

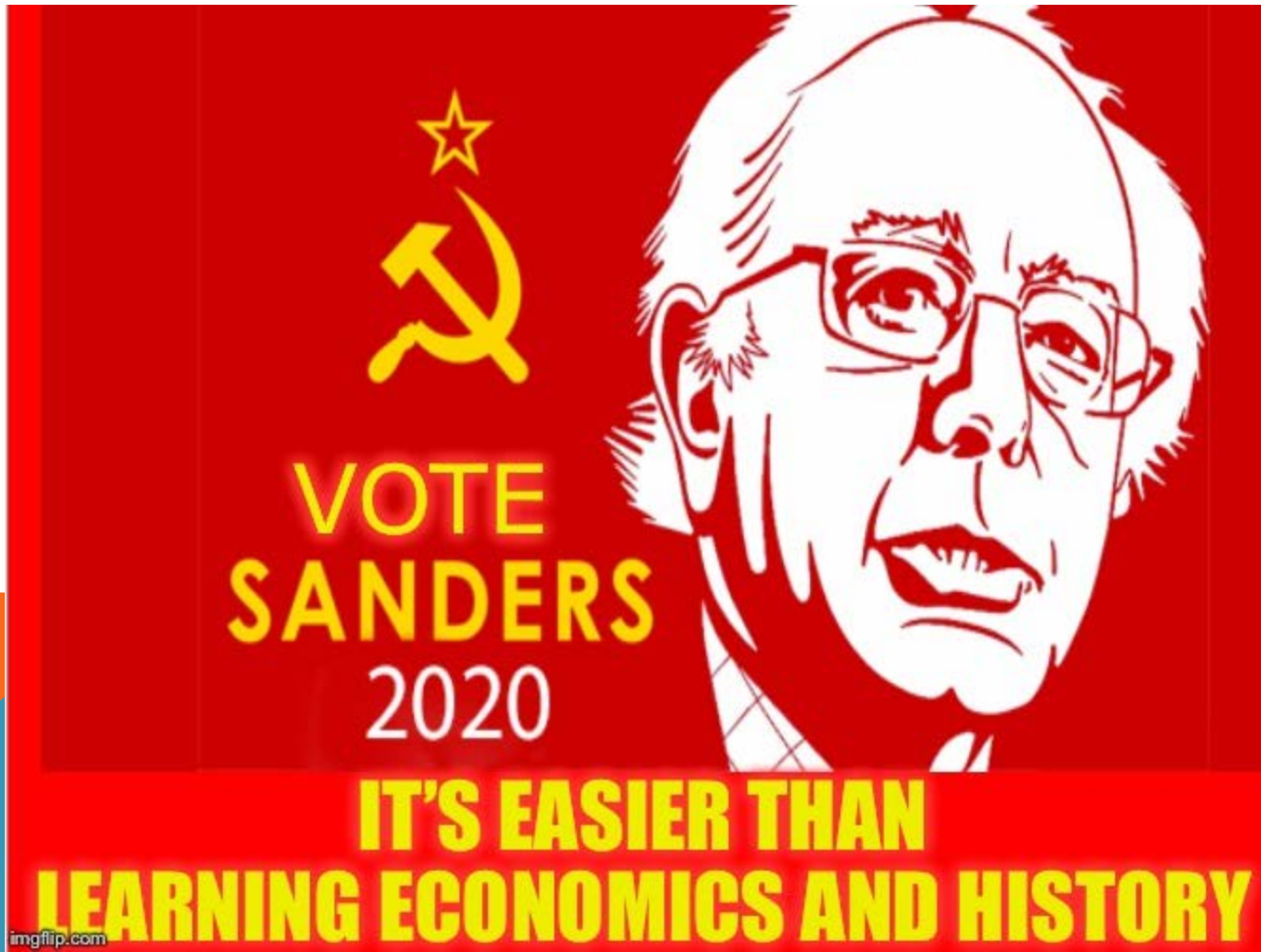
SYSTEM LEVEL THEORY # 3

Class System Theory



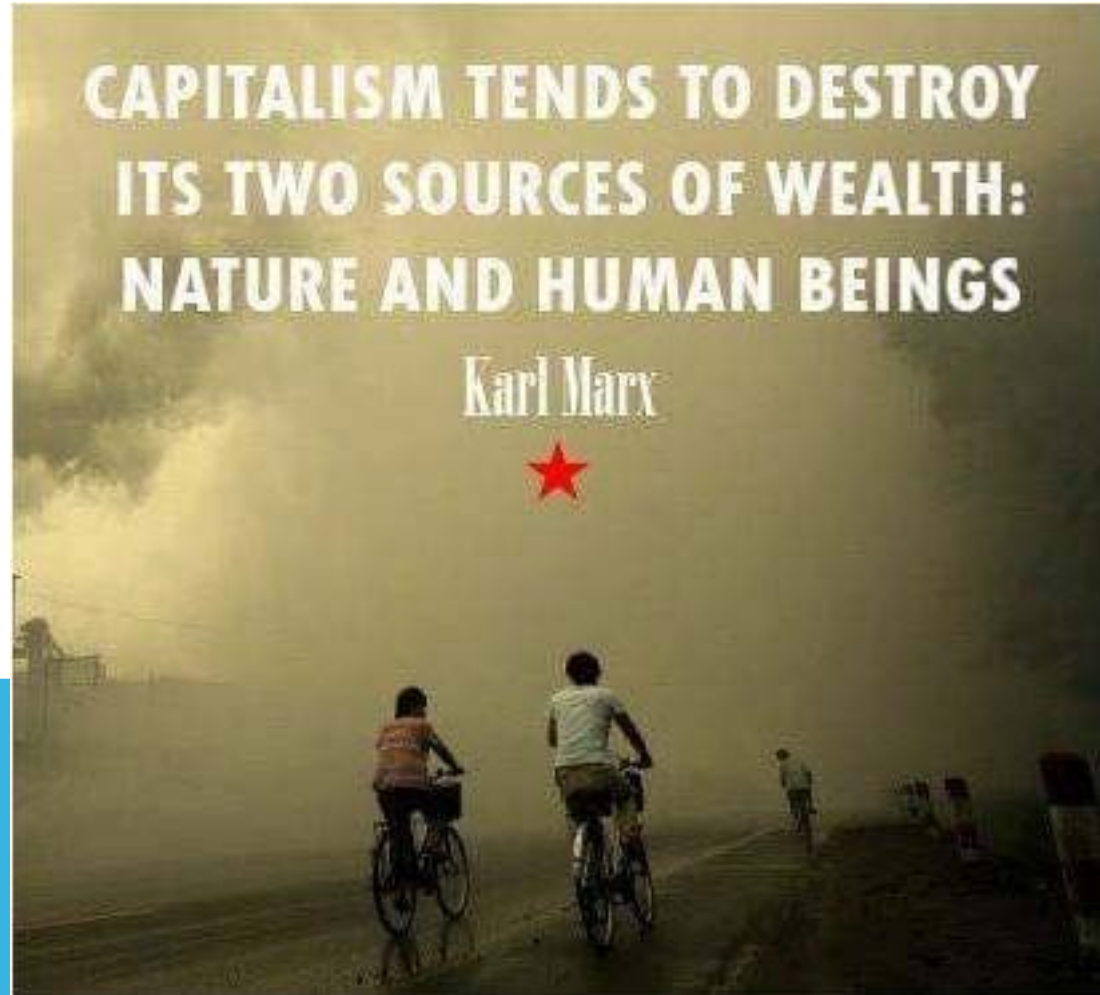
CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

Class system theory is based on four important concepts:



CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

First, proponents contend, *economic factors* are the driving force of international politics.



CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

Second, **class system theory** focuses on the development of the capitalist world economy and how it both creates and perpetuates uneven development between advanced capitalist states and poor, less developed states.



CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

'Probably the world's most
effective critic of globalization'
MARTIN WOLF, *FINANCIAL TIMES*

'Lucid, deeply informed'
NOAM CHOMSKY



BAD SAMARITANS

THE GUILTY SECRETS
OF RICH NATIONS
& THE THREAT TO
GLOBAL PROSPERITY

HA-JOON CHANG

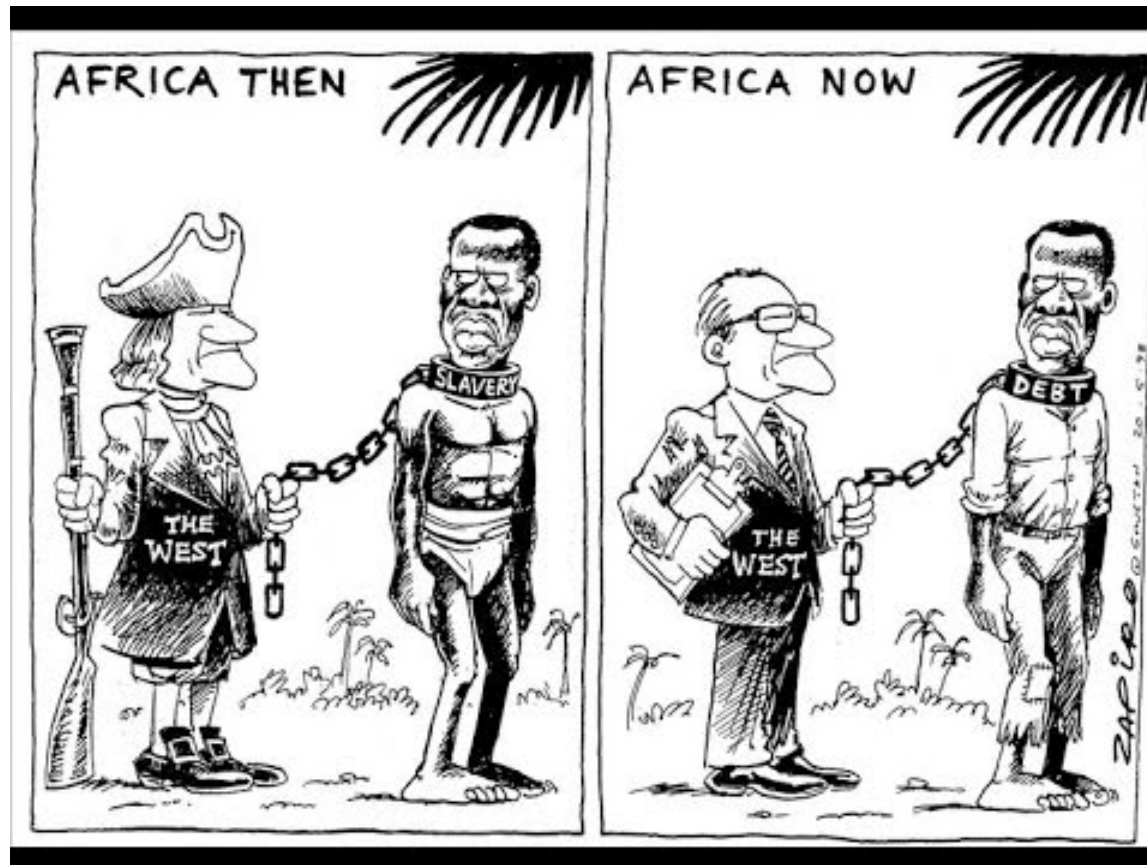
Third, theorists point to an international class structure in which the advanced industrialized states in the center of the world capitalist system dominate and exploit poorer states, occupying the periphery of this system.

CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

Finally, *transnational class coalitions* represent the primary actors in international politics.



CLASS SYSTEM THEORY



Unlike economic liberals, **class system theorists** emphasize the exploitative nature of international economic ties between states.

CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

According to **class system theory**, the structure and process of international relations is largely the result of the struggle between rich and poor countries over the control and distribution of economic resources. The tension between rich and poor countries is often referred to as the *North-South conflict*.



The problem of racism, the problem of economic exploitation, and the problem of war are all tied together. These are the triple evils that are interrelated.

— Martin Luther King —

CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

War is the result of capitalist states attempting to increase their wealth and power through imperialist foreign policies – policies in which strong capitalist states seek to exploit weaker noncapitalist states.

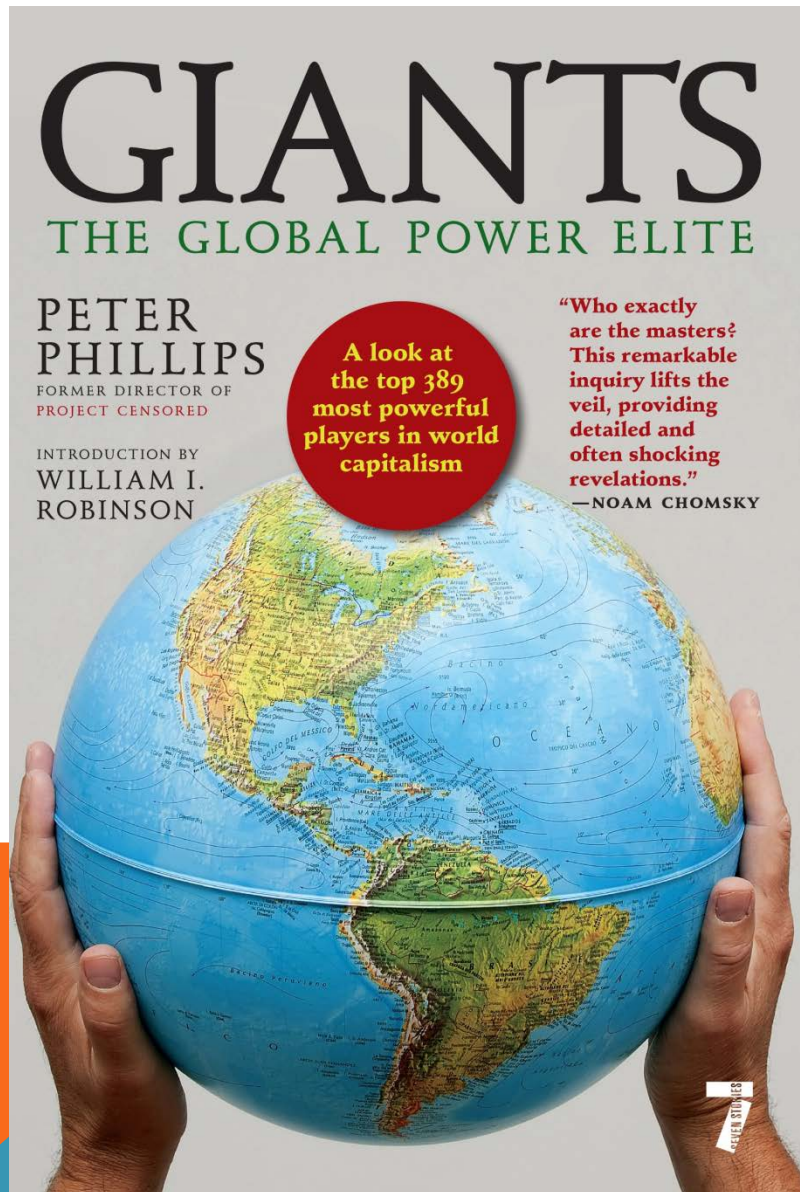


CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

Class system theorists acknowledge that states are important actors but they also emphasize that the dominant class exerts significant influence and often controls government policymakers. Unlike **realism**, which holds that states pursue national security interests, **class system theory** argues that states act in accordance with the wishes of the dominant economic class within the state.



CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

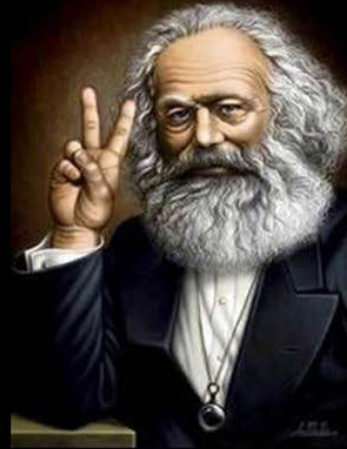


The idea of *transnational class coalitions* suggests that economic classes form close ties across national boundaries.

CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

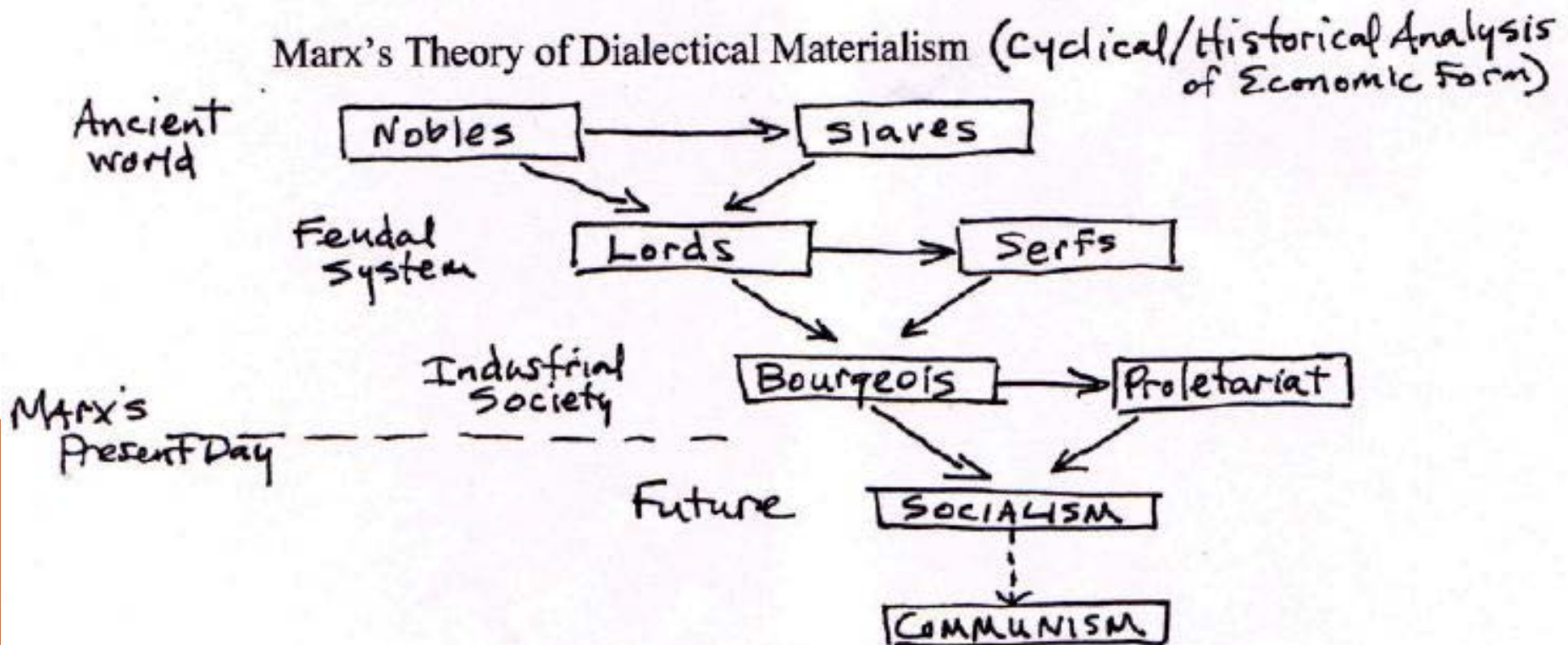
Most **class system theorists** rely on the fundamental assumptions of **marxism**, and its critique of capitalism, as the intellectual basis for their theories about international relations.

- The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways. The point, however, is to change it.



CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

According to Marx, the driving force of history is the struggle between economic classes. He termed this condition *dialectical materialism*. The dialectic suggests that history moves through stages – from feudalism to capitalism to socialism and finally, to communism.



CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

THEORY MATTERS.

I made lunch for you.

Use idealist philosophies like religion and post-modernism, and it'll smell pretty good!

Ha ~ I've mastered Dialectical Materialism!

So get ready, sucker~ I'm going to make you eat it!



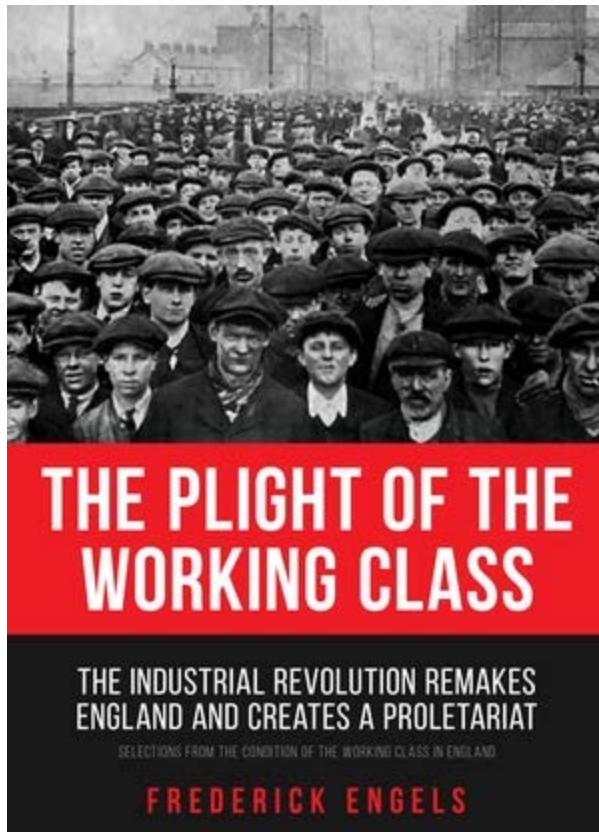
Marx contends that capitalist society is divided into three basic classes:

CLASS SYSTEM THEORY



The dominant class, made up of wealthy capitalists, owns and controls the means of production, that is, factories and land.

CLASS SYSTEM THEORY



Wildcat Germany / Summer 2015

The second class consists largely of workers living in the cities and working in these capitalist-owned factories. **Marx** wrote that the workers, or *proletariat*, are nothing more than “wage slaves,” paid subsistence wages and exploited by factory owners whose sole motivation is greed.

CLASS SYSTEM THEORY



The third class is made up of peasants who work the land. Capitalist land owners exploit peasant farm labor in return for allowing the peasantry to live on their land.

CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

The division of society into these three classes represents the core of **marxist** theory, emphasizing the history of society as the history of class struggle, in which the oppressed worker and peasant classes attempt to free themselves from the domination of the wealthy capitalist class.



Friedrich Engels

All history has been a history of class struggles, of struggles between exploited and exploiting, between dominated and dominating classes at various stages of social development.

CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

Classical *imperialism* is the policy of expanding a state's power and authority by conquering and controlling territories called colonies. According to **John Hobson**, imperialism is an extension of the capitalist search and competition for cheap labor and raw materials, and occurs when wealthy states exert political and economic control and influence over weaker nations or territories.



CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

The Components of Class System Theory



CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

Focus of
Analysis

Capitalist world
system



CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

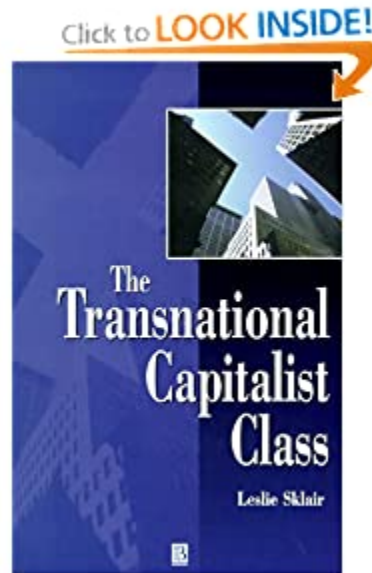
Major Actors

States

Transnational class coalitions

Multinational corporations (MNCs)

International organizations

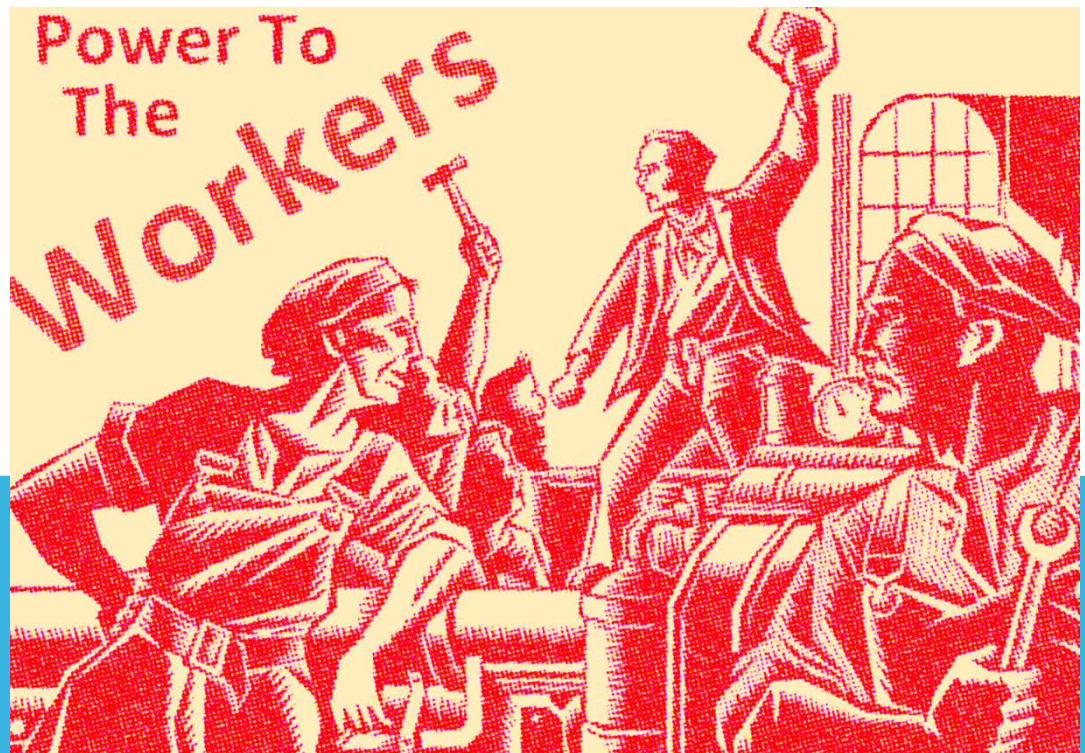
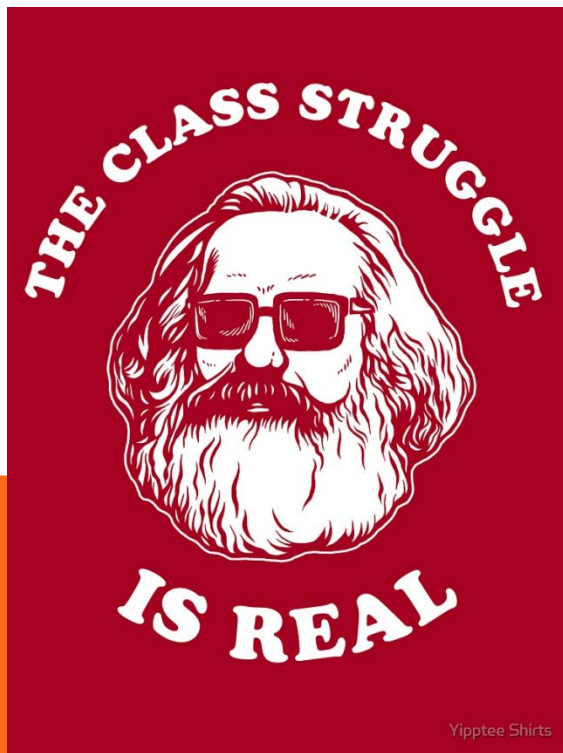


CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

Behavior of States

Class struggle;

Accumulation of wealth for capitalist class



CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

Goals of States

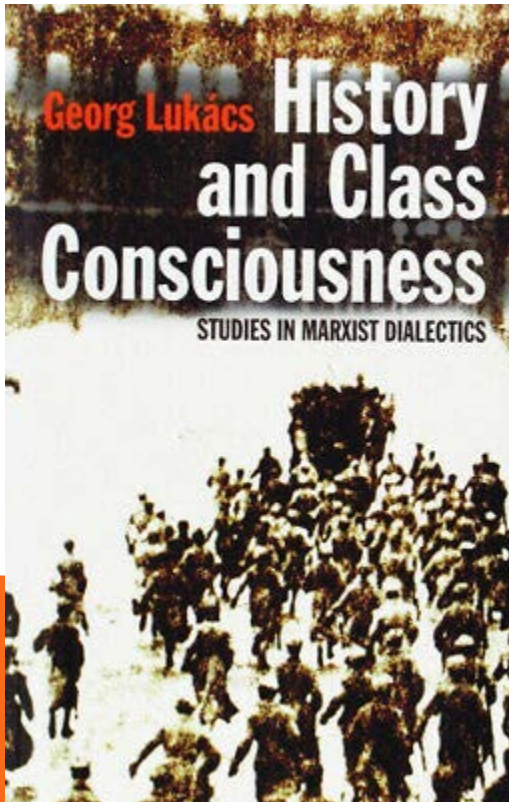
Enhance wealth of the capitalist class



CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

View of Human Nature

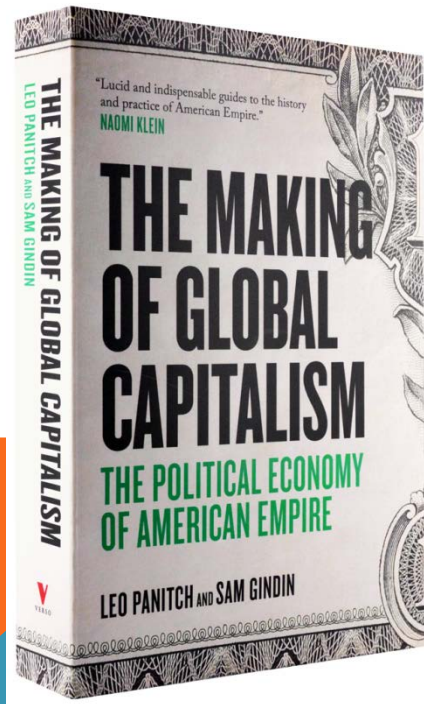
Selfish and dominating, but reformable



CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

Condition of the International System

Domination of capitalist world system;
Cycle of exploitation
and dependency



CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

Key Concepts



CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

Key Concepts

Capitalist world system

A concept of **class system theory** that focuses on the exploitative nature of the global spread of capitalism.



CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

Key Concepts

Class struggle

The **marxist** theory that history is a story of struggle between economic classes in which the oppressed worker and peasant classes attempt to free themselves from the domination of the wealthy capitalist class.

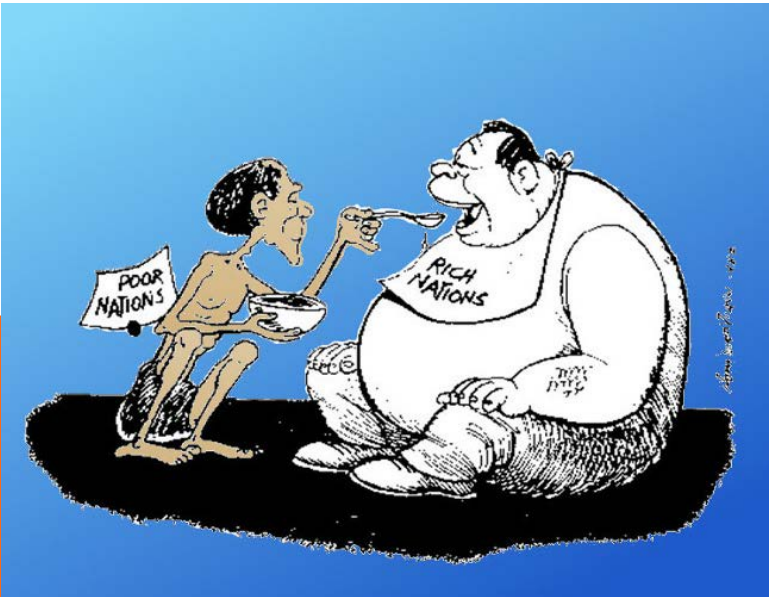


CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

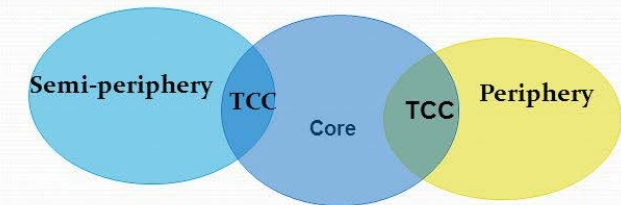
Key Concepts

Dependency theory

A concept associated with class system theorists that asserts that trade, foreign investment, and even foreign aid between advanced industrialized countries and poor, lesser developed states is inherently exploitative and works to the disadvantage of poor nations



World-System Theory's (cont.)



1. East Asia and South America

1. United States
2. European Union
3. Canada
4. Japan
5. China
6. Russian Federation
7. Oil Rich Arab Nations

1. Sub-saharan Africa
2. Arab States

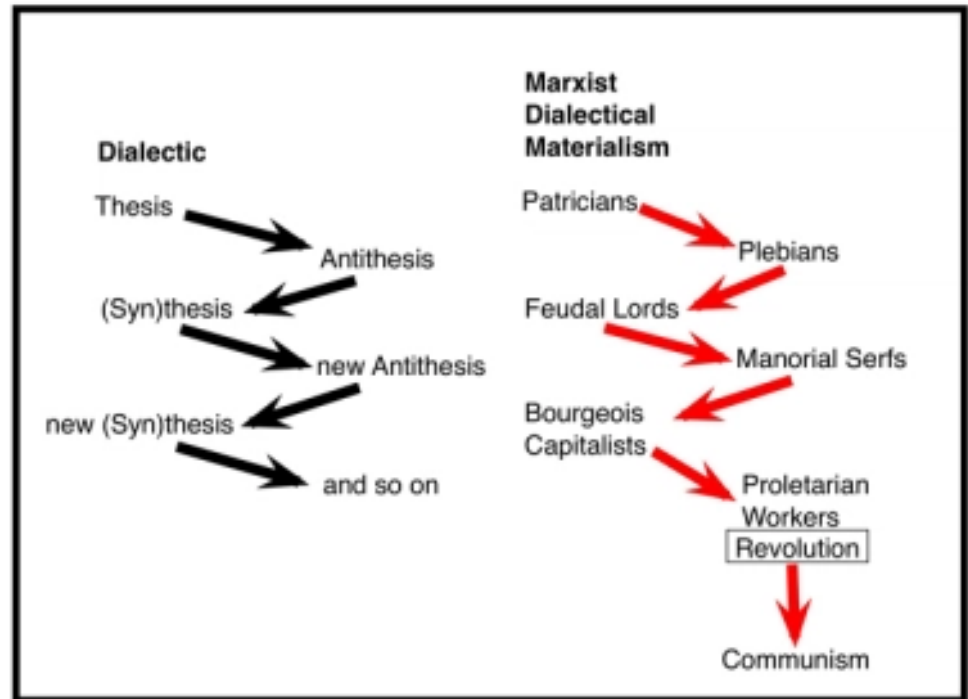
CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

Key Concepts

Dialectical materialism

A theory developed by **Karl Marx** positing that history moves through stages – from feudalism to capitalism to socialism and finally, to communism.

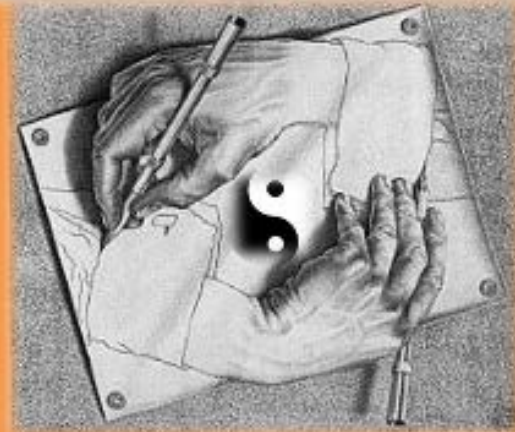
The transition from one stage to the next is often prompted by the struggle between economic classes as well as by the development and spread of technology.



CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

Hegel's Dialectics & Feuerbach's Materialism

- Marx & Engels embraced Hegel's notion of dialectical change over rigid metaphysics, but they rejected his idealist interpretation of history.
- They adopted Feuerbach's materialism, but rejected his passive, determinist view of history.

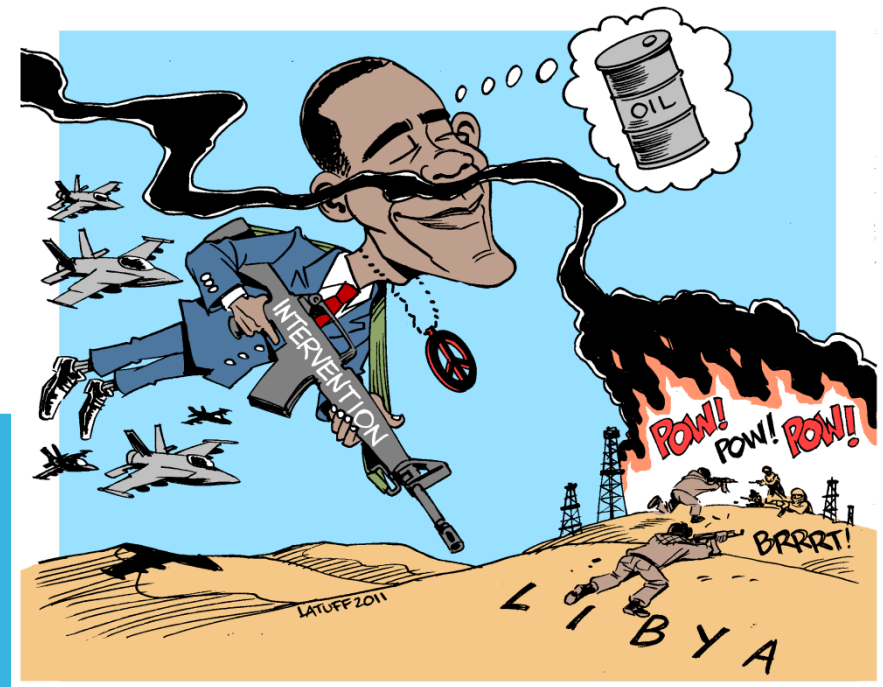


CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

Key Concepts

Imperialism

The policy of expanding a state's power and authority by conquering and controlling territories, called colonies.

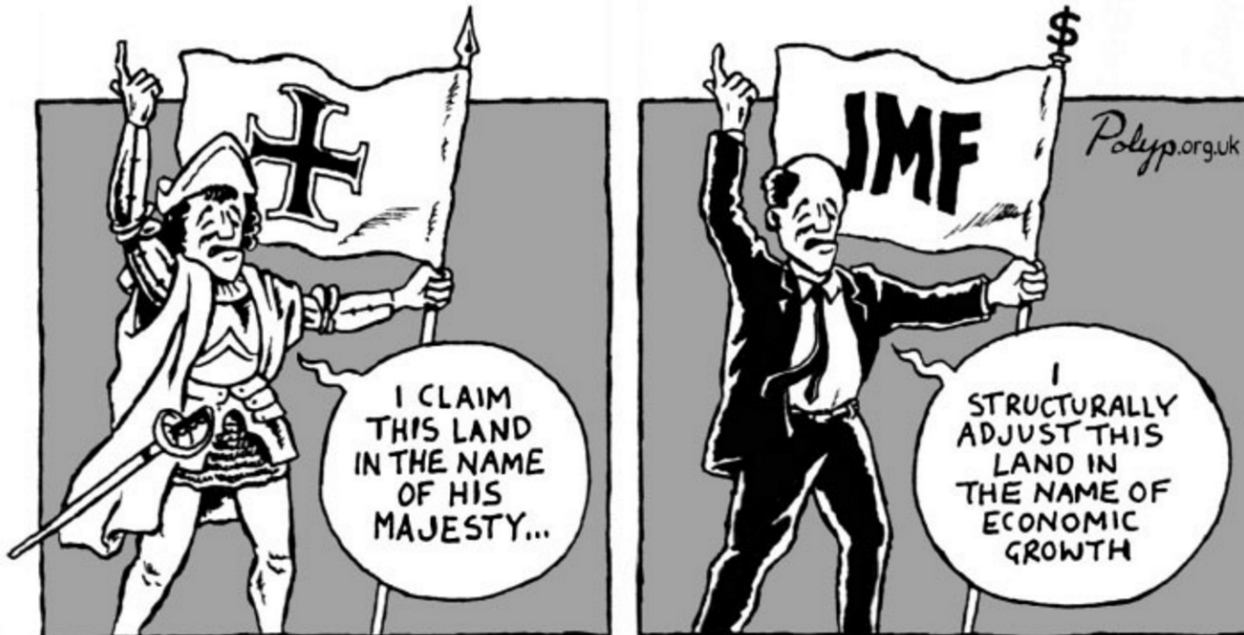


CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

Key Concepts

Neo-imperialism

The process of the international system in which the advanced industrial states' control of exports and raw materials in developing nations is simply a more subtle form of domination than the previous imperialist practices of the European colonial empires.



'PROGRESS'

CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

Key Concepts

North-South conflict

A phrase used to characterize the tension between rich and poor countries. *North* represents the wealthy industrialized states that lie primarily in the northern hemisphere, while *South* is the term used for the less developed countries mainly located in the southern hemisphere.



What side of capitalism do *you* wake up to in the morning, and what percentage of the world's population wakes up on the "right" side of capitalism?

CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

Key Concepts

Proletariat

A **marxist** term for the industrial workers living in urban areas and working in capitalist-owned factories. **Marx** wrote that the workers are nothing more than “wage slaves,” paid subsistence wages and exploited by capitalist factory owners whose sole motivation is greed.



CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

Key Concepts

Transnational class coalitions

A concept of **class system theory** contending that economic classes form close ties across national boundaries. Unlike **liberals** who focus on the positive aspects of increasing international economic linkages, **class system theorists** emphasize the exploitative nature of the global economic system and the role that transnational actors, like multinational corporations, play in this exploitation.



CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

Key Concepts

Uneven development

The propensity of capitalism to create and perpetuate and unequal dispersal of global wealth and prosperity.



CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

Critiques of Class System Theory



CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

Critiques of Class System Theory

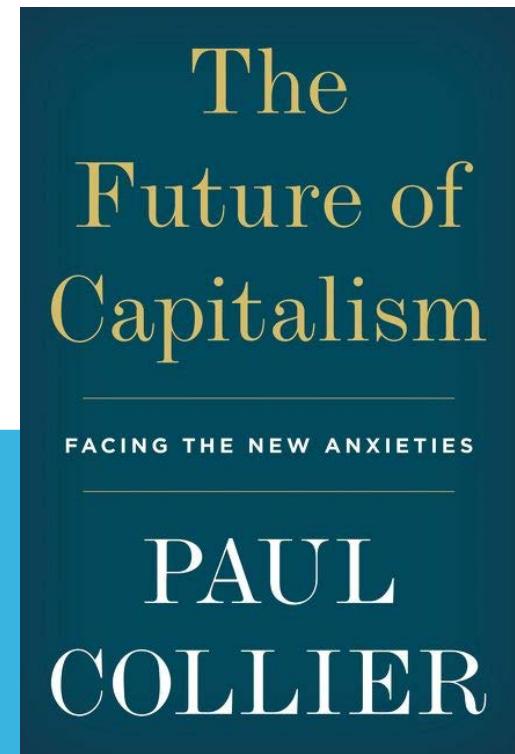
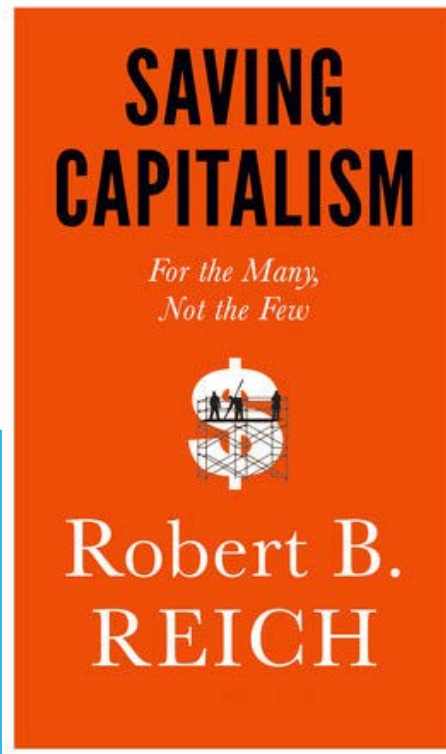
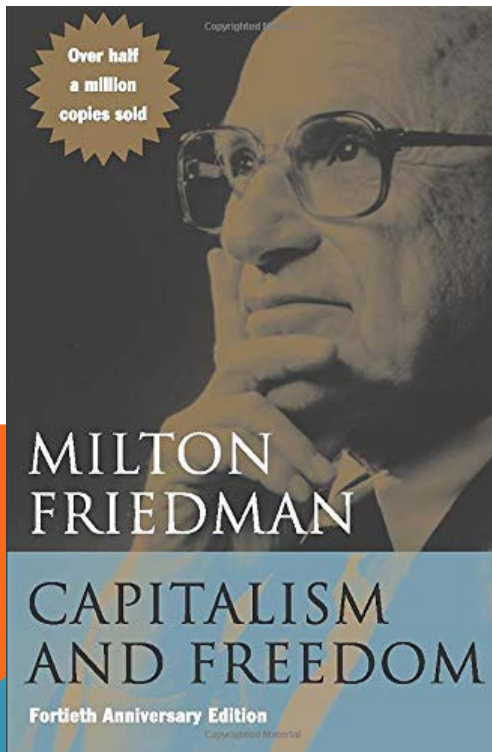
Many critics argue that **class system theory** exaggerates the role of the world capitalist system in limiting development and ignores the impact that policies adopted in the less developed states have on their own economic development.



CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

Critiques of Class System Theory

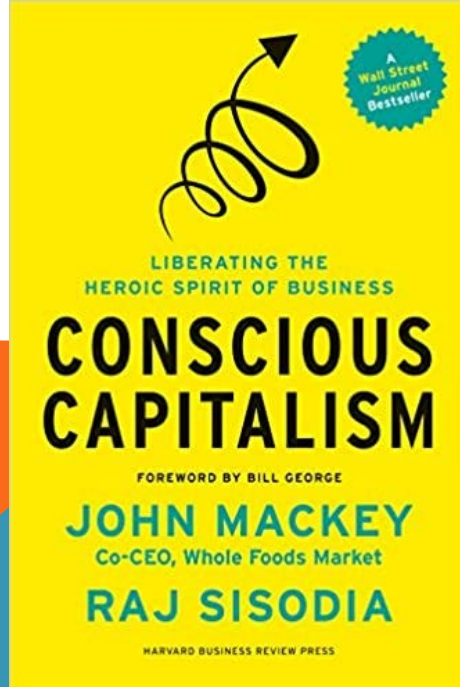
The theory also fails to address the impact that different development strategies have had on various countries facing similar problems with economic development. **Dependency theory** can account only for those countries that have failed to develop.



CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

Critiques of Class System Theory

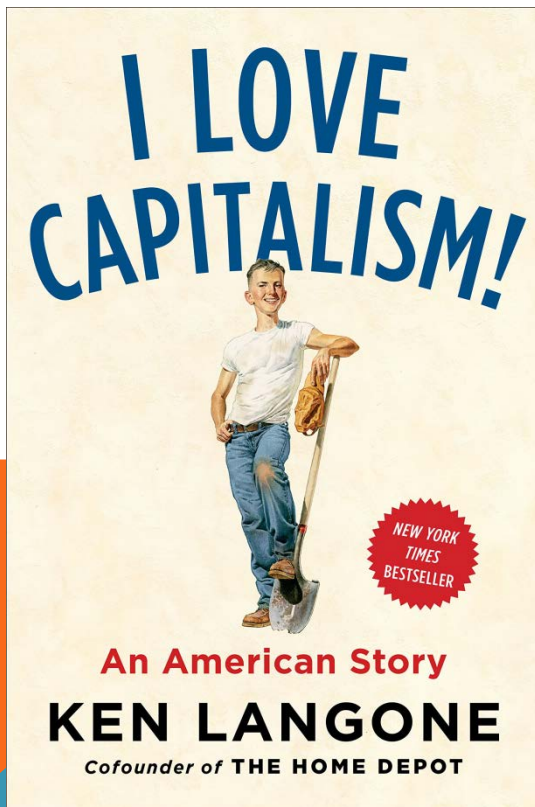
Some class system theorists have been criticized for being ahistorical – a potential trap for any theorist of I.R.



CLASS SYSTEM THEORY

Critiques of Class System Theory

Class system theory also falls short in explaining the failure of **marxist** principles and communist doctrine in the former USSR and Eastern Bloc nations, as well as the capitalist reforms now under way in these countries.



CAPITALISM IS FREEDOM

Living well is the best revenge

