behind a proletarian political project that could imagine a break with the bourgeois present. This may be one of the reasons that capitalism is now triumphant: the conscious vanguard of the capitalist class has not believed in political evolutionism since World War I, which began the short 20th century. They were not counting on the spirit of history to save them from communism. They and their intellectual advocates acted and wrote history, by organizing to win, as if their lives depended on it. It is only now, after the collapse of the East Bloc that some of their more liberal intellectual spokesmen like Francis Fukuyama could timidly return to the evolutionist paradigm and hesitantly suggest a Hegelian "I told you so."

As Marx said in *Das Kapital* "what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality"(Marx 1954: 174). This was his way of identifying the importance of consciousness in all projects involving human labour. This also points to the relationship between scholarship and action. In this cleared field, where social democrats are embracing neo-liberalism and a global war on terror, guerrillas are coming down from the mountains to join their old enemies in managing the bourgeois state and ex-communist party bosses in the former East Bloc are creating "red/brown alliances" and helping to impose IMF austerity we can discard the notion that humans are techno-environmental bees building their atomic reactors while waiting for communism and the mind-over-matter textual fantasies of Thompsonian gradualists, "Weberian Gramscian Marxists" (Crehan 2002), and what Ellen Meiksins Wood disparagingly calls the "new true socialists" of postmodernism (Wood 1986). As Marxists, scholars, and sentient humans we are bad architects with free will, taking various historical projects from conception to reality. The future is only what we make of it.

Marxism: If It Doesn't Say It, It Isn't

What then can we do to sharpen our analysis and write and act history as Marxist architects in a post-Marxist academy? We can start by keeping our eyes on the new international working class and its new workers' vanguard that is inevitably emerging in regions with young and militant working classes. The current climate of race to the bottom global production seems to allow less and

less room by the year for the creation and financial support of a large layer of trade union social democratic bureaucrats that have traditionally managed industrial working classes for their bosses. Where they do exist, they often ignore the most militant and strategically important areas of struggle that may not even be directly tied to production sites. This presents exciting opportunities for the development of new forms of struggle, new organs of political mobilization, and new anti-capitalist alliances.

We can also look to older sections of the working class, where hatred of the capitalist class and the dream of a co-operative, socialist society remain strong. It is easy to forget, in New World Order North America, that much of the world still remains loyal to the dream of a co-operative and equal society. In South Africa, for instance, the Communist Party, the African National Congress, COSATU and other pro-capitalist working-class leaderships are steadily losing legitimacy and relying on brute force to guarantee the accumulation of capital. In Korea, which remains a Cold War battlefield, it is often said that the South Korean government would not last an hour without U.S. soldiers, despite 15 years of economic catastrophe and a profoundly anti-democratic government in North Korea. Regardless of the veracity of this rhetorical claim, it reflects a widely held hatred for the U.S. imperial project and a counter-position of a variety of socialist, proletarian, and nationalist visions that are strong in the communities, worksites and political organizations on the Korean peninsula.

In Brazil, the recent election of Workers' Party leader and former industrial worker Luis Ignacio da Silva "Lula," suggests a conscious working-class militancy that is threatening enough to have forced the Brazilian capitalist class to use a working-class party to manage austerity. Despite some recent successes by Lula in imposing austerity on the Brazilian working class, his election indicates important class tensions in Brazil that seem to have spread to Uruguay in the national electoral victory of the *Frente Amplia in 2004*. In China where a pro-capitalist Communist Party apparatus attempts to foist capitalism and neo-liberalism on a population schooled in various forms of official, state-sanctioned Marxism, the tensions are particularly acute. Massive industrial strikes break out everyday, while many call for the return of the "iron rice bowl" and everywhere pictures of Mao ZeDong, the founder of the communist state, have become good luck symbols and rallying banners.[19]

In "Old Europe," the first homeland of the labour lieutenants of capital, in the form of early twentieth century social democratic parties that have managed capi-

talism during its most difficult moments and communist parties that slavishly followed Moscow's on-again, off-again attempts to make friends with the capitalist class, the working class is probably still better organized and more socially conscious than anywhere else in the world. From French industrial workers who retain a strong understanding of the value of blocking highways, shutting down airports, and burning overturned cars in the streets of Paris to Italian white collar civil servants, who go into the streets in defence of the social rights of the entire working class, to Scandinavia where the gender divisions of class society are probably most attenuated, the wealthy and well-organized European working class has many potentially positive features.

It is here in the realm of connecting subjective ideas to objective conditions that Marxist anthropologists can help to write and act history. With bourgeois ideology triumphant, it is necessary for those of us who continue to imagine working-class power to organize ourselves both as workers and as anthropologists. If we refuse to submit to the false god of passivity and look at the way that human history is made, we will see that there is still an important role for those of us who *are* willing to swim against the current. Both the physical power and the consciousness of the world working class are more important than ever.

As anthropologists, whom Gramsci might have called traditional intellectuals, we have only the tiniest connection to the physical power of the working class. We cannot shut down a city the way transit workers can. We cannot stop a war the way soldiers, dockworkers, and weapons factory workers can, but even the most marginal, sessional instructors amongst our cohort has a public platform for exerting some small influence on the consciousness of the world working class. In our goal of a class-struggle anthropology we must heed Jean Paul Sartre's challenge that: "commitment is an act, not a word."[20]

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Notes

1   For three key review articles see O'Laughlin 1975, Roseberry 1988, 1997. One may also wish to consult Wessman's Anthropology and Marxism (1981) or Bloch's more European focussed Marxism and Anthropology (1983). All of these reviews outline aspects of the relationship between Marxism and anthropology and, with the possible exception of O'Laughlin, tend to focus on the intellectual as opposed to the activist elements of the relationship. The online journal, New Proposals: Marxism and Anthropology (www.new proposals.ca, see also www.npweblog.ca) is a new project that aims to provide a forum for a focus on the more activist element of the relationship between Marxism and anthropology.

2   We are critical of the fashion now popular in the "University of Excellence" that seeks novelty and innovation for its own sake. Excellence has come to be synonymous with innovation and novelty. Reworking or pulling forward old ideas to a new generation is not as appreciated as is riding the euphonious cutting edge of innovation (see: Readings 1996).

3   As Michael Blim has so clearly and passionately demonstrated, even in the face of expanding economic and social capacity, the gap between rich and poor is wider than at nearly any previous point in human history (2005: 1-11). And, that group of rich are themselves becoming fewer and fewer relative to the growing masses (Blim 2005).

4   We use this term as a provisional replacement for the term "Cold War" which makes a number of assumptions that we explicitly reject: (1) that there was no military engagement and no shooting between the USSR and the imperialist countries; (2) that the nuclear Mexican standoff that characterised the post Korean War period can stand for the entire conflict over political-economic systems during the twentieth century; (3) that prior to the Korean War, when the imperialist countries were not united around a politics of global anti-communism the ideological and political challenges to the world working class were significantly different.

5   See Burner and Marcus (1999). See also, the "it is difficult to ask a man to be the last to die" speech by recent Democratic Presidential candidate, John Kerry, before the U.S. Congress in 1971. Kerry was among a large contingent of mainstream Democrats in the U.S. who were advancing a defeatist position. Kerry was also involved with the Detroit war crimes inquest organized by anti-war veterans. He was not alone in his defeat at any cost position. There was a petition from the West Point officers' corps that stated a quick defeat in Vietnam would stop the U.S. army from a crisis of morale that could have serious implications for Western Europe. Navy ships were reporting near mutinies from crews who voted not to proceed into battle, and the "fragging," or killing of officers in the battlefield by enlisted soldiers, was increasing the difficulty of actually prosecuting the war on the ground in Vietnam. By the early 1970s more than 60% of Americans were opposed to continued U.S. presence in Vietnam (see, Kurlansky 2004; Kerry et al. 1971; Joseph 1981; www.moderntribute.com or www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1972VVAW.html).

6   Operation Solidarity was a popular coalition of labour and community groups organized in opposition to one of the early neo-liberal attacks on the welfare state in North America (see Palmer, 1987). Though the agenda had been developed and refined in the 1970s, the new language of fiscal restraint, corporate downsizing, and deficit reduction caught like wildfire in the 1980s (for its impact on the managerial classes, see Newman, 1988).

7   The edited collection by Lem and Leach (2002) draws extensively upon the circle of Canadian anthropologists from the Political Economy and Production of Culture working group discussed in this issue's introduction. See Marcus (1996) for an equivalent collection of papers produced by CUNY trained anthropologists.

8   Menzies was an undergraduate student at SFU in the early/mid 1980s where the memory of Gough was still strong. The bitter fights of the late 1960s and 1970s, which had pitted administrators and conservative academics against radical faculty and students, reverberated long after the details of the fights had been forgotten.

9   As students of Gerald Sider, we have been influenced not only by him, but also by many of his other students. In particular Dombrowski (2001), Bornstein (2002), Carbonella (1996), and Striffler (2002) are all pieces which have helped us to define our own writing and political vision. Sharryn Kasmir and Kathryn McCaffrey, though not students of Sider, have produced works on nationalism, co-operative production and working-class consciousness (Kasmir 1996) and anti-militaristic social movements (McCaffrey 2002) that have been at least as important to our discussions as has been the coterie of students who completed their PhDs with Sider.

10 The unilateral abrogation of the Bretton Woods agreement by the U.S. can be said to mark the beginning of a concerted employers' attack against the meagre gains made by workers during the post-World War II upturn. The political turns that followed and, in more conventional accounts, are said

to mark the dismantling of the welfare state can be dated to the election of politicians such as Margaret Thatcher in the UK (1978), Ronald Reagan in the U.S. (1980), and a host of likeminded politicians across the Western Democracies. The underlying economic factors were, however, present far earlier than the electoral victories of explicitly neo-conservative/neo-liberal politicians. As Tony Cliff methodically documents in his 1970s book, *The Employers' Offensive*, European and North America employers—allied with their respective state governments—were pushing hard to limit the gains the working class had managed to make in the workplace. To do this required combining new attempts to undermine what power workers may have in their workplace through new "productivity" contracts (in which workers were "rewarded" for increases in "productivity") with increasing controls applied to labour by the state. Even in regimes with nominally left of centre governments, such as the UK, the state was engaged in realigning labour laws to the benefit of employers (Elliott and Atkinson 1999[1998]).

11   Thomas Patterson (2001) documents how the growth of a contingent workforce—primarily female—across North American universities beginning in the 1970s played a significant role in undermining the economic security of the majority of practicing anthropologists. The development of a two-tiered workforce became commonplace in North American, unionized worksites. The core ingredient of the two-tiered contract was a first tier of original workers who maintained their wages and benefits and a second tier typically of part-time workers for whom the union negotiated a concessionary agreement usually at significantly lower wages and benefits. Union leaders saw such arrangements as ways to protect the economic conditions of those already working on the shop floor. By the 1980s this pattern of concessionary contracts was firmly entrenched.

12   Alex Callinicos reminds us, however, that the impact of the long downturn upon academic workers was delayed relative to its devastating impact upon the industrial working class. Since the mid 1970s workers' struggles have been defensive and the provisions of the welfare state have come under attack. Yet, the experience of intellectuals who had been radicalized during the 1960s and early 1970s was different from much of the workforce. As the economy contracted the 1960s radicals "began to enter middle age. Usually they did so with all hope of socialist revolution gone—indeed, often having ceased to believe in the desirability of any such revolution. Most of them had...come to occupy some sort of professional, managerial or administrative position, to have become members of the new middle class, at a time when the over-comsumptionist dynamic of Western capitalism offered this class rising living standards (a benefit often denied the rest of the workforce: hourly wages in the U.S. fell by 8.7% between 1973 and 1986)" (Callinicos 1989:168). This is not to suggest that contemporary anthropology is simply the product of radical intellectual disillusionment and co-optation. It is, however, to suggest that the social context within which people live does indeed shape how they come to see the world around them.

13   It is, perhaps, misleading to suggest that the post-modernist turn to text and away from materiality is simply the by-product of revolutionary disillusionment. Certainly, if

one were to follow the argument of A. Ahmad (1992), B. Palmer (1990), or A. Callinicos (1989), the reasons are more likely to be found in these scholars' lack of revolutionary commitment and understanding in the first place. As Ahmad points out the most radical of the generation of '68 didn't necessarily make it through the hoops and trials of graduate school or tenure review. While the more radical activists organized, wrote pamphlets, and sold revolutionary newspapers on the street corner, their more reserved peers wrote the academic pieces that granted them entry into the halls of the academy. Furthermore, as Callinicos carefully details, the material conditions did in fact change over the course of the 1970s and 1980s (1989). Following upon the heals of the collapse of the Bretton Woods agreement real wages fell for the traditional working class and workers' struggles became defensive. This change in the tone of working-class struggle released the pressure from erstwhile radical academics so that they could focus on more reflective work (see, for example Rabinow 1977). Despite a growing contingent labour force within the academy those ensconced in positions of power and privilege did not feel the bite of cutbacks or the collapse of their real wages until the 1980s (Callinicos 1989). Disappointment, lack of willpower, and changing material conditions all combined to give us a generation of dilettantes more interested in playing with text than in resolving or intervening in the crises experienced by the rest of the working class.

14   Some may well question our groupings, in particular that of Negri with Lyotard and other post-modernists. While we respect the progressivist intentions of Negri, neither of us see anything Marxist in Hardt and Negri's attempt to rewrite capital through the lens of Foucauldian reifications. From our reading Hardt and Negri have explicitly rejected social class as the central dynamic of analyzing capitalism and as the motor force of progressive change.

15   These movements and individuals appear to have transformed themselves following the U.S. led invasion of Iraq in 1991 and the very public establishment of U.S. army bases in Saudi Arabia. However, the very fact that the U.S. started these groups on their way points to the Machiavellian nature of Imperialist politics; as long as they were useful in fighting the Soviet Union people like Osama Bin Laden were granted carte blanche to prosecute a proxy war on behalf of the U.S. After that one supposes the U.S. thought they would simply fade away....

16   There is clearly a similar dynamic at work in the current retreat from political women's liberation. The contemporary logic of gender politics seems to be heavily personalized, contained within the family, family based social policy, and family based political discourse. Privatized childrearing has returned to being a given and the abolition, or radical rearranging of the two principle gender roles of the epoch of class society, men and women, seems to be, at best, a subterranean footnote (in this case an endnote). The gender divisions within the world working class are, of course, hugely significant though generally pitched in terms of a far more intimate and personal form of paternalism than the aforementioned ones, which currently threaten the very basis of human existence with their projects.

17 Here we would point to the renewal movement within U.S. trade unions as one path. The renewal movement seeks to expand internal democratic practice while simultaneously breaking down the walls of economic, bureaucratic business unionism. This is being accomplished through grassroots, social justice unionism. We would also point to the left tradition of shop-floor unionism that challenges the hold on unions by bureaucrats, many of whom have long been separated from the real material conditions of the shop floor (McNally 1980).

18 This is not to suggest that structural Marxists have disappeared entirely. Writers such as Giovanni Arrighi, Anwar Sheikh, and Michael Webber continue to look at grand cycles, Kondratieff waves and other large movements in the development of the mode of production.

19 The continuing power of an Asian populist/communist vision connected to Mao ZeDong in Asia is particularly apparent in Nepal and what is currently referred to as the "Naxalite region" of India, where the intersection of caste, class and geo-politics has yielded a longstanding civil war. In addition to this, there are a wide variety of legal and semi-legal communist parties spread across India and Nepal that have recently seen increasing popularity.

20 Quoted in Gerassi, 1971.

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