

this approach shows promise. But as a general introduction to environmental sociology, this book's approach is lacking. Perhaps a subtitle should be introduced in subsequent editions of this book: 'Environmental Sociology: A Social Constructionist-Organizational Perspective'.

References

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The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World. By Vijay Prashad. New York: The New Press, 2007. Pp. 364. \$26.95 (cloth). ISBN 9781565847859.

Vijay Prashad argues that the Third World is not a place but a political project. It is a term that emphasizes not subordination but power. The Third World as political project emerged among the anti-colonial movements arising out of the Second World War. It was defined by the goals of economic equality, anti-racism, women's liberation, disarmament and anti-militarism, and cultural cooperation. It rejected essentialist forms of nationalism based on exclusion and hierarchy and instead offered an 'internationalist nationalism' (p. 12):

Unity for the people of the Third World came from a political position against colonialism and imperialism, not from any intrinsic cultural or racial commonalities. If you fought against colonialism and stood against imperialism, then you were part of the Third World. (p. 34)

The Third World posed a dramatic, if uneven, challenge to colonialism. Prashad's book provides an important, critical analysis of the history of this project.

What happened to the Third World? Prashad points unequivocally to the capitalist core's responsibility for the 'assassination' (p. xviii) of the Third World. This occurred through the core's use of state violence in the form of military invasion, counterinsurgency, and support for military dictatorships to ensure compliant regimes in the periphery: 'Powerlessness ... grows out of the barrel of a gun' (p. 162). Even if Third World states had some success in fighting off these attacks, the defensive measures employed often came at such great cost that their commitment to social welfare was strangled.

The assassination of the Third World also took economic forms. Prashad points to the centuries of underdevelopment of the periphery by the core and the unequal exchange between core and periphery as an imposing structural obstacle to the success of the Third World project. In the post-colonial period, Prashad demonstrates quite powerfully that 'the national liberation state was disemboweled' (p. 238) by debt, structural adjustment,

and free trade. Neoliberal praise of the market obscures its racialized nature: 'the invisible hand is white. And the First World wanted it to remain white' (p. 68).

If the relationship between the capitalist core and the Third World was defined by exploitation, the defining feature of the Soviet Union's relationship to the Third World was opportunism. In the years immediately following the Soviet revolution, the Second Congress of the Communist International and the First Congress of the Peoples of the East, both of which occurred in 1920, demonstrated the central role that national liberation movements played in revolutionary strategy. The debate that took place within these settings, between building working class internationalism and establishing alliances with the national bourgeoisie of colonized regions, was settled in favor of the latter with the rise of Stalinism.

The theory of socialism in one country made the goals of anti-imperialist movements subordinate to the defense of the Soviet Union, which became the principle goal of the world Communist movement. For example, Prashad points out that, in contrast to the major role played by anti-colonial movements in the early years of the Communist International, no Communist parties from the colonial world were invited to the founding conference of the Cominform in 1947. In addition, for both the Soviet Union and China, national liberation movements became prizes over which both struggled to achieve dominance within the world Communist movement.

For Prashad, the collapse of the Third World as a political project has as much to do with internal contradictions as external forces. The major contradiction of the Third World was its failure to address the class forces that defined these societies. The demands of those classes that were the driving force of national liberation movements, the working class and peasantry, were resisted by the national bourgeoisie and landlords. Without a social revolution to destroy feudal and capitalist class power, that power came to impose powerful boundaries on the Third World project. While a more equitable distribution of resources was central to Third World politics, there was no challenge to the capitalist mode of production: 'Socialist reorganization (socialized production) was squandered for welfarist handouts (socialized distribution and consumption)' (p. 202). Similarly, Prashad states that 'one of the principle failures of the Third World project [was] the lack of effective socialized democracy' (p. 123). The seizure of state power and its control by national liberation movements was seen as sufficient for the Third World project. The demobilization of the people following the conclusion of national liberation struggles reinforced the welfarist character of Third World socialism, with the state seen as an institution *providing for* rather than *controlled by* the people, and left the Third World more vulnerable to military coups and imperialist military interventions. As a result, the opportunity to create a participatory socialist society was lost.

The collapse of the Third World political project has come at considerable cost. The assassination of the Third World and the resulting weakening of an 'internationalist nationalism' (p. 12) has left a void allowing the emergence of a 'primordial culturalism' (p. 258) reproducing racial and religious hierarchies. The displacement of progressive Third World forces with more reactionary counterparts has intensified both national and global economic inequality. It has also had the consequence of reproducing colonial definitions of tribalism and exoticism which have strengthened the core at the expense of

the periphery. Prashad concludes, 'The world was bettered by the attempt to articulate a Third World agenda. Now it is impoverished for the lack of that motion' (p. xix).

I wish that Prashad had spent more time addressing the possibilities for renewing the Third World project. His conclusion is a powerful statement of the possibilities for such renewal:

The limitations of IMF-driven globalization and revanchist traditionalism provoke mass movements across the planet. The battles for land rights and water rights, for cultural dignity and economic parity, for women's rights and indigenous rights, for the construction of democratic institutions and responsive states – these are legion in every country, on every continent. It is from these many creative initiatives that a genuine agenda for the future will arise. When it does, the Third World will have found its successor. (p. 281)

Given Prashad's detailed review of the history of the Third World project, I would have liked to learn what he sees as the contemporary structural opportunities that may contribute to the rise of such a successor as well as the contemporary structural obstacles in the way of such a development. I would also have liked to learn more about his analysis of the differences in institutional form and political strategy between the Third World project and its likely 21st century successor. I hope that he addresses these issues in a subsequent book. If it is anything like this book, it too will be essential reading for the left.

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Liberal Modernity and its Adversaries: Freedom, Liberalism, and Anti-Liberalism in the 21st Century. Studies in Critical Social Sciences, Volume 10. By Milan Zafirovski. Boston: Brill, 2007. Pp. 579. \$139.00 (cloth). ISBN 9004160523.

The thesis of this book is that the birth of liberal society and modernity in the Western world in the 18th century involved an act of liberation from feudalism, medievalism, and traditionalism. Further, the maturation of liberal society and modernity in the 21st century still involves an effort of liberation from these structures. These successors include neo-conservatism and religious fundamentalism in its various forms.

Zafirovski argues that American 'exceptionalism' should be interpreted in terms of the fact that the USA has not matured to the extent that other liberal democracies have. That is, the USA is still in the process of liberating itself from neo-conservatism and the theocratic tendencies of fundamentalist religion. Weberian rationalization (in partial contrast to utilitarian 'rational choice' theory) and Durkheimian structural differentiation have indeed been instantiated to some extent in the USA, but the USA still remains a 'deviant case' when compared to other liberal democracies, where cultural liberalization, rationalization, and modernization are more advanced.

The persistence of traditionalism in the USA is odd because, unlike the liberal democracies in Western Europe, the USA does not have a medieval past. Hence, in a way,