the cycles of capitalism entirely. Even supposing there will be a new hegemon in the form of a state, there is no particular reason why this hegemon should be egalitarian or ecologically friendly. The assumption that it will be is wishful thinking on Arrighi’s part. Granted, it would need to be so in order to solve the problems inherited from the previous hegemons — but which hegemon has ever, in fact, solved these problems? One must surely look beyond the system for transformative alternatives to it.

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Benedict Anderson

**Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-Colonial Imagination**

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ISBN: 978-1844670901 (pbk) £10

reviewed by April R. Biccum

Benedict Anderson’s follow up to *Imagined Communities* takes us back, in historical detail, to the fin de siècle anti-colonial mobilisation in the Philippines. The focus of Anderson’s study are the connections made between two nationalist insurrections in Cuba and the Philippines through a dense interpersonal network of novelists, activists and scholars with near-global reach, and it thus weaves a complicated web of personalities, documents, events and narrative. In *Under Three Flags*, Anderson offers us a work of history and a close reading of key figures, their seminal texts, and detailed accounts of their production and circulation. Anderson’s study is anchored around three Filipino men who were instrumental to Filipino nationalism, and who were engaged in this dense, transcontinental exchange of letters, pamphlets, articles, academic studies and novels. Anderson’s detailed account of the lives and works of novelist Jose Rizal, anthropologist and journalist Isabelo de los Reyes and coordinating organiser Mariano Ponce comprises a complex combination of literary criticism, sociological and political study and historiography that includes Anderson’s own translations of texts and detailed erudition of archival material.

Anderson returns us to the theme of print media explored in *Imagined Communities*, and his study demonstrates the importance of the novel form to burgeoning nationalisms — a fact also explored through postcolonial theory. Anderson sets out to supply us with a ‘political astronomy’, attempting to ‘map the gravitational force of anarchism’ between opposing poles of nationalism as they emerged at empire’s end. Anarchism, for Anderson, overcomes many of the shortcomings of Marxism, which were apparent at the time of Anderson’s focus and have continued to echo through debates between neo-Marxism, anti-imperialism, single-issue movements and identity politics. Anderson is drawing our attention to the textuality of these encounters across time, space, language and culture in an era he refers to as late-nineteenth-century ‘early globalisation’. His point is that this is the first time in history that such a transglobal coordination of political events has become possible thanks to the technology and circulation of print media and the mobility of
cosmopolitan, elite, and multilingual personalities, all connected in some way or another to the hub of European anarchist activism. The very slight argumentative frame of Anderson’s account is that it is through this transglobal ‘imagined community’ that activists on different continents learned how to ‘do’ revolution, and that the most reliable allies of Filipino and Cuban anti-colonial agitators were this hub of European anarchists. I say ‘slight argumentative frame’, because while Anderson emphasises it in the introduction, any evaluation or analysis of the importance of this claim falls away completely in his dense reading of events, texts and personalities. But in fact, this is an important claim for a few reasons.

First, because of the kinds of schisms that have occurred in the last twenty years in the academic left with the rise of post-structuralist epistemological frameworks across the social sciences. Post-structuralism has had a particular impact on postcolonial theory, which has quite broadly examined the historical, sociological, geographical and literary configurations of anti-colonial, nationalist and postcolonial state formation. These histories have highlighted the incommensurabilities of anti-colonial mobilisation and the framework of classical Marxism, which has produced a scepticism toward postcolonial studies on the part of many contemporary Marxist scholars, exacerbated by the post-structuralist inflection of much postcolonial scholarship. This has led to infeld schisms and to formerly-Marxist-turned-postcolonial theorists such as Robert Young writing the history of postcoloniality in a way that inscribes an organic affinity between the complex tradition of Marxism and the anti-colonial imagination (Young, 2001). Anderson’s claim that it is anarchists’ activism that had the most affinity with anti-colonial nationalists complicates any easy assumptions about counter-hegemonic activity in the metropole, particularly because there are fundamental ideological differences between Fabian socialists, Marxists, and anarchists that bear out different relationships with the periphery, from solidarity to assimilation to further intervention. This simultaneously corroborates and problematises both postcolonial critiques of Marxism and the assumption that anti-colonialism is a singularity of sentiment, either in the metropole or in the periphery.

The second reason Anderson’s claims are important has to do with the ambivalent relationship between communications and globalisation that is a function of the multiple interfaces produced by the networked character of its territorial configuration. Anderson stresses that readers will ‘not be mistaken to find resonances with their own time’, because some of the same patterns we witness today will have their origins in his study. The networked patterns of communication and transportation of capitalist globalisation that enable its patterns of accumulation are the same networks that can be deployed to recapture surplus (i.e. the shadow economy), and can be hijacked to service counter-hegemonic or counter-insurgent activities: witness the ‘Battle of Seattle’ or the phenomenon of ‘cyber-conflict’ (see Karatzogianni, 2004). The network bears an ambivalent relation to capital and empire — something eloquently demonstrated by Anderson’s study and born out by contemporary developments. The question, then, is one of historiography. Given the voluminous recent literature on both globalisation and empire, it seems that historicity is in crisis. While Anderson’s locus of study is certainly legitimate on its own terms, his claim that ‘early globalisation’ begins at this juncture would surely be called into question by many historians of the longue durée. The migration of people, ideas and the networks these furnish are as central to nineteenth-century empires as they are to twentieth-century globalisations. This has implications for whether one theorises contemporaneity as a ‘new’ US imperialism, or as an empire bearing continuities with empires past (see Mabee, 2004). Following the
emphasises of much postcolonial theory, it seems that one could say that it is more than that history-writing has political implications; rather, it is that writing history is itself politics. In this sense, every account of politics has embedded in it a narrative of history, and every account of history works to delineate subjective agency, making Anderson’s lack of a more abstracted level of analysis and evaluation a significant shortcoming.

At a moment in which the figure of empire has resurfaced, it seems prescient to focus instead on a close empirical analysis of anti-colonial mobilisation. In so doing, Anderson deftly demonstrates both the complexity of the characters, locations and movements, and the way globalisation exceeds the twentieth century in its scope and origin. Anderson illustrates the push and pull of three spheres of influence, several acts of betrayal and different trajectories of critique and alliance, which should easily give the lie to statist assumptions about how international relations were conducted prior to the Second World War. The truly global span of Rizal and company’s communicative stretch and alliance resonates profoundly with contemporary issues of migration, citizenship, extra-territorial allegiance, economic remittances, and diasporic mobilisation in today’s war on terror.

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Göran Therborn (ed.)

Inequalities of the World: New Theoretical Frameworks, Multiple Empirical Approaches

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ISBN: 1-84467-519-X (pbk) £20

reviewed by Gerard Cotterell

This collection of chapters edited by Göran Therborn seeks to widen the discussion of inequality beyond its usual focus on income distribution. In doing so, Therborn does not seek to deny the importance of income inequality, but rather looks to expand the scope of the debate. The book begins with an introductory chapter by Therborn which, on its own, is worth the price of the book and which, for those seeking to understand the issue of inequality, is an ideal place to start.

Therborn’s aim is to provide an analytic framework within which to understand inequality. He begins by arguing that the issue of inequality is best understood when it is conceptualised in the plural — as ‘inequalities’. Inequalities, Therborn suggests, have three primary dimensions: inequality of life and death (vital inequality); the unequal treatment of humans as persons (existential inequality); and inequality of resources, which has a wider definition than just income inequality and includes such things as education and social networks. The mechanisms that operate to enforce these inequalities are distantiation, hierarchisation, exclusion and exploitation. Of