

BOOK REVIEWS

William G. Martin, ed., *Making Waves: Worldwide Social Movements, 1750-2005*. London: Boulder.

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Globalisation and the social movements, both national and international in terms of focus and co-ordination, which it spurred have generated very rich discussion within the past twenty years. Attempts have been made to offer insights into the two phenomena, considered by some radical scholars as not necessarily new. Such attempts, especially in explicating the former, wrap their analysis with the notion of hegemony, accumulation, neo-imperialism and sub-imperialism as implicit and relatively explicit in some of the contributions to the current volume of the *African Sociological Review*. The latter of the two, social movements, are considered generally as *anti-whatever* (imperialism, globalisation etc.) in many of the analyses. But are such movements new? Are they qualitatively different from earlier social movements if not new? Do they pose challenges to the world capitalist economy? These are the issues of concern for the Research Working Group on Waves of Anti-systemic Movements based at the Fernand Braudel Centre at Binghampton University in the US. This group sought to lace current movements within historical patterns and discern future possibilities taking their cue from World system theorists, Giovanni Arrighi, Terence K. Hopkins and Immanuel Wallerstein's early attempts in the 1980s on anti-systemic movements. The task of this group culminated in the recently published edited single volume, *Making Waves: Worldwide Social Movements, 1750-2005*. (William G. Martin, co-ordinator, London: Boulder), which is the focus of this review.

At a first glance, the volume suggests itself as one for the activist if we characterise such books as rhetorical with grand and grandiose narratives inflected with sweeping arguments and moralistic tones. But closer reading indicates the contrary. It is a scholarly piece albeit with elements of an activist character – *the flipping of the coin*. Such flipping allows the other side to be visible. Perhaps it is inevitable, given its subject matter, anti-systemic movements and the theoretical bent of the contributors, world system perspective. The criticism of this perspective is well known: a common one is that it makes sweeping generalisations. But does this apply to the contribution in this volume? The point about sweeping generalisation is a methodological one and it is gratifying that Martin's main concern in the introductory chapter concerns this. He raises the issue of whether we possess the right tools to make sense of the anti-systemic movements of contemporary times. He said this mindful of the fact that 'radical and world-systems scholars have in the past twenty years paid far more attention to matters of hegemony and accumulation, for example, as might be expected given successive world-economic crises and the dangerous collapse of U.S. hegemony'. Are present movements substantially different from earlier movements?

The attempt to answer this question requires, in the first place, a clarification of what is meant by movements. Martin offers us a definition which we also get from Kalouche and Mielants in their own contribution to the volume. Movement is disruptive, momentary and non-institutionalised collective action, a definition that factors spontaneous outbreaks such as food riots, through organised movements to classic state revolutions. But movements might not necessarily be disruptive or indeed momentary as Martin would want us to believe. Kalouche and Mielants seem to be aware of this in pointing out that movement entails conscious and self-reflective teleology and in fact suggest that they might not also be 'anti-systemic' which is used to narrow down the focus of the main research objective that underpins the volume. We find Martin telling us that by using the word 'anti-systemic' in capturing the activities of the movements and qualifying such movements, they imply movements that 'engage and oppose dominant capitalist forces and processes' suggesting that conceptually, 'anti-systemic movements are thus relationally opposed'. Whatever the case, and this is the strength of the qualifying word 'anti-systemic', the movements the contributors are concerned with are those that respond to systemic forces which, as Kalouche and Mielants highlight, Wallerstein considers as permeating through a 'capitalist civilisation' that demands 'more' for 'us'.

The concern in the volume is to address the successive world waves of these movements – anti-capitalist movements – over time. Concretely, the contributors aimed to chart 'movement waves' and the linkages among movements within and then across four periods: 1750-1850, 1848-1917, 1917-1968 and 1968-2005. These individual historical periods are in the thinking of the contributors bounded by well-known outbreaks of movement activity and by transitions in the world-economy and interstate system. For Agartan, Choi and Huynh, the period, 1750-1850, which they were concerned with in the first chapter of the volume titled 'Transformation of the Capitalist World: 1750-1850', is characterised by what they suggested as multiple modes of resistance against European culture and capitalism. They pointed out that the period was one of worldwide organisation of and rewards to labour and capital through expanded boundaries of the capitalist world-economy, the emergence of hegemonic order and diverse acts of resistance which were 'transformative', a term they used rather cautiously to encompass and link a broad range of direct 'assaults against elite groups that dominated land, labour and capital within and across the capitalist world economy', and also to capture the explored diverse acts of resistance as interrelated, oppositional forces that generated the systemic transition of the modern capitalist world-system in this early period.

Their argument is simple but somehow rather attractive: that there were wider relationships that linked world empires and world-economies and that had a formative but often ignored impact on the construction of a capitalist world-economy in the period they focused upon. For them, the most central of these networks was the formation of an international monetary system based on silver and its worldwide production and exchange. Silver provided the financial liquidity to fuel the wheels of commerce that linked the trading states and the material integration of the presumably 'self-contained parts of the world'. What does this mean? To the authors, it saw the growing integration of Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas. The integration of course brought unequal relationships among trading states, including both imperial

rivalry among European states and the hierarchy of trade relations between the metropole and its colonies abroad. The relationships transformed the pattern of capitalist development and European expansion and within and outside the boundaries of Europe; there were 'anti-capitalist less anti-systemic movements' – the French revolution, the American 'revolution', the revolution against slavery in the Americas, the nationalist and secessionist movements from the Balkans to the Americas, the civilisation movements, mostly termed religious or cultural movements that resisted European and capitalist cultures ranging from the Middle East, Africa, Asia and the Americas.

Agartan et al., were concerned with waving the global movements prior to the twentieth century which is also taken up by Caleb M. Bush in chapter two of the volume titled 'Reformers and Revolutionaries: The Rise of Antisystemic Movements and the Paradox of Power, 1848-1917'. Bush's discussion concerned the important events of the periods 1848-1873, 1873-1896 and 1896-1917, the links between the movements and their impact in terms of world-economic change. He suggested that the first period, 1848-1873 as one of little revolt. He singled out 1848 as providing the first example of what he called an anti-systemic cluster – it was the year that saw, citing Immanuel Wallerstein, a 'proletarian-based political group' which made 'serious attempt to achieve power and legitimize workers power'; the year also saw the Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention considered as the beginning of the women's rights movement. Bush argued that 1848 helped lay a foundation for the formal, organised, and sustained movements such as the formation of the General Workers Brotherhood in Germany. The period 1848-1873 saw the formation of the International Workingmen's Association (the First International) and foreshadowed the increased organised anti-systemic activity and unrest in the closing years of the second period, 1873-1896. In this second period, Bush pointed out, most of the 'revolts' took place outside of Europe: the Indian revolt of 1857, the India Indigo Revolt or Blue Mutiny of 1859, the Morant Bay rebellion of 1865 which was a direct expression of the grievances felt by the impoverished in colonial Jamaica and China's Taiping Rebellion that made China an interesting locus of activity in the period 1848-1878.

The third period, 1896-1917, saw previous revolts come to fruition. Bush noted that there was China's Boxer Rebellion in 1900, the 1905 Russian revolution, Iran in 1906, the Ottoman Empire in 1908, Mexico in 1910 and Russia again in 1917. There was also the clustering of anti-colonial/imperialist resistance in Africa. The Maji-Maji Rebellion in Tanganyika in 1905 to protest forced labour, taxation, general oppression and aimed at expelling the Germans from the region, the Herero Revolt of South West Africa in 1904 and the Bambata Rebellion of South Africa in 1906. In the Belgian Congo, Bush pointed to the armed resistance against wage labour demands of the territorial administration led by the brothers Kabongo and Kasongo Nyembo between 1907, the 1915 Chilembwe uprising in Nyasaland to protest poor treatment and wage policies on coffee plantations in the region and the 1912 formation of the African National Congress in South Africa that brought about a period of anti-colonial nationalism lasting up to the twentieth century. Bush echoed Immanuel Wallerstein's argument that these differing strands of resistance and early anti-imperialism/nationalism struggles were part of the same process, resisting and shaping the different forms of labour and broader social control that an expanding capitalism and its

attendant capitalist class hoped to assert. He concluded that the movements' clusters are linked by migration. But at what point do anti-systemic movements stop being anti-systemic? Bush and Morris asked in 'Empire Crumble, Movements Fall: Antisystemic Struggle, 1917-1968', the title of the third chapter of the volume.

For them, 1917-1968 offers a clue to an attempt to provide illuminating answer to the question. This fifty-one-year period saw a complete transformation of the modern world-system. It altered the course of the system as well as the movements that challenged the operations of capitalism. According to them, the period demonstrates the danger to oppositional movements that pursue '*acquiring state power* as a primary goal'. The danger would seem to be apparent given the success of anti-systemic struggle in transforming the world so greatly in this period, as Bush and Morris noted. They highlighted the fundamentals of this transformation: the emergence of clear opposition to the process of capitalism, which took the form of established, often global movements that ideologically and politically challenged the domination of workers and the peasantry; the acceptance of liberal ideology as the principal impetus for and sometime source of solidarity between workers movements, nationalism, and Pan-Africanism; the right to self-determination along with the notion of human rights and the right of livelihood which served as the driving force to challenge imperial and colonial power relations.

They waved the flag for anti-systemic struggle in this fifty-one year period around two global movement conjunctures: 1917-1945 (World War I/Russian Revolution) and 1945-1968 (World War II/Chinese Revolution). The former, they pointed out, was marked by economic and political turmoil. Europe saw labour rallied against the state in a crucial wave of strikes, factory occupations and mass demonstrations that shook the continent. Bush and Morris argued that this did not last as labour's immediate post-war gains were quickly stymied in the 1920s as evidenced in the US where trade unions went into decline and capital rose with the heavy support of government. The interesting point in their global history of this period is the consequences/s of the success of the anti-systemic struggle as embodied in the Russian Revolution. The success of the Russian Revolution was a source of inspiration for anti-systemic movements around the world but this very success was used as a reason for 'states, democratic or otherwise, to repress labour and reverse the gains of the post-war period'. We see this inspiration in Latin America where the Communist parties were most active Mexico in 1919; Argentina in 1920; Brazil, Chile and Uruguay in 1921; Ecuador and Cuba in 1925 and Peru in 1930.

Very significant in this period were the black nationalist struggle in the US and the anti-colonial resistance in Asia and Africa. Bush and Morris noted the impact of Garveyism and the Radical black nationalist organisations which called for a separate black nation within the US. They pointed out that Garveyism influenced, to some degree, black nationalist organisations and set the tone of self-determination for a new generation of black nationalists in the post-World War II period. 1945-1968 was in fact the period of nationalism, Pan-Africanism and Independence as their twofold history of anti-systemic struggle showed. In discussing this period, they attempted to lay bare the meaning of nationalism which they suggested is the overarching framework for organising movements and articulating the motivations and aspirations for change of a larger populace. Nationalist struggle was considered anti-systemic in the sense of

breaking down the last vestiges of European empire. By 1968, these movements had in many places taken new roles as governing parties or as they suggested, were firmly enmeshed in the day-to-day operations of the capitalist world. The fact of this would hardly surprise a student of history or social processes as they evolve: the world system is in a constant state of transformation as Kalouche and Mielants pointed out in chapter 4 of the volume titled 'Transformation of the World-System and Antisystemic Movements: 1968-2005'.

1968 marks for them a period not only of disillusionment with the historic anti-systemic movements but also one of transformation for anti-systemic struggles world-wide. They pointed to the decline of the traditional anti-systemic movements and the rise of what they referred to as 'identity movements'. The critical events of 1968 that shaped the forms of struggle in that period, to them, were: the Chinese Cultural Revolution, the Cuban Revolution and the Vietnam War. The Cultural Revolution saw the attacks by the Red Guards on the People's Liberation Army which gave 'birth', so to say, to the notion that armed struggle was deemed necessary in continuous class warfare, 'where the masses could take on the task of shaping their future rather than trusting specialised bureaucrats or party apparatchiks'. It is not clear where Cuba falls in during this period and one does not get a sense of its significance in shaping anti-systemic struggles; Kalouche and Mielants' mention of Che Guevara who was a member of Castro's government from 1959 to 1965 and subsequently was engaged with Latin American peasants in rebellions does not inform us better. Though, the point about the Chinese Revolution combining with Vietnamese defeat of the French and the Americans and Che Guevara in Latin America and numerous other struggles to inspire 'popular' movements world-wide is valid.

Both authors pointed to the Sandinista National Liberation Front of Nicaragua in 1979 as one of such. But this, as one gathers from their argument, was to be replaced by identity, religious and ethnic movements which flourished as forms of resistance to 'internationalisation'. The main point in this regard is that as finance and speculative capital advanced wildly, state socialism was tossed out of the window. The economic policies 'implemented by the Washington consensus throughout the 1980s, along with those of the US-dominated international financial institutions had a lasting impact', especially with the extensive international regulation and manipulation of trade, foreign currencies, tariffs and widespread use of the dollar and the imposition of 'liberalisation' schemes on the Third World countries.

The authors noted the significance of Reaganism and Thatcherism in this period and the fall of the Berlin Wall which was 'proclaimed to be the success of liberal dreams in fostering imaginaries "freedom" and the "equality of rights" while surpassing any dreams of "justice" and "economic equity"'. Under these pressures, they concluded, very rightly, internationalism was transformed into an empty discourse of rights that overrode discourses of equity and distribution.

So, what does this waving of the history of anti-systemic movements mean? It means, as Martin concluded, that successive world movement waves have changed the contours and processes that form the world-economy, and in so doing, they have altered the conditions within which future movements form, and the forces against which they protest. It is for the reader to make up his or her mind on this. However, the volume, as I indicated earlier, is seductively attractive but deceptively so. It is not a

book on the *nitty-gritty* but the larger picture and here lies its scholarly strength. There is history in the book and this was waved in the old-fashioned epochal manner with each chapter flowing into the next as it charts a different epoch, which makes for a good read.