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Globalization from Below: Toward a Collectively Rational and Democratic Global Commonwealth

By CHRISTOPHER CHASE-DUNN

ABSTRACT: This article presents a model of the structures and processes of the modern world-system and proposes a project to transform the system into a democratic and collectively rational global commonwealth. Popular transnational social movements are challenging the ideological hegemony of corporate capitalism. The global women's movement, the labor movement, environmentalist movements, and indigenous movements are attempting to form strong alliances that can challenge the domination of an emerging transnational capitalist class. This article argues that new democratic socialist states in the semiperiphery will be crucial allies and sources of support for the antisystemic movements.

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THE world-systems perspective is a historical and structural theoretical framework that analyzes national societies as parts of a larger stratified sociopolitical and economic system (Shannon 1996). The focus is on the structural features of the larger system itself. It is a world economy with a hierarchical division of labor for the production of different kinds of goods. There are economically and militarily powerful countries in the core, dependent, and dominated regions in the periphery, and a middle sector of countries (the semiperiphery) in which states have intermediate levels of economic and political/military power.

The world market includes both international trade and all the national economies, so the world-system is the whole system, not just international relations. Local, regional, national, international, transnational, and global networks of interaction constitute the world-system. This set of nested and overlapping networks of human interaction is itself located in the biosphere and the physical regimes of the planet Earth, the solar system, our galaxy, and the larger processes and structures of the physical universe. The world-systems perspective is both materialist and institutional. It analyzes the evolution of human institutions while taking account of the constraints and opportunities posed by physics, biology, and the natural environment (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997).

WORLD-SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE

The modern world-system is a global set of interaction networks that include all the national societies. But world-systems have not always been global. The modern world-system originated out of an expanding multicore Afro-Eurasian world-system in which the Europeans rose to hegemony by conquering the Americas and using the spoils to overcome the political and economic strengths of contending core regions in south and east Asia (Frank 1998). The result was a global world-system with a single core region. And because capitalism had become a predominant mode of accumulation in the European core, European hegemony further extended commodification and markets to the rest of the world. The consequence was a capitalistic and globalizing world economy in which states and firms were increasingly focused on competitiveness in commodity production for the global market. Commodification was always much more developed in core regions, whereas in peripheral regions, core colonizers used remnants of the tributary modes of accumulation, especially coercive labor control, to mobilize production for profit. Core regions specialized in the production of capital-intensive goods that required skilled and educated labor, and so their class structures and political institutions became more egalitarian and democratic relative to the

authoritarianism and much greater internal inequalities of most peripheral and many semiperipheral countries.

The capitalism referred to here is not only the phenomenon of capitalist firms producing commodities but also capitalist states and the modern interstate system that is the political backdrop for capitalist accumulation. The world-systems perspective has produced an understanding of capitalism in which geopolitics and interstate conflict are normal processes of capitalist political competition. Socialist movements are, defined broadly, those political and organizational means by which people try to protect themselves from market forces, exploitation, and domination and to build more cooperative institutions. The sequence of industrial revolutions by which capitalism has restructured production and the control of labor has stimulated a series of political organizations and institutions created by workers to protect their livelihoods. This happened differently under different political and economic conditions in different parts of the world-system. Skilled workers created guilds and craft unions. Less skilled workers created industrial unions. Sometimes these coalesced into labor parties that played important roles in supporting the development of political democracies, mass education, and welfare states (Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992). In other regions, workers were less politically successful but managed at least to protect access to rural areas or subsistence plots for a fallback or hedge against the insecurities of

employment in capitalist enterprises. To some extent, the burgeoning contemporary informal sector provides such a fallback.

The varying success of workers' organizations also had an impact on the further development of capitalism. In some areas, workers or communities were successful at raising the wage bill or protecting the environment in ways that raised the costs of production for capital. When this happened, capitalists either displaced workers by automating them out of jobs or capital migrated to where fewer constraints allowed cheaper production. The process of capital flight is not a new feature of the world-system. It has been an important force behind the uneven development of capitalism and the spreading scale of market integration for centuries. Labor unions and socialist parties were able to obtain some power in certain states, but capitalism became yet more international. Firm size increased. International markets became more and more important to successful capitalist competition. Fordism, the employment of large numbers of easily organizable workers in centralized production locations, has been supplanted by flexible accumulation (small firms producing small customized products) and global sourcing (the use of substitutable components from widely spaced competing producers), production strategies that make traditional labor organizing approaches much less viable.

Theories of social structure provoke a standard set of criticisms. They are allegedly deterministic and downplay the importance of human

agency. They are accused of reifying the idea of society (or the world-system), whereas only individual persons are alleged to really exist and to have needs. Structural theories, it is charged, totalize experience and provide ideological covers for domination and exploitation. And they miss the rich detail of locality and period that only thick description can provide.

The world-systems perspective has been accused of all these sins. In this article, I will describe a model of the structures and processes of the modern world-system and propose a project to transform the contemporary system into a democratic and collectively rational global commonwealth. This involves an approach to structure and action first outlined by Friedrich Engels in his *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (1935). The point of building a structural theory is to enable us to understand the broad dynamics of social change in the historical system in which we live. This knowledge is potentially useful to those who want to preserve, modify, or transform the historical system. For Engels, the point was to mobilize the working class to humanize and socialize the world. That is also my intention.

The approach developed here assumes a structural model of the world-system, and it identifies the agents who have both the motive and the opportunity to transform the contemporary world-system into a global socialist commonwealth. I also discuss some of the value bases and the organizational issues that surround the project of transformation. By presenting the model in this way, I

hope to show the critics of structuralism that structural theories need not be deterministic, nor need they undermine social action. By positively stating the model and its implications for action, I hope to get those who would be critical of the modern system to focus on the problems of scientifically understanding and transforming that system.

The scientific approach to world-system transformation needs to avoid the teleological elements of much of Marxism. The ideology of progress has been used to glorify both capitalism and socialism. Progress is not an inevitable outcome of forces that are immanent in the world. The idea of progress only means that many humans can agree about the basics of what constitutes a good life. These are value judgments. But by making these assumptions explicit, we can determine whether social change really constitutes progress as defined.

Inevitabilism also needs to be renounced. Human social change is both historical and evolutionary, but there is nothing inevitable about it. Indeed, another big asteroid or a human-made ecological catastrophe could destroy the whole experiment. Teleology is the idea that progress is inevitable because it comes out of the nature of the universe, or the nature of history, or some other powerful source. For many Marxists, the proletariat has been understood to be the agency of progress. It is important to disentangle the scientific from the unscientific aspects of this idea. Workers may have interests that are compatible with and encourage the development of a more humane

system, but that is not the same as being a magical source of historical progress. Teleology, inevitabilism, and eschatology are powerful bromides for the mobilization of social movements, but they are deceptive and counterproductive when the prophesied utopia fails to arrive. What is needed is an open-ended theory of history that can be useful for practitioners of the arts of transformation. The world-systems perspective can serve this purpose.

THE SPIRAL OF CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM

In core countries, certain sectors of the working classes were able to mobilize political power and raise wages through trade unions and socialist parties. This was made possible by core capital's need for skilled and educated labor. The relatively more democratic political institutions and the development of welfare programs were mainly based on the political efforts of skilled and organized workers (Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992). In some core countries, the relative harmony of class relations was supplemented by the extraction of profits from peripheral regions and the availability of cheap food and raw materials provided by core domination and exploitation of the periphery.

At some times and places, the movements of core workers took a more radical turn and threatened the political hegemony of capital, but the long-run outcome in the core states was not socialist revolution but rather the construction of social

democratic welfare states or the sort of business unionism that emerged in the United States.

In the periphery, colonial elites used coerced labor (serfdom, slavery, indentured servitude) to produce commodities for export to the core. But resistance in the periphery from peasants and workers, as well as nationalist movements supported by small middle-class groups, led to effective anti-imperialist coalitions that were able to achieve decolonization and the rudiments of national sovereignty. These movements created anti-imperial class alliances that after World War II, often utilized socialist ideology. But most of the resultant regimes remained quite dependent on neocolonial relations with capitalist core states. Radical challenges to capitalism in most of the periphery were easily disrupted by overt or covert intervention. Vietnam was a significant exception.

In the world-system framework, the Communist states represented efforts by popular movements in the semiperiphery and the periphery to transform the capitalist world-system into a socialist world-system but also to catch up with core capitalism in terms of economic development. These efforts largely failed because they were not able to transcend the institutional constraints of the capitalist world economy and because the capitalist core states were spurred to develop new technologies of production, political/military control, and global market and political integration in response to the challenges posed by the Communist states. The long-run relationship between capitalism and anticapitalist movements

is a spiral in which the contestants provoke each other to ever-greater feats of mobilization and integration (Boswell and Chase-Dunn 2000).

In some countries in the semiperiphery, radical challenges to capitalism were able to take state power and to partially institutionalize socialist economic institutions. There were great limitations on what was possible despite the fact that there were true revolutions of workers and peasants in Russia, China, Cuba, Yugoslavia, Korea, Albania, and Vietnam.

Socialism in one country was not what the Bolsheviks had in mind. They thought that there would be a world revolution against capitalism after World War I, or at least a revolution in Germany. The decision to hang on in Russia despite the failure of radical regimes to come to power elsewhere may have been a grave mistake. It required the use of both socialist ideology and substantial coercion simply to maintain Communist state power and to mobilize industrialization, urbanization, and education to catch up with core capitalism. This contradiction was already apparent in the time of Lenin. Stalin did not look back.

It was the military part of this equation that was probably the most costly economically and politically. Military-style mass production became the model for the whole "socialist" economy in Russia (Boswell and Peters 1990). Building and supporting a Soviet army that was capable of halting the advance of Germany in World War II meant further concentration of power in the Communist party, the complete

elimination of democracy within the party, and the use of the Communist International as purely the instrument of Russian international interests. The humiliation of the Hitler-Stalin pact and its reversal branded Communism as a form of totalitarianism equivalent to fascism in the minds of millions of democratic socialists all over the globe, as well as playing into the hands of the ideologues of capitalism.

Chirot (1991) and Lupher (1996) argued that Stalinism was mainly a continuation of Russian bureaucratic patrimonialism or oriental despotism. I reject this sort of institutional determinism. I see both structural constraints and historical possibilities. The authoritarian outcome of the Russian revolution was not predetermined, but it was greatly conditioned by Russia's semiperipheral location and the military and economic forces that were brought to bear from the capitalist core states. I agree with Hobsbawm (1994) that this does not excuse the Stalinist repression, but my analysis leaves open the possibility of past and future systemic transformation, while the continuationist frame sees only the end of history.

The Chinese, Cuban, Korean, Yugoslavian, Albanian, and Vietnamese revolutions benefited somewhat from the political space opened up by the Soviet Union. The idea that there was a real alternative to the end of history in the capitalist version of the European Enlightenment was kept alive by the existence of the Soviet Union, despite its grave imperfections. The Chinese, Cuban, Korean, Yugoslavian, Albanian, and

Vietnamese revolutions were able to learn from Russian mistakes to some extent and to try new directions and make mistakes of their own. The most obvious example was Mao's turn to the peasantry. While the Bolsheviks had treated peasants as a conservative foe (despite Lenin's analysis), thus putting the party at odds with the majority of the Russian people, Mao embraced the peasantry as a revolutionary class. The later revolutions also benefited from the maneuverability that Soviet political/military power in the world-system made possible.

The regimes created in central and eastern Europe by the Red Army after World War II were a different breed of cat. In these, socialist ideology and Stalinist development policies were imposed from outside, so they were never politically legitimate in the eyes of most of the population. This major structural fact varied to some extent depending on the strength of preexisting socialist and Communist forces before the arrival of the Red Army. The Soviet Union justified its intervention in terms of proletarian internationalism and creating a buffer zone against the Germans. While the geopolitical justification was plausible from the Russian point of view, it did not help to justify the regimes of the eastern European countries with their own populations. And the noble ideal of proletarian internationalism was besmirched by its use as a fig leaf for setting up these puppet regimes.

Jozsef Borocz's (1999, Table 1) analysis of these eastern and central European "comprador" regimes detailed the many compromises that

the Soviet overlords introduced to increase internal legitimacy. But because of the origin of these regimes in world geopolitics, the legitimacy problem was insoluble. Russian tanks crushed revolts, but the basic problem of legitimacy eventually led to the overthrow of every one of these regimes as soon as Gorbachev lifted the Soviet fist.

POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE WORLD-SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE

Thus, class struggles and anti-imperial movements have been important shapers of the institutional structures of modern capitalism for centuries. The waves of globalization of capitalism in the twentieth century were stimulated in important ways by the challenges posed by the Leninist parties and the Communist states. Contrary to the view that history has ended, anticapitalist movements will continue to emerge in response to expanding and intensifying capitalist development. The most recent wave of transnational economic integration and the political ideology of neoliberal restructuring, downsizing, and competitiveness is provoking workers, peasants, women, indigenous groups, and defenders of the biosphere to mobilize. Some of the resulting movements may employ localist and nationalist organizational structures to protect against market forces and transnational capital, but retreat into xenophobic nationalism is likely to be a recipe for another round of world war. The only effective response is to organize "globalization

from below"—transnational social movements with the goal of building an Earthwide collectively rational and democratic commonwealth.

The age of U.S. hegemonic decline and the rise of postmodernist philosophy have cast the liberal ideology of the European Enlightenment (science, progress, rationality, liberty, democracy, and equality) into the dustbin of totalizing universalisms. It is alleged that these values have been the basis of imperialism, domination, and exploitation and, thus, they should be cast out in favor of each group's asserting its own set of values. Note that self-determination and a considerable dose of multiculturalism (especially regarding religion) were already central elements in Enlightenment liberalism.

The structuralist and historical materialist world-systems approach poses this problem of values in a different way. The problem with the capitalist world-system has not been with its values. The philosophy of liberalism is fine. It has quite often been an embarrassment to the pragmatics of imperial power and has frequently provided justifications for resistance to domination and exploitation. The philosophy of the Enlightenment has never been a major cause of exploitation and domination. Rather, it was the military and economic power generated by capitalism that made European hegemony possible.

To humanize the world-system, we may need to construct a new philosophy of democratic and egalitarian liberation. Of course, many of the principal ideals that have been the core of the Left's critique of capitalism are shared by non-European

philosophies. Democracy in the sense of popular control over collective decision making was not invented in Greece. It was a characteristic of all nonhierarchical human societies on every continent before the emergence of complex chiefdoms and states (Bollen and Paxton 1997). My point is that a new egalitarian universalism can usefully incorporate quite a lot from the old universalisms. It is not liberal ideology that caused so much exploitation and domination. Rather, it was the failure of real capitalism to live up to its own ideals (liberty and equality) in most of the world. That is the problem that progressives must solve.

A central question for any strategy of transformation is the question of agency. Who are the actors who will most vigorously and effectively resist capitalism and construct democratic socialism? Where is the most favorable terrain, the weak link, where concerted action could bear the most fruit? Samir Amin (1990, 1992) contended that the agents of socialism have been most heavily concentrated in the periphery. It is there that the capitalist world-system is most oppressive, and thus peripheral workers and peasants, the vast majority of the world proletariat, have the most to win and the least to lose.

On the other hand, Marx and many contemporary Marxists have argued that socialism will be most effectively built by the action of core proletarians. Since core areas have already attained a high level of technological development, the establishment of socialized production and distribution should be easiest in the

core. And organized core workers have had the longest experience with industrial capitalism and the most opportunity to create socialist social relations. I submit that both "workerist" and "Third Worldist" positions have important elements of truth, but there is another alternative that is suggested by the comparative world-systems perspective: the semiperiphery as the weak link.

Core workers may have experience and opportunity, but a sizable segment of the core working classes lack motivation because they have benefited from a nonconfrontational relationship with core capital. The existence of a labor aristocracy has divided the working class in the core and, in combination with a large middle stratum, has undermined political challenges to capitalism. Also, the long experience in which business unionism and social democracy have been the outcome of a series of struggles between radical workers and the labor aristocracy has created a residue of trade union practices, party structures, legal and governmental institutions, and ideological heritages that act as barriers to new socialist challenges. These conditions have changed to some extent during the past two decades as hypermobile capital has attacked organized labor, dismantled welfare states, and downsized middle-class workforces. These create new possibilities for popular movements within the core, and we can expect more confrontational popular movements to emerge as workers devise new forms of organization (or revitalize old forms). Economic globalization makes labor internationalism a

necessity, and so we can expect to see the old idea take new forms and become more organizationally real. Even small victories in the core have important effects on peripheral and semiperipheral areas because of demonstration effects and the power of core states.

The main problem with Third Worldism is not motivation but opportunity. Democratic socialist movements that have managed to obtain state power in the periphery either have been overthrown by powerful external forces or have forced them to abandon most of their socialist program. Popular movements in the periphery have most usually been anti-imperialist class alliances that have often succeeded in establishing at least the trappings of national sovereignty, but not socialism. The low level of the development of the productive forces in the periphery has made it difficult to establish socialist forms of accumulation, although this is not impossible in principle. It is simply harder to share power and wealth when there is very little of either. But the emergence of new democratic regimes in the periphery will facilitate new forms of mutual aid, cooperative development, and popular movements once the current ideological hegemony of neoliberalism has thoroughly broken down.

SEMIPERIPHERAL DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM

In the semiperiphery, both motivation and opportunity exist. Semiperipheral areas, especially those in which the territorial state is large,

have sufficient resources to be able to stave off core attempts at overthrow and to provide some protection to socialist institutions if the political conditions for their emergence should arise. Semiperipheral regions (e.g., Russia and China) have experienced more militant class-based socialist revolutions and movements because of their intermediate position in the core-periphery hierarchy. While core exploitation of the periphery creates and sustains alliances among classes in both the core and the periphery, in the semiperiphery, an intermediate world-system position undermines class alliances and provides a fruitful terrain for strong challenges to capitalism. Semiperipheral revolutions and movements are not always socialist in character, as we have seen in Iran. But when socialist intentions are strong, there are greater possibilities for real transformation than in the core or the periphery. Thus, the semiperiphery is the weak link in the capitalist world-system. It is the terrain on which the strongest efforts to establish socialism have been made, and this is likely to be true of the future as well.

On the other hand, the results of the efforts so far, while they have undoubtedly been important experiments with the logic of socialism, have left much to be desired. The tendency for authoritarian regimes to emerge in the Communist states betrayed Marx's idea of a freely constituted association of direct producers. And the imperial control of eastern Europe by the Russians was an insult to the idea of proletarian internationalism. Democracy within and

between nations must be a constituent element of true socialism.

It does not follow that efforts to build socialism in the semiperiphery will always be so constrained and thwarted. The revolutions in the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China have increased our collective knowledge about how to build socialism despite their only partial successes and their obvious failures. It is important for all of us who want to build a more humane and peaceful world-system to understand the lessons of socialist movements in the semiperiphery and the potential for future, more successful, forms of socialism there.

Once again, the core has developed new lead industries—computers and biotechnology—and much of large-scale heavy industry, the classical terrain of strong labor movements and socialist parties, has been moved to the semiperiphery. This means that new socialist bids for state power in the semiperiphery (e.g., South Africa, Brazil, India, Mexico, and perhaps Korea) will be much more based on an urbanized and organized proletariat in large-scale industry than the earlier semiperipheral socialist revolutions were. This should have happy consequences for the nature of new socialist states in the semiperiphery because the relationship between the city and the countryside within these countries should be less antagonistic. Less internal conflict will make more democratic socialist regimes possible and will lessen the likelihood of core interference. The global expansion of communications has increased the salience of events in the semi-

periphery for audiences in the core, and this may serve to dampen core state intervention into the affairs of democratic socialist semiperipheral states.

Some critics of the world-systems perspective have argued that emphasis on the structural importance of global relations leads to political "do-nothingism" while we wait for socialism to emerge at the world level. The world-systems perspective does indeed encourage us to examine global-level constraints (and opportunities) and to allocate our political energies in ways that will be most productive when these structural constraints are taken into account. It does not follow that building socialism at the local or national level is futile, but we must expend resources on transorganizational, transnational, and international socialist relations. The environmental and feminist movements are now in the lead, and labor needs to follow their example.

A simple domino theory of transformation to democratic socialism is misleading and inadequate. Suppose that all firms or all nation-states adopted socialist relations internally but continued to relate to one another through competitive commodity production and political/military conflict. Such a hypothetical world-system would still be dominated by the logic of capitalism, and that logic would be likely to repenetrate the socialist firms and states. This cautionary tale advises us to invest political resources in the construction of multilevel (transorganizational, transnational, and international) socialist relations lest

we simply repeat the process of driving capitalism to once again perform an end run by operating on a yet larger scale.

A DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST WORLD-SYSTEM

These considerations lead us to a discussion of socialist relations at the level of the whole world-system. The emergence of democratic collective rationality (socialism) at the world-system level is likely to be a slow process. What might such a world-system look like and how might it emerge? It is obvious that such a system would require a democratically controlled world federation that can effectively adjudicate disputes among nation-states and eliminate warfare (Goldstein 1988). This is a bare minimum. There are many other problems that badly need to be coordinated at the global level: ecologically sustainable development, a more balanced and egalitarian approach to economic growth, and the lowering of population growth rates.

The idea of global democracy is important for this struggle. The movement needs to push toward a kind of popular democracy that goes beyond the election of representatives to include popular participation in decision making at every level. Global democracy can only be real if it is composed of civil societies and national states that are themselves truly democratic (Robinson 1996). And global democracy is probably the best way to lower the probability of another war among core states. For

that reason, it is in everyone's interest.

How might such a global commonwealth come into existence? The process of the growth of international organizations, which has been going on for at least 200 years, will eventually result in a world state—if we are not blown up first. Even international capitalists have some uses for global regulation, as is attested by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and George Soros (1998). Capitalists do not want the massive economic and political upheavals that would likely accompany collapse of the world monetary system, and so they support efforts to regulate ruinous competition and “beggar-thy-neighborism.” Some of these same capitalists also fear nuclear holocaust, and so they may support a strengthened global government that can effectively adjudicate conflicts among nation-states.

Of course, capitalists know as well as others that effective adjudication means the establishment of a global monopoly of legitimate violence. The process of state formation has a long history, and the king's army needs to be bigger than any combination of private armies that might be brought against him. While the idea of a world state may be a frightening specter to some, I am optimistic about it for several reasons. First, a world state is probably the most direct and stable way to prevent nuclear holocaust, a desideratum that must be at the top of everyone's list. Second, the creation of a global state that can peacefully adjudicate disputes among nations will transform the existing interstate system.

The interstate system is the political structure that stands behind the maneuverability of capital and its ability to escape organized workers and other social constraints on profitable accumulation. While a world state may at first be dominated by capitalists, the very existence of such a state will provide a single focus for struggles to socially regulate investment decisions and to create a more balanced, egalitarian, and ecologically sound form of production and distribution.

The progressive response to neoliberalism needs to be organized at national, international, and global levels if it is to succeed. Democratic socialists should be wary of strategies that focus only on economic nationalism and national autarchy as a response to economic globalization. Socialism in one country has never worked in the past, and it certainly will not work in a world that is more interlinked than ever before. The old forms of progressive internationalism were somewhat premature, but internationalism has finally become not only desirable but also necessary. This does not mean that local, regional, and national-level struggles are irrelevant. They are just as relevant as they always have been. But they need to also have a global strategy and global-level cooperation lest they be isolated and defeated. Communications technology can certainly be an important tool for the kinds of long-distance interactions that will be required for truly international cooperation and coordination among popular movements. It would be a mistake to pit global strategies against national or

local ones. All fronts should be the focus of a coordinated effort.

W. Warren Wagar (1996) has proposed the formation of a "World Party" as an instrument of "mundialization"—the creation of a global socialist commonwealth. His proposal has been critiqued from many angles—as a throwback to the Third International and so forth. I suggest that Wagar's idea is a good one, that a party of the sort he is advocating will indeed emerge, and that it will contribute a great deal toward bringing about a more humane world-system. Self-doubt and postmodern reticence may make such a direct approach appear Napoleonic. It is certainly necessary to learn from past mistakes, but this should not prevent our debating the pros and cons of positive action.

The international segment of the world capitalist class is indeed moving slowly toward global state formation. The World Trade Organization is only the latest element in this process. Rather than simply oppose this move with a return to nationalism, progressives should make every effort to organize social and political globalization and to democratize the emerging global state. We need to prevent the normal operation of the interstate system and future hegemonic rivalry from causing another war among core powers (e.g., Wagar 1992; see also Bornschier and Chase-Dunn 1998). And we need to shape the emerging world society into a global democratic commonwealth based on collective rationality, liberty, and equality. This possibility is present in existing and evolving structures. The agents are all those

who are tired of wars and hatred and who desire a humane, sustainable, and fair world-system. This is certainly a majority of the people of the Earth.

In conclusion, the main point is that the semiperiphery remains the weak link of global capitalism—the structural region where the contradictions between core and periphery and between classes intersect powerfully to generate antisystemic movements. But Terry Boswell and I have also argued that the post-Communist societies are less likely than other semiperipheral countries to generate strong support for future democratic socialist movements (Chase-Dunn and Boswell 1999). Also, I do not expect antisystemic movements to take state power through revolutionary upheavals again. Rather, the much larger proletariats of the non-post-Communist semiperipheral countries and the availability of support from allied groups in the core and the periphery will make it possible for these movements to win legal elections. This path will have a much better chance of avoiding the pitfalls of authoritarianism and war. That is why I am optimistic about the prospects for democratic socialism. But as before, socialism in one country will not work. The semiperipheral socialist governments of the future will necessarily have to join the transnational movements for globalization from below.

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