


EDITORIAL PERSPECTIVES

SCIENCE & SOCIETY AT 75

Well, dear readers, we have — amazingly, from any number of standpoints — arrived at one of those rare milestones in our history. We are rounding out the 75th year of publication of this journal, which began its life in the Fall of 1936. We repeat the claim: *Science & Society* is the longest continually published journal of Marxist scholarship in the world, in any language.

At the half-century mark 25 years ago, our then long-time editor (and my mentor) David Goldway wrote a retrospective article (“Fifty Years of *Science & Society*,” *S&S*, Vol. L, No. 3, Fall 1986), which tells the story of the journal’s founding, and of its evolution through the first five decades. (I will be glad to send an electronic version to anyone requesting one.) In what follows, I will not try to extend Goldway’s account for the 25 years that have elapsed since then, at least not in the same degree of detail. What follows are a few observations that might serve as the basis for a fuller assessment, to be carried out later, and perhaps by others.

Science & Society continues to be run by an Editorial Board — and its working subset, the Manuscript Collective — that is an evolving group of Marxists of various persuasions and affiliations, with no systematic, let alone official, ties to any other organization, political or academic. The “dark matter” that keeps this universe from centrifugal dissipation is a shared affirmation: the Marxist project has deeper roots than any particular programmatic position or interpretation. Marxist theoretical and empirical practice is more than the sum of the various schools and tendencies that arise from time to time and enrich it, and we always look ahead from each point in time to where the various streams and currents merge into a wider and deeper river.

Our third quarter century coincided with accelerating changes in the world correlation of class forces, especially with the disappearance of the Soviet Union and its Eastern European allied states, and with the onslaught of neoliberal expansion, polarization, conquest, deregulation, and dismantling of hard-won protections and social achievements for working people, in most parts of the world. While Marxism has taken refuge in the academy, it has also experienced further sophistication as it draws upon developments

in all of the intellectual disciplines for its own growth path. In 1986, David Goldway described our steadying, recuperative response to the impacts of: Keynesian theory and mathematical formalism in economics; Freudian and neo-Freudian perspectives in psychology; existentialism in philosophy; the Analytic or rational-choice perspective, also based in philosophy (along with economics); feminist theory; and so on. He did not anticipate anything quite as overwhelming as the linguistic turn in literary and cultural studies, which gave voice to something that has been increasingly present in the later development of S&S: transition away from the serene confidence of the founding generation, rooted as that generation was in the active presence of working-class movements, power, culture, and consciousness. Our forebears were like mice that roared: they confidently turned the spotlight of Marxist criticism onto the leading representatives of capitalist power and ideology; they analyzed the ruling classes and provided ammunition for the subaltern forces whose resistance and (eventually) counteroffensive were seen as part of the law of motion of the whole. There was no need to speculate about *how* “science” was related to “society”; how or whether there could be a science of society (this connection is, I think, the origin of the journal’s name); how science could be turned to the task of social transformation. All of this was something that we would simply do, by, well, doing it. Most of all, the idea that suspicion should be directed at science itself, or that one should question the basic commitment to the working class as the ultimate agent of progress, would never have occurred to the mid-20th-century Marxists who brought S&S to the point of entry into our neoliberal era of retrenchment and reconsideration.

By contrast, the generation of editors (and authors and readers) who came of age in the 1960s (those of us who are now the “elders”!), had — inevitably, given the political and intellectual environment that we faced — to turn the spotlight inward. We tend to look *at* Marxism, rather than *using* Marxism to look at (let alone change!) the world. I am not deploring this; it is a necessary stage associated with our — hopefully temporary — isolation within the academy. But it is definitely a reality. Case in point: the identifying slogans of some of our sister journals, with whom we now share this project: *Rethinking Marxism* (not, be it noted, “Rethinking *Capitalism*”); *Historical Materialism: Research in Critical Marxist Theory* (what Marxist theory is *not* “critical”? Does “research in” mean “research into” or “research using”?).

This brings to light a change in our own self-designation, on the journal’s masthead. When I joined the editorial group, along with about five other younger editors, in the 1970s, our subhead designation was: “An Independent Journal of Marxism.” The matter of “independence” from other political forces, in particular from the Communist Party USA, was of concern in the early decades, not so much because of any pressure from the CPUSA

itself — I can attest to the absence of anything of the kind — but because of the perception imposed within wider circles. Any journal that resisted the fracturing impacts of the various intellectual tendencies, that challenged the dominant Cold War assumptions, and that insisted on a respectful and recuperative attitude toward all sites of Marxist inquiry, “east” and “west,” would be victimized by the anticommunist ideological dogma: if it is Marxist, then it has to be “foreign,” and therefore under the control of an alien power. My generation of editors, in fact, needed instruction concerning what it had been like to bring *Science & Society* through the “time of the toad,” the decade of the 1950s. There had been issues of the journal that were written entirely by the editors, since no one else dared to be associated with it, and many writers wrote under pseudonyms.

Still, with the approaching turn of the millennium, many of us were asking, “independent” of what? Like the “critical” label, “independent” has an implied other: who is being characterized as “uncritical,” or “dependent”? The concept increasingly seemed defensive and anachronistic, and finally, in Vol. 63, No. 2, Summer 1999, the masthead line was changed to: “A Journal of Marxist Thought and Analysis.”

Well, then, what has our “journal of Marxist thought and analysis” been doing for the last 25 years? Only a prolonged sojourn in the archives will provide a full answer to that question!¹ But one way to get a sense of the magnificent variety and depth of coverage can be gleaned from a list of the Special Issues that were produced during that period, 1987–2010. The following list gives the title of the issue, followed by the name(s) of the Guest Editor(s):

- “Marxist Perspectives on Ireland” — Ellen Hazelkorn (53:2, Summer 1989)
- “The French Revolution and Marxism” — Bernard H. Moss (54:3, Fall 1990)
- “Socialism: Alternative Visions and Models” (56:1, Spring 1992)
- “Lenin: Evaluation, Critique, Renewal” — David Laibman (59:3, Fall 1995)
- “Marxism and Ecology” — David Schwartzman (60:3, Fall 1996)
- “Communism in Britain and the British Empire” — Kevin Morgan (61:1, Spring 1997)
- “Friedrich Engels: A Critical Centenary Appreciation” — Joost Kircz and Michael Löwy (62:1, Spring 1998)
- “Dialectics: The New Frontier” — Bertell Ollman and Tony Smith (62:3, Fall 1998)
- “Color, Culture and Gender in the 1960s” — Paul Mishler and Alan Wald (65:1, Spring 2001)
- “Building Socialism Theoretically: Alternatives to Capitalism and the Invisible Hand” — Pat Devine (66:1, Spring 2002)

1 Readers should be aware that *Science & Society* is now available on the scholarly journals archive, JSTOR. All issues from Vol. 1, No. 1 (1936) to five years prior to the present (currently Vol. 70) can be accessed electronically. Most academic libraries subscribe to JSTOR, and can provide this access upon request. For general information, visit www.jstor.org.

- “Marxist–Feminist Thought Today” — Martha Gimenez and Lise Vogel (69:1, January 2005)
- “The Deep Structure of the Present Moment” — Renate Bridenthal (69:3, July 2005)
- “Biography Meets History: Communist Party Lives in International Perspective” — Richard Cross and Andrew Flinn (70:1, January 2006)
- “Rethinking Marx and History” — Alan Carling and Paul Wetherly (70:2, April 2006)
- “China — Socialism, Capitalism, Market: What Now? Where Next?” — Barbara Foley and Bernard H. Moss (73:2, April 2009)
- “Capitalism and Crisis in the 21st Century” — Justin Holt and Julio Huato (74:3, July 2010)

Before concluding this short anniversary statement, I must mention two innovations that took place in the third quarter century. First, this “Editorial Perspectives” section. “Editorial Perspectives” evolved from small beginnings. The phrase was used for the first time in Vol. 49, No. 2 (Summer 1985), and the section’s content was then a brief review of the contents of the issue — essentially what now appears after the subtitle “In This Issue.” The first time an “Editorial Perspectives” got its own title was in 58:1 (Spring 1994); that title was “Marxism in a Punctuation,” an appreciative-yet-critical appraisal of the work of the celebrated Marxist paleontologist and historian of science, Stephen Jay Gould. “Editorial Perspectives” is listed in the Table of Contents for the first time in 58:2 (Summer 1994), and “In This Issue” appears first as a separate subsection in 65:4 (Winter 2001–02). This editorial is the 70th in the series! I am, I admit, proud of them. They are not easy to write, as they must be drafted about six months before they will appear in print — a discipline not faced by too many bloggers. I would also like to record my appreciation for the input of my colleagues on the S&S Manuscript Collective, who contribute to each one with criticism, suggestions, and guidance.

Second — this was, I am stating here for the first time, in response to a reader’s intervention — the designation of issues of the journal changed from seasons to months, beginning with 69:1 (January 2005). Thus, instead of Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter issues (with the latter bearing the awkward dating across two years, as in “Winter 2001–02” above), we have four issues, all within a single year: January, April, July, and October. The reader who complained was from Australia, and he pointed out that when our “summer” issue arrived in his mailbox it was *winter* there! This change was small in itself, but it reflected, I think, the persistent pressure toward a truly global consciousness, just one tiny element in what we will eventually achieve when we are able to confront a globalizing capitalism with an equally global Marxist counter-presence.

What, then, of the future?

Just as the last generation of S&S editors placed their hopes on passing the work over to those of us who came on the scene in the 1970s or

thereabouts, so we take pride in the appearance of still younger comrades and colleagues. I will not name them here, but you will be seeing their influence increase in the period to come. We are getting younger, more global, and (of course) more electronically sophisticated in the way we work. Expect change! (What a silly thing to say in a Marxist journal.)

I can't guess how, or when, the next phase shift will occur in the nature of the work presented in our pages, and in our own editorial oversight and direction. But I believe that the Marxism hunkered down in the academy, with all of its splendid sophistication and all of its faults, will — must — become once again the property of wider social and political forces. (The academy and its research function will, of course, remain as a component part of this larger progressive community.) Just as in the early decades of *Science & Society*, but on a qualitatively higher level, Marxism will once again belong to the worldwide working-class movement, and those who practice it will once again exhibit a certain confidence in linking their intellectual work to revolutionary politics. This reassertion of the emancipatory moment in the Marxist synthesis will not and can not mean eclipse of the scientific or critical moments. Rather, the tension among them will be addressed — if never “resolved” in any final sense — on the plane of *praxis* and engagement. And *Science & Society* will certainly play its own special role, as we move forward into our fourth quarter century.



THE UNACKNOWLEDGED STAMP OF HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

We have received a communication from long-time S&S collaborator, Dr. Irving Adler, which serves as a greeting from the original generation of S&S activists on our 75th anniversary. Adler, now 98, notes that non- and anti-Marxist scholars often unwittingly use Marxist formulations whenever they themselves try to make sense of society and history. Case in point: the prolific intellectual historian and former Columbia University provost, Jacques Barzun. “During his long and productive life,” Adler notes, “Barzun emphatically rejected the principles of Marx’s philosophy of history, dismissing them as ‘mechanical materialism.’ It is therefore amusing that in some of his writings Barzun unconsciously assumes and uses these principles.” Two examples are cited:

... as far back as the thirteenth century some purely scientific ideas challenged the theologians’ monopoly of explanation. But ideas alone do not change an entire

culture; they require the aid of strong and simple motives. . . . the clergy's strongest competitors were not the men of science telling a different story of the heavens; the true rivals were the inventors who said nothing but increased man's power to wrest a living from nature. (Barzun, *Science: The Glorious Entertainment*, 1964, 19.)

. . . Luther's hope of reform might have foundered like many others of the previous 200 years, had it not been for the invention of printing: Gutenberg's movable type . . . was the physical instrument that tore the West asunder. . . . the printing press by itself was not enough: better paper, a modified ink, and a body of experienced craftsmen were also needed to make type a power. (Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence*, 2000, 4.)

Adler comments: "These two excerpts sound as if they might have been written by an avowed Marxist. The only difference from a typical Marxist formulation is the absence of the words 'basis' and 'superstructure.'"



IN THIS ISSUE

In a series of famous but variously interpretable passages, Marx pointed beyond the limited horizon of capitalism toward the "passionate possibilities" of human development under (to use the classical terminology) a communist mode of production. The continued exploration of these possibilities is a central task of political economy; we will be focusing on this theme in a forthcoming special issue on theorizing/envisioning socialism, planned for April 2012. In the meantime, and entirely "over the transom," we have, currently, a series of papers that push out the frontiers of this inquiry in various related but distinct ways.

Paul Leduc Browne's "Disposable Time, Freedom, and Care" examines the relation between caring labor/activity and the expansion of Marx's realm of freedom, beyond (but incorporating?) necessity. Capitalist reproduction and valorization tend to reduce labor to a means, an instrumentality in the generation of surplus value; activity that is both a means and an end in itself, such as caring labor, does not lend itself well to this process and is therefore marginalized and relegated to the sidelines. By contrast, a society whose mainspring is human needs and development could — in fact, must — greatly expand this sphere of activity. Indeed, the unification of means and ends, and the evolution of a caring dimension in all labor, can be seen as central to Marx's vision of truly human activity as this emerges with the transcendence of exploitative and alienated social relations.

James Reveley examines a controversy within Critical Management Studies, showing the importance of cross-disciplinary contact for the larger project of (eventual) overcoming disciplinary boundaries. S&S readers may not be familiar with Paul Adler's "paleo-Marxist" intervention, which proposes returning to rigorous, value-theoretic foundations for analysis of the workplace, in contradistinction to the work of Harry Braverman and other writers in the same tradition. Reveley approves of this return in principle, while arguing that Adler's version of it is insufficient in various ways. He also draws upon some recent work (including that of this editor) to propose an approach to theorizing the strategic problems of capitalist workplace management. The implications for transcendence of capitalism are implicit, but nonetheless real.

Similarly with John L. Hammond's study of "The Resource Curse and Oil Revenues in Angola and Venezuela": Here, and contrary to the decontextualized concept of the "resource curse" — presence of abundant natural resources *as such* constrains development, rather than fostering it — Hammond shows in copious detail that everything depends on the social and political context within which resources, such as oil, are developed. The Angola–Venezuela contrast is a very clear case in point.

Werner Bonefeld ("Primitive Accumulation and Capitalist Accumulation") argues that, contrary to many readings (and indeed to the structure of presentation in *Capital I*), primitive accumulation is not an early and now-surpassed stage preparatory to capitalist accumulation proper; rather, it is an active presence within the overall capitalist process. Forcible dispossession is an ever-present counterpart to valorized reproduction of class relations. The alternative, a stages-based conception, reinforces the determinism of both the reformist and the revolutionary branches of 20th-century Marxism. Its rejection foregrounds the essential role of consciousness, on the part of the "community of revolutionary proletarians," of their mission to achieve the "victory of the political economy of labor over the political economy of property."

Finally — and directly in line with the "envisioning" problematic — Mark Jablonowski offers an intriguing re-examination of the markets/socialism/calculation debate. As Oskar Lange and others foresaw, modern computer technology opens up new ranges of possibility for socialist calculation. The "millions of equations" critique may be answered by means of analog computing, fuzzy sets, and simulated (as opposed to actual) markets. At the most general level, the idea of economic calculation "'on a (computer) chip' can . . . serve as a wider metaphor for the melding of the fruits of human progress guided by deeper moral and ethical standards."

This issue concludes with a review article by Steve Ellner, on Jorge G. Castañeda and Marco A. Morales' edited work, *Leftovers: Tales of the Latin*

American Left. Castañeda, foreign minister under conservative Mexican President Vicente Fox — and S&S contributor! (April, 2005) — is a well-known figure in left intellectual and political circles in Latin America, who has, as the current book reveals, drifted to the right in recent years. This trajectory is quite interesting as a mirror of the leftward shift on the continent: the absence of mass mobilization and empowerment in Castañeda's perspective is an exact reflection of their centrality in recent experiences, in Venezuela, Bolivia and elsewhere.

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