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0521597307 - Theory of the Global State: Globality as Unfinished Revolution

Martin Shaw

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## Theory of the Global State Globality as Unfinished Revolution

This ambitious study rewrites the terms of debate about globalization. Martin Shaw argues that the deepest meaning of globality is the growing sense of worldwide human commonality as a practical social force, arising from political struggle not technological change. The book focusses upon two new concepts: the unfinished global-democratic revolution and the global-Western state. Shaw shows how an internationalized, post-imperial Western state conglomerate, symbiotically linked to global institutions, is increasingly consolidated amidst worldwide democratic upheavals against authoritarian, quasi-imperial non-Western states. This study explores the radical implications of these concepts for social, political and international theory, through a fundamental critique of modern 'national-international' social thought and dominant economistic versions of global theory. Required reading for sociology and politics as well as international relations, *Theory of the Global State* offers a historical, theoretical and political framework for understanding state and society in the emerging global age.

MARTIN SHAW is Professor of International Relations and Politics at the University of Sussex. His recent publications include *Civil Society and Media in Global Crises* (1996), *Global Society and International Relations* (1994), *Post-Military Society* (1991) and *Dialectics of War* (1988). He is editor of [www.theglobalsite.ac.uk](http://www.theglobalsite.ac.uk).

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521592505](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521592505)

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First published 2000

Reprinted 2002

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

ISBN-13 978-0-521-59250-5 hardback

ISBN-10 0-521-59250-X hardback

ISBN-13 978-0-521-59730-2 paperback

ISBN-10 0-521-59730-7 paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2006

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## Preface

This book offers a theoretical and historical synthesis of the politics of globality. It reflects my deep dissatisfaction with the ways in which the social scientists have so far grasped the meaning of 'global' change. The book is ambitious in its range and, because it touches on a considerable variety of materials, may not always satisfy specialists. I can only hope that, even where its specific judgements need to be qualified, its critical thrust will provoke serious reflection on the ways in which we understand (and act in) the world of the twenty-first century.

The book reflects my own institutional movement in the social sciences, from a sociological to an international relations context. It has involved a deeper engagement with the international literature, yet this has not shaken me in my belief that the perspectives of a historically oriented sociology offer a breadth of understanding that international relationists do not always achieve. At the same time, I remain unhappy about the gulf that still exists between 'global' theorizing in sociology and the work of historical sociologists, much of which has underestimated the scope of contemporary historical change. The sense that there is still a fundamental critical task, to shift the ways in which we think about the global, is what has made this book return repeatedly to the level of concepts rather than turn fully to the empirical exploration of global state power.

This book introduces new categories, and there is always a danger that readers who do not engage with the text as a whole will take these out of context. The title headlines 'the global state': the text makes it clear that I do not believe that this has been or is likely to be achieved in any simple sense. The title could as easily (but less

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catchily) have referred to 'the Western-global state', since what I place at the centre of my analysis is the symbiotic relationship between the consolidation of a single dominant Western centre of state power and the development of a more all-encompassing and legitimate global layer of power. It could also have referred to 'contradictions of the global state', since I argue that a complex global state structure is being formed through fundamental and often violent political struggles. I have settled for the simplest main title, bearing in mind that books with obscure titles often languish in obscurity, but I hope that readers will not mistake this character of the title for that of the argument.

This book has been written through a transition that has been geographic and personal as well as disciplinary. I wish to thank my international relations colleagues and students at Sussex for their stimulating intellectual comradeship and criticism. This has helped me to develop the ideas of this book from their simpler early forms (in which they were inflicted on my erstwhile sociological colleagues at Hull). Burdens of academic leadership undoubtedly slowed down the writing, but in a curious way may have helped the ideas to mature. I wish to thank the series editor, Steve Smith, and my editor at the Press, John Haslam, for their almost infinite patience with the consequent delays. I wish to express my thanks to various conference and symposium organizers and editors who have given space to earlier versions of this argument. I particularly thank Meghnad Desai and the Centre for the Study of Global Governance at LSE, who published my paper (given at the 1993 British International Studies Association conference) as *The Global State and the Politics of Intervention* as long ago as 1994; Mary Kaldor, of Sussex and the LSE Centre, for many opportunities to test my arguments against her own ideas on 'new wars'; my colleague Ronen Palan and the other editors of the *Review of International Political Economy*, in which the core of the present argument was further developed, in 'The state of globalization' (4(3) 1997: 497–513); the editors of *Millennium*, at whose twenty-fifth anniversary conference in 1996 I presented 'The state of international relations', which appears in the collection edited by Sarah Owen-Vandersluis, *State and Identity Construction in International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 2000, pp. 7–30); as well as the University of Sussex, at which I presented a belated inaugural lecture, 'The unfinished global revolution: intellectuals and the new politics of international relations', on 9 November 1999, the tenth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall,

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published at *The global site*, <http://www.theglobalsite.ac.uk> (this lecture contributes to chapter 9).

Above all, Annabel's love has helped me to find the calm and warmth in which I have thrived. Together with Tom and Isabel, Kate and Fred, she has sustained me in the writing of this book.