

prophetic and progressive sociological perspective. If I could have made a suggestion during the writing of this volume, I would have advised that another of Du Bois's major sociological considerations included the interrelationships among race, democracy, and development. The latter two of these issues were fundamental questions addressed by other classical social theorist such as Marx, Durkheim, and Weber. In fact, it could be argued that Du Bois's *Black Reconstruction* and his well-known desire to follow that publication with a volume on "a search for democracy" foreshadowed the work of Barrington Moore and Theda Skocpol.

As we come to the end of this book, we are left satisfied, convinced, and enlightened by the author's characterization of Du Bois as a "trans-disciplinary human scientist and critical social theorist." He helps the reader to recognize that Du Bois could be a pan-Africanist and a Europhile; that Du Bois's politics could simultaneously be black nationalist and the best of radical humanist; that Du Bois's social scientific advocacy was some of the best propaganda against human degradation; that as a "race man" Du Bois was a pioneer in the fight for women's rights; and that the Du Boisian articulations of bourgeois elitism developed into a critique of dogmatic Marxism. Finally, this volume is necessary reading for the newly reinvigorated interest in Du Bois's contribution to sociology, history, philosophy, political science, economics, education, criminology, and religion.

Envisioning Real Utopias. By Erik Olin Wright. New York: Verso, 2010. Pp. xviii+394. \$26.95.

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Envisioning Real Utopias is the capstone of Erik Olin Wright's prodigious 20-year effort to imagine a future beyond capitalism, one that assures "human flourishing" for all. Six volumes on such topics as *Gender Equality* (2009), *Deepening Democracy* (2003), and *Redesigning Distribution* (2006) have been previously published, also by Verso, and more are in the works; each of these volumes is a collection of invited essays built around a core proposal for change in a specific area. As the Real Utopias Project website (<http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/RealUtopias.htm>) states, "The basic idea is to combine serious normative discussions of the underlying principles and rationales for different emancipatory visions with the analysis of pragmatic problems of institutional design." In this volume, Wright seeks to provide "a larger framework of analysis" (p. xi) and to document the possibility of a future social world arranged entirely differently from our own. In this, he succeeds admirably. Always a clear, engaging, and logical thinker, Wright brings together in this volume scholarship in political economy, democracy studies, and socialism, a critique of capitalism and

of Marx's theory of its decline, a new theory of historical transformation and strategies to achieve the same, and a study of on-the-ground alternatives.

The heart of the story in *Envisioning Real Utopias* is found in part 2, "Alternatives." These chapters (4–7) describe the real-life examples of alternatives to capitalism that have impressed Wright with their creativity and originality. These alternative institutions provide goods or services outside capitalism or typical top-down government: Wikipedia, which is produced by volunteers and is available without charge; participatory, bottom-up city budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil; and the Mondragon worker-owned cooperatives, aided by a worker-owned bank—now the seventh largest business group in Spain.

The earlier chapters provide context and situate Wright's study of these real utopias in his understanding of social science and of the socialist endeavor. "The Tasks of Emancipatory Social Science" (chap. 2) will be especially useful to those who believe there is no value-free science and would like to enlist science in the social change movement. As outlined by Wright, it is emancipatory because it is used to challenge various forms of human oppression, scientific because it generates methodical knowledge of how the world works, and social because it recognizes that human emancipation requires transformation of institutions (paraphrasing p. 10). Wright notes that emancipatory social science requires a normative concept of justice. He develops the concept of "human flourishing," which is akin to Amartya Sen's notion of capabilities in *Development as Freedom* (Oxford University Press, 1999), and states: "In a socially just society, all people would have broadly equal access to the necessary material and social means to live flourishing lives" (p. 11).

Chapter 3 provides a thorough and concise summary (50 pages) of the harms inflicted by capitalism that incorporates the latest scholarship on public goods, externalities, efficiency, and inequality. I hope it will be widely used in classrooms. This chapter also serves as a useful update of Marx's *Capital* (a book that is strongest in its critique of capitalism). It is in the following chapter (4), which begins the "Alternatives" section, that Wright provides an even more succinct (20 pages) and equally cogent critique of Marx's theory of the downfall of capitalism and the transitions to socialism and communism. This chapter, too, could profitably be read on its own, for its straightforward abandonment of Marx's claim that capitalism contains the seeds of its own destruction because it unites the working class.

Wright then sets the stage for his own theory of transformation. Recognizing that the theory and knowledge of how to arrive at a "radical democratic egalitarian alternative to capitalism" (p. 110) is underdeveloped, Wright suggests that the best we can do is assess whether the institutional change we are working toward is moving us in the right direction. Using both theory and empirical investigation, Wright describes and analyzes a number of existing alternatives in chapters 6 and 7, among

the meatiest and longest in the book, and then speculates about how these and other alternatives might grow and eventually supplant capitalism. Wright argues that a metamorphosis into a postcapitalist society, to remain successfully democratic, would have to come about slowly and through strengthening democratic participation, not through a more dramatic rupture in which capitalism collapses.

Wright distinguishes two types of ongoing changes: those in which people largely ignore the state and set up their own production processes, which he labels interstitial, and those in which people use the state to control capital, which he labels symbiotic. The Swedish welfare state is an example of the latter and the Mondragon worker coops an example of the former. Wright's curiosity is clearly excited by the variety and creativity of the ways people have found to operate in the interstices of capital, and less by the bureaucratic welfare states that have succeeded in controlling the worst excesses of capital and improving the quality of life for many. For those of us who have turned toward influencing state policy, Wright provides considerable insight—but insufficient guidance. I saw myself in the midst of his discussion of symbiotic transformation, while examining figure 11.8, perplexed by how to move the United States from where it is shown on the downward part of the curve to the upward region where Sweden is located.

Another absence is the lack of discussion of human reproduction in *Envisioning Real Utopias*. Like most economics texts, Wright takes the production of goods and services as his central problem. While he believes society should be organized so that humans can flourish amid production, the very human business of creating and nurturing human life, work that is primarily done by women, is only briefly touched upon. Wright notes that capitalism tends to devalue the needs of children, but he seems to think that this problem, like racism, sexism, and other forms of inequality, will wither away once workers control capital. The institutional designs that are needed to aid *this* transformation are apparently not seen as requiring the same kind of systematic study.

These lacks aside, Wright's magnum opus should be read by all those who are looking for ways to improve human flourishing, those who are skeptical of alternatives to capitalism as well as those who are looking for them.