

Rod Bush

**10. HEGEMONY AND RESISTANCE IN THE  
UNITED STATES: THE CONTRADICTIONS OF  
RACE AND CLASS**

Ten years ago at the American Sociological Association meeting in New York, I spoke with Immanuel Wallerstein and Martin Murray about going back to school, after nearly twenty years as a militant in the U.S.-based radical social and national movements of the 1960s and 1970s. They both warmly encouraged me. Wallerstein told me to contact Terence K. Hopkins, with whose work I was familiar, but whom I had not met. It required a few phone calls to connect with Hopkins, but this was one connection that was much, much more than worth the effort.

Although I had been involved in an intensive study of world-systems materials since 1975, my association with Terence Hopkins changed my life. He deepened my understanding of world-systems, he taught me what it meant to be a scholar who was deeply concerned about the movements; he was a role model for how to be a committed intellectual. He spared nothing of himself. His comments on my work

were at least as extensive as the work that I did. He was a tireless and merciless critic. Yet I never felt demeaned or belittled. Rather I felt challenged to extend myself, to be the kind of scholar that he demanded. For all of his exacting and demanding reviews, which required more rewrites than I care to admit, I feel that although I may not have quite gotten it all right, his comments constituted a treasure to which I could return again and again for more insights. I felt that I could never exhaust these comments, but would ponder them again and again to deepen my understanding.

I feel that this approach not only made me a better scholar, but truly opened the future to me in a way that I had never seen before. The possibilities of self-actualization and contribution to a field of study and action seemed so much clearer after my encounter with Hopkins. As a mature student who had completed one stint in doctoral studies 15 years earlier (I was 41 years old at the time of my reentry into academia), I had no idea that there was so much to gain, aside from the course content, rather narrowly conceived. But Hopkins's impact on me was profound. I would characterize it as a remaking of me. And I appreciate his efforts enormously.

At the time of our first meeting, I was preoccupied with the debates that had sprung up within the Black Liberation Movement around the events that had occurred in Howard Beach, Queens, in December 1986, involving an attack on a group of Black men, leading to the death of one of the young men. This event had rekindled the old race/class issue and had put it on the forefront, but the debate seemed incomplete or truncated. These debates had occupied a great deal of my political and theoretical attention over the previous twenty years and became central to my own scholarly inquiry as I returned to the academy. Hopkins's contribution to my investigation and explication of the nuances to this relationship is inestimable. He pounded home time and again that it was not helpful to view race and class as binary opposites, and forced me to include this understanding in my analysis.

When young Michael Griffith was chased to his death by a White mob in Howard Beach, Queens, the situation of Blacks attained a high profile that it had not had for many years. It was the occasion for

deepening old debates, and raising new ideas about the nature of the African-American condition, and the strategy for African-American freedom struggle in the United States. Rev. Jesse Jackson called upon Blacks and Whites to fight for an economic common ground, and to avoid the dead-end of the racial battleground. Most nationalists were as usual all over the board, calling variously for a boycott of White stores, demonstrations to disrupt business as usual, and a new civil rights movement. The Left (including the Black Left) debated over the adequacy of Jackson's common ground remark, some supporting him, others arguing that racism was based on class but required attention from those who struggled for social justice and equality in its own right.

I was surprised by the tone of the debate. What a difference twenty years had made. The Black Power movement of the 1960s had argued that Blacks in the United States constituted an internal colony and thus should be considered to be in the same category (with its own particularities) as other national liberation movements. I did not expect a simple rehash of this position, but assumed that it would be taken into account in the new debates. It was not mentioned, except by one or two very small nationalist organizations, who did not have a high profile in the ensuing debate. Two things had happened, or seemed to have happened.

The revolution had ended. The radical ideologies of the revolution had cooled with the new leftists (in which I include the radical section of the Black Power movement) moving to orthodox Marxist and liberal positions. Prior to 1968 the socialist concept of hegemony and resistance prevailed. Based on class analysis, the socialists predicted the rise of a universalistic workers movement who had nothing to lose but their chains. The growth of this movement would change the relations of force within the capitalist world, enabling the working class increasingly to take control of society, and then embark on a process of socialist construction.

There existed in addition a liberal version of the socialist position which did not portend revolutionary change but which envisioned the construction of coalitions around an economic common ground as a

means of incorporating previously excluded groups into the system and thus stabilizing the capitalist system. The Left based its ideas about hegemony and resistance on the analysis of crisis in capitalist society and the direction of the evolving class structure. Class was the principle issue but there were subordinate issues: race, ethnicity, age, gender. But these were all subordinate issues. Class was the central and anchoring concept of the Left. Class was the Left's main organizing theme.

1968 challenged the privileged status of the proletariat as classically understood, giving rise to conceptions of hegemony and resistance that are at variance with that of the old Left. One indication that 1968 was truly a divide is the different trajectories of two of the most important revolutionary nationalist organizations in U.S. history up to this time. The African Blood Brotherhood of the 1920s played an important role in the radicalization of the U.S. Communist Party (CPUSA), but they eventually joined the CPUSA and liquidated their own leadership responsibility within the Black Liberation Movement and their own organization. The Black Panther Party (1966-1976), in contrast, proclaimed itself the vanguard. The debate about race and class within the early history of the CPUSA and its confrontation with the issue of the African-American people should illustrate the problematical relationship of race and class to the issues of hegemony and resistance within the United States.

The role that the CPUSA played within and in support of the Black movement and also in opposition to certain movements has proven to have been key in defining the relationships between Black and White social movements, on a national scale, and in prescribing the approach of Black-led social and political movements toward working with Whites. This brings us to the crux of the issue. For despite the sincerity of the CPUSA in attempting to create a model of interracial cooperation and unity within its ranks, the fact that it punished members for White chauvinist behavior, and its willingness to place its resources into the struggle for racial equality alongside Blacks, it was not within its power to make of the White working class a revolutionary class, nor *a fortiori* to make of the Black movement a

revolutionary force in its own image. The political stance of the various strata of the capitalist world-economy is much more dependent on their own social position than not only the CPUSA but most others have been willing to admit. It is not that classes or groups are static and frozen into a deterministic “role” to be carried out for all times. It is that groups develop in relation to other groups, and obtain a social role in the context of the overall relationship of the different groups within the social system. The White working class did not develop as a “revolutionary” class vis-à-vis the capitalist world-system as a whole, although they fought very militantly for their own rights (perceived in a limited way) vis-à-vis those immediately above them. Their attitude toward those immediately below them was primarily defensive.

This defensiveness is not a “betrayal” of their historic mission, in any sense, but a reflection of the actual social relationship between the two groups within the capitalist world-economy. Thus many have committed the error of voluntarism because their class analysis lacked the depth to gauge a group’s actual social position, as did the class analysis developed by W.E.B. Du Bois in the 1930s.

While I do not agree with Du Bois’s 1933 argument that the White working class is the cause of most of the suffering of the Black working class, his analysis of the class structure of the imperialist system seems to me an excellent statement of the problem. In contrast to some “Marxist” arguments about a so-called false consciousness among the White working class who identify their interests with their own ruling class instead of their class brothers and sisters across national borders and ethnic lines, Du Bois argued that the problem of the times was not that the White workers were ignorant. “William Green and Matthew Wolf of the A.F. of L. have no excuse of illiteracy or religion to veil their deliberate intention to keep Negroes and Mexicans and other elements of common labor, in a lower proletariat as subservient to their interests as theirs are to the interests of capital” (Du Bois 1973: 213). In the capitalist world-economy of the twentieth century, the White working class no longer occupied an unambiguous “proletarian” position within the social structure. Since capitalist production had now gained worldwide organization, there has developed within the

American working class a large petty bourgeoisie. According to Du Bois:

... a new class of technical engineers and managers has arisen forming a working class aristocracy between the older proletariat and the absentee owners of capital. ... [They] form a new petty bourgeois class, whose interests are bound up with those of the capitalists and antagonistic to those of common labor ... common labor in America and White Europe far from being motivated by any vision of revolt against capitalism, has been blinded by the American vision of the possibility of layer after layer of the workers escaping into the wealthy class and becoming managers and employers of labor. (Du Bois 1973: 213-14)

This new class structure of the capitalist world-economy means that in the United States we have witnessed a “wild and ruthless scramble” (Du Bois 1973: 214) of labor groups seeking to obtain greater wealth on the backs of Black and immigrant labor. However, immigrant labor adopted the same stance toward Black labor, eventually resulting, in my view, in the creation of a “White working class” which by 1945 occupied an essentially intermediate status in the capitalist world-economy. On the one hand this arrangement has spawned a “new proletariat” worldwide of colored workers toiling under conditions equivalent to those of nineteenth-century capitalism. On the other hand “capitalists have consolidated their economic power, nullified universal suffrage, and bribed the White workers by high wages, visions of wealth, and the opportunity to drive ‘niggers’” (Du Bois 1973: 214). “Soldiers and sailors from the White workers are used to keep ‘darkies’ in their ‘places’ and White foremen and engineers have been established as irresponsible satraps in China, India, Africa, and the West Indies, backed by the organized and centralized ownership of machines, raw materials, finished commodities and land monopoly over the whole world” (Du Bois 1973: 214).

While this same process has given rise to a petty bourgeoisie among Blacks in the United States, West Africa, South America, and the West Indies, the opportunity for upward mobility of the petty bourgeoisie in these different locales varies. The group in the United

States was particularly weak, having little opportunity or no ability to exploit the labor power of Black workers. Furthermore, any significant hope of enlarging this group is an idle dream, because, as Braverman (1974: 403-09) points out, those individuals who in earlier times might have become small business persons, for the most part only have opportunities to become employees of capital, that is, a part of the new petty bourgeoisie. If Du Bois's analysis is correct for that time, as I believe it is, then the CPUSA's problem is not that it failed to mobilize Black workers. According to Record (1971: 116) the CPUSA had 2,500 Black members out of a total of 24,536 in 1934. Given the practices of racial exclusions among the White working class during that period, it seems that it is remarkable that a predominantly White organization was able to attract such a large proportion of Blacks to its membership.

I think that a much more serious problem for the CPUSA was its inability to attract Black intellectuals to the Party. While several Black intellectuals did join the ranks of the Party (e.g., Richard Wright) or were closely allied fellow travelers (e.g., Claude McKay, Paul Robeson), the Party needed to attract more of the nationalist-oriented intellectuals to be able to truly understand the depths of racism and the extent to which such a comprehension is central to the ability to attract and mobilize Blacks on the basis of how the Black working class itself understood its position in the social structure. It was precisely Garvey's genius to be able to do this. And this is precisely the issue that Harry Haywood had raised with regard to the missed potential of the Niagara Movement.

The CPUSA's mechanical position on the African-American national question reflected, *inter alia*, both the Party's attempt to appeal to this group and at the same time the lack of any input from this sector of the Black intelligentsia. If there had been substantial input from this group, then the CPUSA would have developed a different position, Blacks would have composed a more substantial section of its leadership, and the Party would have been stronger and more capable than it proved to be. One essential component in being able to organize a sub-proletarian group such as the African-American working class is

the ability of intellectuals from that group to assist them in articulating their experience and to elaborate on the experiences of the group so that it articulates a clear culture of resistance, which then sustains the group as a conscious political actor. On this matter Stalin was right! Otto Hall recounts that when he and a delegation of Negroes selected by the CPUSA attended the Communist University of Toilers of the East, Stalin had requested a meeting with them. During the meeting Hall recalls Stalin as saying that "The Negroes represented the most oppressed section of the American working class. Therefore, the American party should have more Negroes than Whites" (Draper 1960: 334).

Part of the Party's difficulty in recruiting African-American intellectuals stemmed from the predominant class against class approach that they used as the model of their organizing. While I do not think that a revolutionary movement can be built without the significant participation of the lower working class, it is necessary to mobilize other sections of the population as well. When the lower working class is an ethnic sub-proletariat, then this means nationalist-oriented intellectuals have to be involved in the struggle. And as Cruse (1968: 201) pointed out, it is illusory in such cases to want a "national question" without nationalism (or national consciousness). I do not claim that it is easy to bring all of these groups together, but I do claim that it is essential to the construction of a revolutionary movement, based in the most oppressed section of the working class to do so.

The attacks on the middle class of the NAACP and the Urban League were, it would turn out, counter-productive. They established a legacy which the Party never lived down and developed habits which were hard to eliminate from the Party's repertoire, since they became so deeply ingrained. When the Communist International called for a United Front against fascism, the Party was able to formulate tactics which did not isolate them from the progressive middle class. But they had a history which was hard to overcome. Many of the Black middle class political organizations were by now set in their opinion of the Party, and the Party's history of changing their line to suit the needs of the international movement (or the U.S.S.R.), their instrumental

attitude towards the middle class, and the popular notion spread by J. Edgar Hoover that the Communists were “masters of deceit” made it hard for them to believe that any change in the Party’s attitude was sincere.

Yet by the 1950s the CPUSA had abandoned all such attempts to understand the specificity of the African-American situation, and moved in theory and practice to a position much closer to Debsian socialism in the rigidity of their anti-nationalist position. While this enabled them to give strong support to the emerging civil rights movement, their politics was often indistinguishable from the moderate civil rights leadership. However, the question remains whether, even if the Party had been able to recruit large numbers of the nationalist intelligentsia to the party, and hence to develop a position on the national question which resonated with the experience of the African-American working class—as well as constituted a more accurate reflection of reality—would it have been more successful in building a revolutionary movement in the United States? I think it is indisputable that the Party would have built a stronger movement. Could it have remained the official representative of international Communism in the United States? Maybe not. Stalin seems to have thought so, but to do this would have required that they abandon some of the dogma of the Third International’s position on the African-American national question and its focus on the necessity of a “national territory” located in the Black-belt South.

But the key question is, could the Party constituted in this way, with much greater representation of the African-American sub-proletariat, have been able to mount a more successful challenge to capitalist rule in the U.S.? Probably not in the short run, but certainly the working class would have been incomparably stronger. The barrier of course is the real social structure, which has been constructed along certain lines, quite independently of the ability of a particular organization at most times to alter it. As Du Bois argues, the period of Radical Reconstruction was the only time that there was an opportunity for the U.S. to eliminate race instead of class as the principal stratifying process. As the U.S. became a contender for the hegemonic position

in the capitalist world, as capital expanded to incorporate the African, Asian, and Latin American peripheries more securely under its control, as the core ruling classes consolidated their rule through a social-democratic alliance with sections of the organized working class; as all of this happened, racism became pervasively integral to the structures of authority (as open/tacit forms of legitimation) and to the structures of rule (to which matters of “legitimacy” are strictly incidental). These relations of rule and authority are complemented within the world-scale social system of production by the increasing coreness of the core via the increasing peripheralization of the periphery, itself a reflection of the ordinary working of the capitalist world-economy. “Wage structures” followed suit everywhere; White workers received higher wages and people of color, lower wages. But in the core during this period the U.S. is the only principal locale of “non-White workers.”

Since inequality was a given, this racial distinction anchored the principal social arrangements of structures of rule and structures of production (as administered and developed by increasingly large-scale, that is, centralized, concentrated capital). The world-scale scope of racism, as fundamental to rule and to the determination of wage scales, made equality an historical impossibility in the United States. No matter what the CPUSA did, inequality between White workers and people of color would have remained a central feature of the society. Only a successful revolution, which would have to have been a world revolution, could have changed this situation. Nonetheless, an American Communist Party made up disproportionately (not necessarily predominantly) of Black and Latino workers and intellectuals would have seriously altered the relations of force between capital and labor in the United States, and would have been a much more serious obstacle to the consolidation of the social-democratic alliance within the United States.

The social-democratic alliance accepts both the hegemony of capital and implicitly a racially structured capitalist world-economy, which allows White workers to assume a more intermediate position within the social division of labor. If the most radical organization of the working class had truly reflected the structure of the working class,

then it would have had a better chance of building a united front based on unity with the most oppressed section of the working class, rather than itself becoming more and more ambivalent about that section—so much so that in the 1960s it would find itself in the rather curious position of having some members branding one of the most exemplary revolutionary leaders in the history of the African-American working class, Malcolm X, a CIA agent. Here we have, dare I say, a repeat of the Garvey debacle, wherein the unity paradigm (that is the presumption that all of the correct strategies and revolutionary consciousness would be captured, or mostly captured, in one organization, the vanguard party) leads ineluctably to sectarian behavior.

The CPUSA presumed the need for unity, but did not seek to develop a genuine united front, which seems to me to have prevented them from being able to learn from the experiences of the nationalist mobilizations among African-Americans in the twentieth century, which of course would have been extremely enriching for the Party's analyses of the world, its political culture, and its development of political line. While some sectors of the CPUSA developed relations with the radical nationalists coming out of the 1960s Black Power movement, for the most part these militants steered clear of the CPUSA which was seen as hopelessly reformist and irrelevant to the struggle for Black liberation. As these militants turned to the Left in the 1970s they formed their own organizations and argued that Black workers should constitute the leadership of any revolutionary movement within the United States. They argued in short that the hegemony of capital over the U.S. working class could not be broken unless other sectors of the population followed its most rebellious and politically conscious segment, the Black working class.

On the other hand the movement to the Left involved a retreat from the militance of the revolutionary nationalists of the 1960s and 1970s who suffered a military defeat seldom analyzed by the new communist movement of the 1970s. The new communist movement of the 1970s tended to view the defeat of the Black Power militants as a consequence of their political and ideological immaturity. As they took up the powerful tools of historical materialism, they unfortunately

tended to liquidate the particularity of their own people's struggle, totally abandoning any attempt to grapple with what we had called the national question except on the most dogmatic Marxist-Leninist terms. It is only if we speak to this question in a new way that we can move beyond the current impasse. This it seems to me is the challenge facing Black intellectuals today.

#### REFERENCES

- Braverman, Harry (1974). *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Labor in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Cruse, Harold (1968). *Rebellion or Revolution*. New York: Morrow.
- Draper, Theodore (1960). *American Communism and Soviet Russia*. New York: Viking.
- Du Bois, W.E.B. (1973). "Marxism and the Negro Problem." Pp. 210-16 in T. G. Vincent, ed., *Voices of a Black Nation: Political Journalism in the Harlem Renaissance*. San Francisco: Ramparts.
- Record, Wilson (1971). *The Negro and the Communist Party*. New York: Atheneum.
-

# CONTENTS

**Immanuel Wallerstein** ix

*Introduction*

## I. GRADUATE EDUCATION: THE FORMATION OF SCHOLARS

**Walter L. Goldfrank** 3

*1. Deja Voodoo All Over Again: Rereading the Classics*

**William G. Martin** 9

*2. Opening Graduate Education: Expanding the Hopkins Paradigm*

**Ravi Arvind Palat** 27

*3. Terence Hopkins and the Decolonization of World-Historical Studies*

**Immanuel Wallerstein** 35

*4. Pedagogy and Scholarship*

## II. METHODS OF WORLD-HISTORICAL SOCIAL SCIENCE

**Reşat Kasaba** 43

*5. Studying Empires, States, and Peoples: Polanyi, Hopkins, and Others*

**Richard E. Lee** 51

*6. Thinking the Past/Making the Future: Methods and Purpose in World-Historical Social Science*

**Philip McMichael** 57

*7. The Global Wage Relations as an Instituted Market*

**Elizabeth McLean Petras** 63

8. *Globalism Meets Regionalism: Process versus Place*

**Beverly Silver** 83

9. *The Time and Space of Labor Unrest*

### III. SCHOLARS AND MOVEMENTS

**Rod Bush** 89

10. *Hegemony and Resistance in the United States: The Contradictions of Race and Class*

**Nancy Forsythe** 101

11. *Theorizing About Gender: The Contributions of Terence K. Hopkins*

**Lu Aiguo** 115

12. *From Beijing to Binghamton and Back: A Personal Reflection on the Trajectory of Chinese Intellectuals*

**Evan Stark** 127

13. *Sociology as Social Work: A Case of Mis-Taken Identity*

**Terence K. Hopkins** 143

14. *Coda*

**Mohammad H. Tamdgidi** 145

*The Utopistics of Terence K. Hopkins, Twenty Years Later: A Postscript*

*Colloquium Photos* 169

*About the Contributors* 193

*Terence K. Hopkins Bibliography* 205

*Index* 309

Copyright © 1998, 2017, by Immanuel Wallerstein; The Fernand Braudel Center for the Study of Economics, Historical Systems, and Civilizations; Mohammad H. Tamdgidi, Ahead Publishing House; each chapter or part by its contributor

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any informational storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher (representing copyright holders) except for a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review.

Published by:  
Ahead Publishing House (imprint: Okcir Press)  
P. O. Box 393 • Belmont, MA 02478 • USA • [www.okcir.com](http://www.okcir.com)  
For ordering or other inquiries contact: [info@okcir.com](mailto:info@okcir.com)



---

Library of Congress Catalog Number (LCCN): 2016920666

For latest and most accurate LOC data for this book, search [catalog.loc.gov](http://catalog.loc.gov) for the above LCCN

---

#### Publisher Cataloging in Publication Data

Mentoring, Methods, and Movements: Colloquium in Honor of Terence K. Hopkins by His Former Students and the Fernand Braudel Center for the Study of Economics, Historical Systems, and Civilizations / Immanuel Wallerstein and Mohammad H. Tamdgidi., eds.

Twentieth Anniversary Second Edition

Belmont, Massachusetts: Ahead Publishing House, 2017

334 pages • 6x9 inches

Includes bibliographical references, photos, chronological bibliography, and index.

ISBN-13: 978-1-888024-98-2 • ISBN-10: 1-888024-98-4 (hard cover: alk. paper)

ISBN-13: 978-1-888024-88-3 • ISBN-10: 1-888024-88-7 (soft cover: alk. paper)

ISBN-13: 978-1-888024-91-3 • ISBN-10: 1-888024-91-7 (PDF ebook)

ISBN-13: 978-1-888024-92-0 • ISBN-10: 1-888024-92-5 (ePub ebook)

1. Hopkins, Terence K., 1929-1997—Congresses.
2. Historical sociology—Congresses.
3. Sociology—Study and teaching (Graduate)—New York (State)—Congresses.
4. Social movements—Congresses. I. Wallerstein, Immanuel, 1930– II. Tamdgidi, Mohammad H., 1959– III. Title

Photo Credits: Sunaryo • Gloria N. Hopkins

Cover and Book Design and Typesetting: Ahead Publishing House

Printed by Lightning Source, LLC. The paper used in the print editions of this book is of archival quality and meets the minimum requirements of ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992 (R1997) (Permanence of Paper). The paper is acid free and from responsibly managed forests. The production of this book on demand protects the environment by printing only the number of copies that are purchased.