



Editorial Note

The Twilight of our Times?

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Much of this issue takes up the topic of engaging with anti-systemic movements and anti-fascist movements in various ways, from the perspective of world history and the immediate present. In these cloudy times, it is important to be reminded that the world of academic intellectuals cannot be separated from power relations within the world-system, and that social scientists still have the responsibility to actively participate in social struggles.

This issue begins with a Symposium, organized and compiled by **Marilyn Grell-Brisk** and **Christopher Chase-Dunn**, in conversation with the late Peter Grimes. These four papers engage with Grimes' contributions to social science that proposed to weave together different disciplines to understand the world we live in. Grell-Brisk's introduction quotes Grimes' unfinished manuscript, *The Twilight of Our Times: The Origins of and Prospects for Human Society*, in which he wrote that "Energy is essential to all life. It always has been, and forever must be...[E]nergy shapes matter to create the forms and behaviors of both the living and non-living things that define our world." These papers present analyses on human behavior and social structures in the past, present, and possible futures by weaving together concepts from physics, the



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natural sciences, and the social sciences to put forward their own exploration of the intersections of these disciplines and how they might enrich our understanding of the world.

The research articles submitted by Bhandari, Plys, Anastasi, and Turkowski and Zarycki, present varied contributions to the field. In “Anti-Systemic Movements in the Attention Economy,” **Bhandari** undertakes an ambitious study of the role that the spread of mobile phones and increasing internet access plays in shifting forms of social relations, now often mediated through social media influenced by algorithms created and managed by powerful capitalist companies, and what that looks like in terms of participation in anti-systemic movements. She makes a compelling argument that shifts in social media engagement with political issues has been driven towards issues that don’t endanger U.S. hegemony; that attention can be drawn from one issue to another through mediated social platforms. She writes that

crucially, hegemonic U.S. interests are not *necessarily* threatened by online chatter about supporting Indigenous traditions and Black rights but are likely to be threatened by continued offline protests demanding an end to exploitation of Indigenous land and the dismantling of the U.S. police state.

In other words, online discourse seems to, especially in the case of Indigenous and Black anti-systemic movements, decrease participation in mass mobilizations offline. This is a timely conversation to have, especially alongside the essay written by **Ezcurdia and Anderson** that introduces a possibility of creating “exilic spaces” within a digital commons, discussing the role it might play in bringing together the global left against the increasing influence of the global right in the world-system.

“Theories of Antifascism in the Interwar Mediterranean Part II: Autonomous Workers Movements and the Café Culture in Italy & Tunisia, 1922–1945” continues **Kristin Plys’** work from the previous issue¹ (footnote link here) with a fascinating look at the role that leisure spaces played in antifascist organizing and mobilization between the world wars. Her analysis of the fascism of the twentieth century walks forward into the resurgence of fascism(s) that we see today, and she writes that “Instead of a ‘left populism’ that endeavors to create a leftist replica of fascist movements, we should situate antifascist strategies at the point of production *and at the point of leisure* to build autonomous resources against fascism.” (emphasis added).

Within academia, shifts in the world-system have impacted allegiances and methods of participation by scholars. In “From Wallerstein to Rothschild: The Sudden Disappearance of the Polish School of Dependency Theory After 1989 as a Manifestation of Deeper Transformations in the Global Field of Social Science,” **Turkowski and Zarycki** provide insight into the shift in the “academic ecosystem” of Poland post-1989, reviewing how the fall of communism impacted the shape of academia in the country with the movement of prominent academics to other careers and political and economic ideologies in line with shifting power relations in the world-system.

¹, “Theories of Antifascism in the Interwar Mediterranean: Fascism in the Longue Durée, Part I” can be found in the *Journal of World-Systems Research* (28) 2 <https://doi.org/10.5195/jwsr.2022.1105>

Finally, **Anastasi** takes up the concept of the “middle-income trap,” weaving it into world-systems analysis to position “middle-income” within the semi-periphery. He undertakes a double case study of Mexico and South Korea to demonstrate the practicality of this amended form of world-systems analysis.

In this issue we have two essays. The first, “Reflections on Walden Bello: The Persecution of the Global Left Vis-À-Vis Intercommunal Solidarity During Hegemonic Crisis,” by **Ezcurdia and Anderson**, which, in addition to their discussion on exilic spaces and digital commons, also offers an important analysis of the censorship and criminalization of political activists in the modern world-system. In “The Field is Upon Us: Anti-Fascist Anthropology as Ethical Imperative,” **Adrienne Pine** proposes an “antifascist anthropology,” calling for academic intellectuals to take an active role in confronting the “neoliberal fascism.” She calls for a refutation of “appropriate” anthropology; instead, the field needs to be a place of “somatic solidarity,” where we need to work “alongside others locally and around the world who are organizing much more effectively against fascism and toward a better future than our profession has ever done.”

Boaventura de Sousa Santos’ commentary “The Silence of the Intellectuals” scrutinizes the seeming absence of intellectuals from current public discourse amidst the present political troubles and catastrophes, with the enjoinder that “history has taught us that, in the periods immediately before the outbreak of wars, all politicians declare themselves against the war while contributing to it by virtue of their actions. Silence is nothing short of complicity with the masters of war.” **William Robinson** offers a fascinating comment on the current geopolitical crisis and a new understanding of imperialism. Finally, we are pleased to publish **Eleanora Gea Piccardi’s** interview with Meral Çiçek, a member of the Kurdish Women’s Movement and the Kurdish Women’s Relation Office. The two activists discuss the proposal for the “world women’s democratic confederalism,” confronting the difficulty of balancing local and global political engagement in anti-systemic movements as well as the role of the new science of *Jineolojî* in developing these movements.

This issue also includes two reviews of the 2022 book *Creolizing the Modern: Transylvania Across Empires* by Anca Parvalescu and Manuela Boatcă. Both reviews, by **Jovanović** and **Itzigsohn**, bring insightful commentary on this book that brings together sociology and comparative literature to discuss modernity and imperialism.