

The End of White World Supremacy: Black Internationalism and the Problem of the Color Line. Randolph Hohle.

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References

Hohle, R. (2011). The End of White World Supremacy.. *Social Forces (University Of North Carolina Press)*, 89(3), 1062-1063.

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The End of White World Supremacy: Black Internationalism and the Problem of the Color Line
By Roderick D. Bush

Temple University Press. 2009. 259 pages. \$79.50 cloth, \$28.95 paper.

Roderick Bush's *The End of White World Supremacy* takes you on an intellectual journey that starts at the heart of the modern capitalist system: colonialism, slavery and America. For those of you familiar with Emmanuel Wallerstein's world systems theory and the history of black intellectual thought, you will find the historical and theoretical matter more of a literature refresher. For those of you who are less familiar, get ready, because Bush trudges through many moments, events and sites of leftist struggle against the world capitalist system as he constructs a theory of black internationalism. He does not provide any new empirical evidence or offer a new explanation of the world capitalist system, reconstruction or the civil rights era. Indeed, Bush tends to downplay the national significance of the New Negro Movement and the civil rights movement to emphasize how these anti-colonial struggles happened everywhere and were not exclusive to the United States. His real contribution is in articulating black internationalism as an autonomous and unified theory of and resistance to systematic racism, which he situates somewhere between Marx and Weber--a revolutionary system of thought weary of progress and

modernity. *The End of White World Supremacy* is less of an approach to understanding the rise of Western power and more of a blueprint as to how the majority non-white world can rise to power.

Black internationalism provides a critique of capitalism without reducing the critique to standard Marxist fare. Bush argues that black internationalism is a theoretical approach to simultaneously resist racial and class domination. Rather than view black internationalism as a political movement, he contends that it articulates itself in American black social movements and anti-colonial struggles around the world. Thus, black internationalism is flexible, malleable and adaptable, which explains its long lasting impact and significance. Indeed, Bush likens the flexibility of black internationalism to the world capitalist system's ability to incorporate liberalism and democracy into its framework, thus, making the world capitalist system impossible to resist through standard class-union struggles. I found it interesting that that black internationalism would manifest itself most clearly in the United States during the time that America was a strong core state, and, conversely, how it dissipated with China's rise to power. Although we may think of globalization and nation-state power as an inverse relationship, how the articulation of resistance to the world capitalist system takes form within a national context seems to indicate the opposite: that global resistance manifests itself at the core rather than at the margins.

Ultimately, this is a theoretical book and it should be judged on its merits of what it offers to social movement and world systems theories. The logic Bush identifies is somewhat simple to follow. If world capitalism is systemic, and racism, which originated in slavery and colonialism, is at the heart of world capitalism, then racism has to be systemic. Bush attacks what he sees as a series of false binaries within black political discourse, especially between race and class, which materializes in the race first or class first debate, in an effort to put forth a unitary theory of black internationalism that poses the best, if not the only, challenge to the world capitalist system. Washington vs. DuBois breaks down based on their shared understanding of the global poor and ambivalence over a national framework. Malcolm vs. Martin breaks down based on their shared understanding of the global poor and shared critique of U.S. foreign policy.

However, a series of unexplained and unexamined paradoxes emerge to trouble this approach, notably with an identifiable pattern that black internationalism was only articulated at end of the struggles between competing factions within black movements. It seems that emergence of the liberal factions of black resistance paved the way for more liberationist, and subsequently, international approaches. We never see a global approach, or black international approach, give way to a liberal approach. Could the dynamics of black resistance be found in the competing factions or at the national framework, whereas the singular global framework weakens black resistance? Rather than identify a single point of consensus that was ultimately undermined with nation-state surveillance and military actions, could the move toward a more global understanding of racial domination associated with black internationalism have contributed with the declines of each of the movements? In the end, *The End of White World Supremacy* serves as an interesting read for sociologists entering the scholarly world of politics and race.

ADDED MATERIAL

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