

## The Marxist tradition as a dialectical anthropology: 40 years on

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Published online: 24 May 2016  
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Dialectical Anthropology is in its 40th year of publication. We are marking this anniversary with a two-part special section of the journal dedicated to exploring Marxist Anthropology, past, present, and future.

The aim of this two-part collection is to bring cross-generational works of scholarship in Marxist anthropology to the fore. Toward this end, we have invited authors to contribute papers that address the theoretical, methodological, and epistemological concerns of dialectical approaches and historical materialism to interrogating the social world. Within this general mandate, authors were given a free hand to engage with the paradigms of Marxist enquiry as a means to structure and discuss research as well as to analyze and theorize capitalist transformation across time, space, and disciplines.

The articles that have been assembled are wide in ethnographic scope and engage with the ideas of a range of classical and neoclassical Marxist theorists, including V. I. Lenin, Antonio Gramsci, Georg Lukacs, Rosa Luxemburg, Ernst Bloch, Louis Althusser, E. P. Thompson, Eric Hobsbawn, Ernest Mandel, David Harvey, Fred Jameson, Walter Benjamin as well as their anarchist and postmodern interlocutors. In Part 1, authors offer considerations of the changing dimensions of financialization, crises, debt, the dynamics of accumulation, gender, value, labor, neoliberalization, unevenness, exploitation, state formations, austerity, transitional demands,

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hegemony, and imperialism. They also consist of meditations on the nature of class and popular struggle, transitional and transformational social movements as well as political engagement within anthropology and beyond.

As this is the ruby anniversary issue of *Dialectical Anthropology*, we also reflect on and engage with Anglo-American Anthropology, a field from which our journal emerged. The journal's founder, Stanley Diamond, was part of a group of Columbia University PhD students in the 1950s who formed the "the Mundial Upheaval Society" (see also Richard Lee, this issue).<sup>1</sup> Along with Diamond, Eric Wolf, Sidney Mintz, Morton Fried, and Elman Service were among the key participants. Sharing the experience of volunteered military service to fight fascism in the second inter-imperialist war, this cohort of young scholars entered the Columbia PhD program in Anthropology, as part of the US G. I. Bill. This bill provided funding for returning soldiers to pursue a university education. These future Marxist anthropologists were part of the leading edge of a mass migration into tertiary education for the American working class that would revitalize US academe and scholarship in the years before post-Sputnik panic educational expansion made college a universal aspiration.

Diamond was, however, a little different. Taking a nonlinear and more circuitous path into the academy, he chose the life of a dissident-wanderer, poet-activist, political troublemaker, and movement mentor. Diamond often prioritized non-anthropologists and non-academics. He casted his nets beyond the discipline and put his passions and political commitments ahead of employment, stability, and scholarly success. It was out of this intellectual, social, and political wanderlust that Diamond brought to birth *Dialectical Anthropology*.

Our goal, as stated on the Web site, remains the same as in Diamond's day—*Dialectical Anthropology* orients itself toward "the transformation of class society through internationalizing conversations about the stakes of contemporary crises and the means for social change." However, the environment in which we work as well as the tasks and perspectives that guide our work have changed over the years. It is for this reason that we use this fortieth year reflection to consider what has changed and where we are going both as a journal and a species living on this planet. For this reason, we have included not only the interventions of many scholars on the contemporary dynamics and historical transformations of capitalism. We are also pleased to include editors from the past and long-standing editors who reflect on their experiences of managing the legacy of Diamond's journal. They do this by addressing the conjuncture within which they were operating, while being true to their own intellectual ambitions. These reflections appear in the "Editors Corner" section which follows the articles.

We continue to seek the input of those who share these orientations and commitments and who are working both within and outside of the traditional intellectualism that Gramsci identified with academic employment. We welcome comments, revisions, and new perspectives that may contribute to a theoretically vigorous body of left scholarship that stimulates the imagination and activities of scholars in anthropology.

<sup>1</sup> We must footnote Eleanor "Happy" Leacock, since she was also in Columbia during this period, but was never a part of this Marxist boy's club. Her work on the Montagnais-Naskapi on the origins of gender inequality, especially her introduction to Friedrich Engels' *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*, stands as among the finest Marxist Anthropology ever conceived and executed.