

Introduction

Charles R. Menzies

New Proposals Editorial Collective

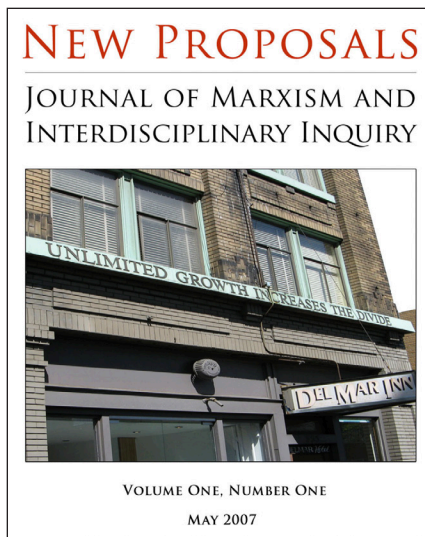
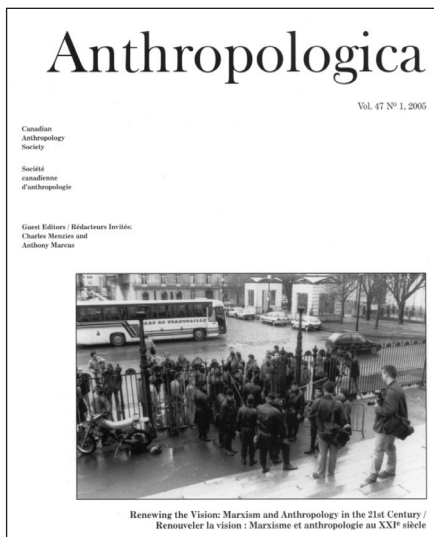
A Final Word

May, 2007 the first issue of *New Proposals* came off the digital press. It was a project that my friend Anthony Marcus and I had imagined for several years. We had put together a special issue on Anthropology and Marxism in the Canadian journal, *Anthropologica* (Menzies and Marcus 2005) based on a session Anthony and I had organized for the 1997 American Anthropological Association meetings. Our success with the special issue led us to think maybe there was space for a journal of Marxist anthropology.

Our inaugural editorial collective included Anthony and I as well as Katherine McCaffrey and

Sharon Roseman. Over time my colleagues had other projects that pulled them away. Sharon and I co-edited for a good number of years until I was the last one standing. I was in the process of shutting the project down with this last issue when a colleague, Scott Timcke, stepped up to take on the responsibility of editing and maintaining this journal.

The name *New Proposals* came directly from the title of a rather old paper by Kathleen Gough in which she exhorted fellow anthropologists to realign their allegiances to the colonized, not to ‘develop’ their capacity, but rather to support their national



liberation struggles. This was a moment of radical progressivism within anthropology. It was one of the many responses to a resurgent colonial world that had tired of Euro-American Imperialism. While the old guard anthropologists were displaced by younger scholars, the vision of anthropology held by Kathleen Gough did not win the day. Instead came a decades-long withdrawal from action through the so-called reflexive/textual turn.

Anthony and I, as students, found ourselves at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. For young doctoral students the CUNY Grad Center was an exciting place. Looking back on it now, I think we could be forgiven our earnest belief that fundamental change was possible based upon the radical space we had landed in at the heart of Imperialism.

We participated in demonstrations against American aggression in the Middle East. We organized in our school against the rising tide of neo-liberalism (even orchestrating an occupation of our campus in 1990: Menzies 2010; McCaffery, Kovic, Menzies 2020). But we were in a bubble. Around us the forces of conservatism and reaction were winning. As we moved through graduate studies into our professional careers we came to face the obstacles and

opportunities involved in living life were we found ourselves. Our training in the pragmatics of believing a better world is possible played a role in shaping our careers. Each in our own ways have found ways to continue to act from a place of conviction even while erstwhile comrades have taken different paths.

Projects like New Proposal won't change the world. What this project can do is continue the story in little ways that we hope will be more a part of the solution in ways that make a difference.

References

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- Menzies, Charles R. "Reflections on Work and Activism in the 'University of Excellence.'" *New Proposals: Journal of Marxism and Interdisciplinary Inquiry*. Vol. 3, No. 2 (February 2010) Pp. 40-55.