

Award statement Roderick Bush August 17, 2014

On behalf of the Marxist section, and its Lifetime Achievement Award Committee (with Kevin Anderson, & Warren Goldstein) it is with great pleasure that we make this year's Award to Roderick Bush.

The sad part is that, since Rod passed away suddenly last fall, this will be a posthumous award, and we are grateful that his spouse, Melanie, is here to receive it.

I met Rod and Melanie through Bill DiFazio, around the time when he moved to St. John's from Seton Hall University. Although the committee was familiar with Rod's work, his nomination was special opportunity to review a very impressive lifetime achievement.

What struck the committee was Rod's constant commitment to both political activism and scholarship. Rod had a sweeping vision, always connecting Black Nationalism and class struggle, national and international struggles, Black internationalism and the color line.

Rod attended Howard University from 1963 to 1967, a time of intense student political activism at the university. After graduation, Rod's political consciousness developed as he worked with Black and working class families in Kansas, when he was enrolled in the Ph. D. program in Psychology. Committed to Black liberation struggles, he was involved there with the Congress of African Peoples and the Student Organization for Black Unity. He moved to the San Francisco Bay area and was involved in community organizing, working with projects such as the US out of Central America. In 1985, Rod and Melanie moved to Brooklyn, where he worked at the New York City Technical College Riker's Island Project, and the Brooklyn Educational Opportunity Center. He enrolled in the sociology Ph.D. program at State University of New York- Binghamton to study under Manny Wallerstein and Terry Hopkins and completed his Ph.D. in 1992. His dissertation title was "Social Movements among the Urban Poor: African Americans in the Twentieth Century." Out of this examination of race and class, his first book, *We Are Not What We Seem: Black Nationalism and Class Struggle in the American Century*, was awarded the 2000 Oliver Cromwell Cox Award of the American Sociological Association. Sweeping, learned, synoptic, from Du Bois, Cruse, Boggs, with a vision from the history of the black liberation struggle and from world systems analysis, this is quite an achievement. His next book, *The End of White*

World Supremacy: Black Internationalism and the Problem of the Color Line continues this extraordinary historical and theoretical sweep, making the connections between internationalism and black nationalism, linking Black Power and the spirit of Bandung, black radicals and the world left. It won our section's 2010 Paul Sweezy outstanding book Award. Just around the time when he fell suddenly ill, Melanie and Rod were working on the proofs for what now will be his final book, *Tensions in the "American" Dream: Rhetoric, Reverie or Reality* co-authored with Melanie. Bush. It will be released by Temple University Press in January 2015, and interrogates the contradiction between American ideals of inclusion, and the reality of marginalization based on race, class, and gender.

More recently was a member of the national council of the Black Radical Congress and also of the Executive Board of the Left Forum. There he continued to connect Black Left and Black Nationalist communities with progressive and radical and progressive movements.

From his recent work on "Black Internationalism and Transnational Africa" his reformulation of structure and agency regarding notions of the 'internal colony,' his radio talks with Bill DiFazio on WBAI, and others on WLIB, his work with *Socialism and Democracy* and with Left Forum, his period as Chair of the ASA section on Racial and Ethnic Minorities, Rod has been a model of activism and scholarship.

There is much more to say and little time, so in conclusion I want to note first three things. First, please look at Bob Newby's superb and very moving obituary in the July/August ASA Footnotes if you have not gotten a chance. Also, check out the wonderful website rodbush.org. Finally, during tomorrow, Monday, August 18, the *Critical Sociology Conference* will have two sessions as a tribute and reflection on The Life and Work of Rod Bush. It will be at the San Francisco Marriott Marquis.

Rod was a force and has left a mark. Melanie, we are honored to bestow this award to Rod.