

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نباشد تن من مباد بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

MARCH 2, 2018

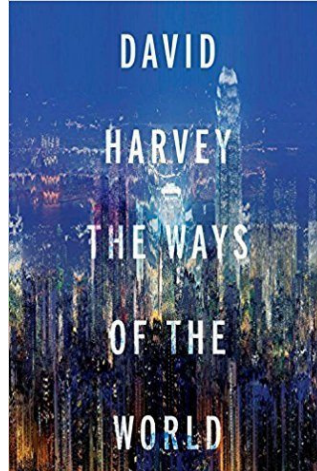
by RON JACOBS
05.03.2018

The Geography of Marxism

David Harvey is a geographer and a Marxist. A collection of his works titled *The Ways of the World* was recently published in paperback. A collection pulled from his writing and lectures, the works are insightful, both in their approach to the world and the manner in which he combines geography and Marxism. Geography is more than just places on the planet and their representation on a map. It is also an examination of how humans and their interactions with the earth and with each other affect the planet's ecology, climate and future. Buildings, roads, resource extraction, industry and population are but a few of the factors that go into the study of modern geography. The economy of capitalism influences them all. Therefore, a Marxist analysis provides a critical look at the nature of the influence capitalism plays. It is quite often not very pretty. However, once one accepts the approach, many things that made little sense before become clearer.

That is the beauty of Marxism. It clarifies phenomena that was once confusing, sometimes plain nonsensical, often inhuman, and always obfuscated. When David Harvey is providing the analysis, his explanations are straightforward and clear. Of course, his word is not the final one, but what he adds to any debate on economics, politics and the world we live in almost always provokes conversation. Not always polite, mind you, but always thought-provoking. Ideally, those conversations and debates create a new synthesis from which a better understanding of our situation can evolve. One such essay in this book is titled "The New Imperialism." Harvey's similarly titled book and this essay have instigated a necessary and useful discussion regarding the nature of imperialism in the

twenty-first century. Likewise, his essay on the shift from what he terms managerialism to entrepreneurialism in the administration of capitalist cities enables progressive and Left grassroots organizations with an understanding that can help fight the bankers' and developers' plans for urban United States.



Capitalism is constantly re-inventing itself. This is a basic message of this text, especially when considered in its entirety. Harvey mentions a fundamental rule of capitalism: it must maintain a minimum rate of growth of three per cent. He argues that it will do whatever it takes to maintain that rate. As he describes it, “capitalism is littered with technologies which were tried and did not work, utopian schemes for the promotion of new social relations (like the Icarian communes in the nineteenth century USA, the Israeli kibbutzim in the 1950s or today’s “green communes”) only to be either co-opted or abandoned in the face of a dominant capitalist logic.” (314) With this cancerous approach to economics, capitalism destroys the planet. Yet, it continues to expand. This is one of the most important messages of this book. It is why capitalism itself must be defeated if we are to survive. There is no other path.

Perhaps the most interesting (and certainly the most poetic) essay in the book is titled “Monument and Myth.” It is a history of the Basilica de Sacré-Coeur in Paris. It is also a history of workers’ resistance and rebellion in that fair city. This means it is also a history of the royalist and reactionary resistance to that resistance. Woven seamlessly throughout this discussion of French history is an examination of the meaning of buildings and statuary—an examination quite relevant to the current battle over monuments to slavery and the Confederacy in states across the US South (and similar debates elsewhere around monuments to the genocide of Native Americans and its champions.) The idea that history is not subjective is given a serious blow in this piece.

Likewise, the idea that capitalism and its need to expand does not affect the environment we live in is given a serious blow in this text. In other words, human economics (not humane economics) do affect the environment. Harvey's scholasticism and insight combine to create a unified argument for radical change in the capitalist nations, especially the United States. Although it is little more than an introduction to his work, David Harvey's *The Ways of the World* can easily be classified as one of the more important expositions of contemporary Marxist thought.