

## Open Letter to the Editorial Board of the *Review of Radical Political Economics*

15 October 2010

Dear colleagues

We are dismayed you have published a book review containing misrepresentations and falsehoods about the work under review. This brings disrepute upon critical economics at the height of a crisis of confidence in mainstream economics. In line with general scholarly standards, for example the Committee on Publication Ethics' *Code of Conduct* ([publicationethics.org/files/u2/New\\_Code.pdf](http://publicationethics.org/files/u2/New_Code.pdf)), we request you retract the review.

The reviewed work is Andrew Kliman's book, *Reclaiming Marx's "Capital": A refutation of the Myth of Inconsistency*, and your review, by Ajit Sinha, appears in the Summer 2009 issue of your journal. For brevity, we limit ourselves to the most obvious of the several falsehoods it contains but are happy to supply further detail on request. The review begins as follows:

In the preface to this book, Andrew Kliman claims that his aim is "to reclaim Marx's *Capital* from the century-old myth of internal inconsistency." Then the reader is told that there exists a group of scholars *who claim that no such internal inconsistency exists. And therefore, according to Kliman*, "The very existence of the TSSI [such an interpretation, generally called the Temporal Single System Interpretation] carries with it two important consequences. First, the allegations of inconsistency are unproved. Second, they are implausible." [emphasis added]

Kliman did not write what your reviewer claims. He did not state that the allegations of inconsistency are unproved and implausible because *a group of scholars claim that no such inconsistency exists*. Immediately prior to the sentences that Sinha quoted, he wrote that the allegations are unproved and implausible because "[a]n alternative interpretation developed during the last quarter-century—the temporal single-system interpretation (TSSI)—*eliminates all of the apparent inconsistencies*" (*Reclaiming Marx's "Capital,"* p. xiii, emphasis added).

As editors, you should have been aware of the misrepresentation in your reviewer's argument. Firstly, it is evident from any proper reading. Secondly, you first published, in the same issue of your journal, Richard D. Wolff's review of *Reclaiming Marx's "Capital"* which correctly characterizes the author's thesis in its opening paragraphs, flatly contradicting Sinha's review:

What the critics actually "proved" was that *their* particular interpretations of Marx's arguments contained logical inconsistencies. What Kliman explains is that alternative interpretations— at least as warranted by Marx's writings as the critics' interpretations — yield no such inconsistencies. ...

By showing that alternative interpretations are possible and reflect the interpreters' different theoretical commitments, Kliman pulls the rug out from under the critics.

Sinha's review further falsely, and tendentiously, charges the reviewed author with "lack of rigor in reasoning":

Following such reasoning, one could then also argue that the existence of a group of scholars who argue that the theory of evolution is false and that creationism is consistent with empirical evidence, must lead us to reject the claims of evolutionism as unproved and implausible. ... This foreshadows the major weakness of this book: a lack of rigor in reasoning.

This is based on the same elementary failure to distinguish between an unsubstantiated claim that something is false and an interpretation of the evidence according to which it is false. It is one thing to write that X is unproved because some people *claim* that X is false, and an entirely different thing to write that X is unproved because there exists an interpretation of the *evidence* according to which X is false. The first statement is ludicrous; the second is quite reasonable.

These falsehoods were willful. In November 2007, Sinha was informed that the paragraph's claims were false (see <http://ricardo.ecn.wfu.edu/~cottrell/ope/archive/0711/0219.html>). He responded to this information shortly thereafter, a year and a half before you published your review (see <http://ricardo.ecn.wfu.edu/~cottrell/ope/archive/0711/0230.html>)

Ajit Sinha was a long-term member of your editorial board, for eleven years, from 1993-1995 and from 1997-2006. A conflict of interest is involved. You should have taken especial care, given Sinha's close association with your journal, to ensure that his status did not lead to your publishing a review that intentionally misrepresented the reviewed work. You could easily have established the willful nature of Sinha's allegations but did not do so.

You should now make clear that Sinha's review breaches normal standards of scientific integrity, and retract it.

Sincerely yours,

Alan Freeman  
Alejandro Ramos  
Anders Ekeland  
Bill Lucarelli  
Brendan Cooney  
Eduardo Maldonado Filho  
Ioana Negru  
John Ernst  
Julian Wells  
Michel Husson  
Nick Potts  
Paresh Chattopadhyay  
Radhika Desai  
Rick Kuhn  
Andy Denis