



INTRODUCTION



This book is guided by the recognition that social systems, whether they exist at the local, regional, or global level, do not last forever. Capitalism as a globalizing political economic system that has produced numerous impressive technological innovations, some beneficial and others destructive, is a system fraught with contradictions, including an incessant drive for profit making and economic expansion; growing social disparities; authoritarian and militarist practices; depletion of natural resources; and environmental degradation resulting in global warming and associated climatic changes. Even more so than in earlier stages of capitalism, transnational corporations make or break governments and politicians around the world. Capitalism has been around for about five hundred years but manifests so many contradictions that it has been increasingly clear to progressive thinkers that it must be replaced by an alternative world system—one committed to social parity and justice, democratic processes, and environmental sustainability, which includes a safe climate.

As delineated in this book, I term the vision for an alternative world system democratic eco-socialism. Due to the shortcomings of efforts to create socialism in the twentieth century, the notion of socialism has been discredited in many quarters, an unfortunate reality that has prompted various scholars and social activists who have sought, in their efforts to preserve the ideals of socialism, such as collective ownership, social equality, and participatory democracy, to utilize terms such as radical democracy, economic democracy, global democracy, and Earth democracy, or to turn to one or another form of anarchism. Nevertheless, it is important for progressive people to come to terms with the historical discrepancies between the ideals of socialism and the realities of what passed for socialism and to reconstruct socialism, to create a global socialist system with manifestations at regional, national, provincial, and local levels that is highly democratic rather than authoritarian, that ensures that all people have access to basic resources, and that is at the same time environmentally sustainable and recognizes that we live on a fragile planet with

limited resources. Democratic eco-socialism constitutes, in the terminology of sociologist Erik Olin Wright (2010), a *real utopia*, a utopian vision that is theoretically achievable but with much reconceptualization and social experimentation. As the existing capitalist world system continues to self-destruct due to its socially unjust and environmentally unsustainable practices, democratic eco-socialism provides a vision to mobilize human beings around the world, albeit in different ways, to prevent ongoing human socioeconomic disparities, environmental devastation, and catastrophic climate change. This vision is not utopian in the sense that it imagines a perfect world free of problems or conflicts, but rather is utopian in the sense that it is aimed at making the best world possible within existing constraints.

Although I have a Ph.D. in anthropology, I have over the course of my career come to view myself as an engaged historical social scientist committed to creating a better world. In this regard, my work is guided by the insights of two scholars: the first is John Bodley (2012) who in the six editions of his book *Anthropology and Contemporary Human Problems* envisions a *sustainable planetary society*. The second is comparative sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein (1998: 1), who coined the term *utopistics*, which he defines as “serious assessment of historical alternatives, the exercise of our judgment as to the substantive rationality of alternative possible historical systems.”

I have become convinced that humanity faces two imperatives, an assertion that I often have expressed to my students at the University of Melbourne, where I have taught since January 2006. The first imperative is to learn how we humans from many different countries and cultures can live in relative harmony with each other, to ensure that we all have access to certain basic resources, such as food, clothing, shelter, health care, education, and meaningful and satisfying work and social relationships. The second imperative is to learn to live in relative harmony with nature or the planet in achieving the former and I add that these two imperatives are intricately interwoven. Of course, the idea of humans living in complete harmony with each other and nature is completely utopian because even in more or less pristine hunting and gathering or foraging societies, which were highly egalitarian, communal, and consensual, social conflict did exist, more at the individual level than the collective level. The real utopian vision is the hope that we achieve relatively harmonious relationships with each other, despite our national, ethnic, and cultural differences, on a fragile planet that has provided us—as protohumans in the form of various lines of hominines and eventually more or less full-blown humans—with sustenance for several million years.

At least in theory, these two imperatives are embedded in the concept of *democratic eco-socialism* that Merrill Singer, Ida Susser, and I coined in our vision for a healthy planet in a textbook titled *Medical Anthropology and the World System: A Critical Perspective*, which we first published in 1997 with subsequent editions in 2003 and 2013 (Baer, Singer, and Susser 1997, 2003, 2013). In adopting this term, we drew from two other terms that had been floating around at the time, namely, *democratic socialism* and *eco-socialism*. Various scholars have devised the term “democratic socialism” to flag those regimes that often have been termed “socialist” or “communist” were or are neither of these designations because they were or are not democratic. By design, socialism should be far more democratic than capitalism.

Various scholars proposed alternative terms such as *radical democracy* and *economic democracy* in order to disassociate their conception of the good society from what had occurred and was occurring in authoritarian regimes that generally called themselves socialist such as the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, North Korea, etc. However, when one delineates the basic dimensions of socialism, such as public and social ownership of the means of production, a high degree of social parity, and workers’ democracy, many people will say that this sounds like socialism and add that history has shown over the course of the twentieth century that socialism was a failure and continues to be a failure in the few countries that still use that designation to refer to themselves, such as China, Vietnam, North Korea, and Cuba. Ultimately, self-proclaimed socialists or Marxists must come to terms with the discrepancies between the ideals and realities of what has historically gone under the label of socialism. It is my assertion that what I term *postrevolutionary societies* or *socialist-oriented societies*, which some scholars term *actually existing socialist societies*, exhibited and in some cases still exhibit positive features. They also exhibit notable negative features. Unfortunately, all too many of the negative features have been tragic and horrific, to the point that they have discredited the notion of socialism in the minds of many people.

Eco-socialism is a more recent term that has emerged as various scholars and activists have come to realize that an authentic socialist world must be based both on principles of environmental sustainability and a disavowal of the growth paradigm that is an integral component of global capitalism and that all too often has been accepted by people who called themselves socialists or Marxists. While eco-socialism has had precursors, including even Marx (Foster 2000), it began to take off in the early 1980s.

My Personal Journey in Becoming a Critical Anthropologist and a Democratic Eco-Socialist

People sometimes ask me how I came to define myself as a “socialist” or a “democratic socialist” or, more recently, a “democratic eco-socialist.” This entailed a somewhat slow and convoluted process. I often tell my students and other people that I am a “leftover from the 60s.” However, during the 1960s my politicization occurred not so much in the university but in the bowels of the corporate world. Between 1963 and 1966 I studied engineering mechanics at the Pennsylvania State University or “Penn State,” situated in the bucolic Nittany Valley of the Appalachian Mountains of central Pennsylvania. I opted to study engineering largely due to the influence of my father, a mechanical engineer, and because for better or worse I did relatively well in my mathematics and physics courses in high school, thus prompting my guidance counselors to reinforce my father’s insistence that I study engineering so that I could secure some semblance of job security. Furthermore, in the post-Sputnik era of the late 1950s and 1960s, young Americans, particularly boys, were encouraged to study some technological field lest the United States fall behind the Soviet Union in the “space race.” However, I was an oddball engineering student in that I enjoyed taking liberal arts courses, which many of the engineering students regarded to be a complete waste of time, referring to them as “gut courses” and “Mickey Mouse courses.”

Upon graduating from Penn State with a B.S. in Engineering Mechanics in early September 1966, I went to work for United Aircraft in Connecticut, where I spent most of my time doing stress analysis on the JT9D engine that propelled Boeing 747 “jumbo” jets. While there I became restless and followed Horace Greeley’s advice, “Go West young man,” and took a job at the Boeing Corporation in the Seattle area, where most of my time was spent doing stress analysis on the 747. However, I found myself increasingly questioning the corporate emphasis on profit making and neglect of the social and environmental consequences of the military and the commercial airplanes that the Boeing Company was manufacturing. The late 1960s as well as the early 1970s was a period of social ferment and I found myself being influenced by various social movements, including the peace, environmental, countercultural, civil rights, and feminist movements. I came to the conclusion that the world was very screwed up and I wanted to understand why it was screwed up and wanted in some small way to contribute to the process of making a better world for humanity and the ecosystem. I believe that in large part over the course of the past forty-six or so years I have achieved the first

objective, but I leave it to others to determine the extent to which I have achieved the latter objective.

In order to achieve these two objectives, I ended up studying anthropology, initially at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, where I obtained an M.A. in 1971, and following a short teaching stint at Kearney State College (now the University of Nebraska at Kearney) in south-central Nebraska, I continued to study anthropology at the University of Utah, where I obtained a Ph.D. in 1976. While in Nebraska, I conducted ethnographic research on a Hutterite colony in South Dakota, which piqued my interest in communitarian societies (Baer 1976a). I did my doctoral dissertation on the Levites of Utah, a Mormon schismatic group (Baer 1976b; Baer 1987). Both the Hutterites and Levites interested me because they sought to create egalitarian and communal societies, one steeped in the Anabaptist tradition and the other in the Mormon tradition. As a Ph.D. student at the University of Utah, I taught a course on Communitarian Societies as part of my effort to unravel the complexities of efforts to create egalitarian and communitarian lifestyles.

Over the course of my long academic career, I have examined a wide variety of topics, including African-American religion; medical pluralism in the United States, Great Britain, and Australia; critical health or medical anthropology; socio-political and religious life in East Germany before and after unification; the political economy of higher education; and Australian climate politics. Much of my work has focused on issues of power, domination, social (class, racial/ethnic/gender) stratification, the contradictions of global capitalism, and efforts to create a more socially just, democratic, and environmentally sustainable world. In these efforts, I have often collaborated with Merrill Singer, whom I met in 1975 while we were both graduate students in the anthropology department at the University of Utah. While at the University of Utah, I was particularly influenced by Robert Anderson (1976), who reportedly was Leslie A. White's first Ph.D. student and described himself, like his mentor, as a "culturologist." I still remember in a seminar Anderson telling us there were two important questions in anthropology. The second most important was how did social stratification emerge, noting that while we do not have all the answers to that question, there were social structural, demographic, and ecological factors that contributed to the shift from foraging to state societies and social stratification. When Anderson asked us what we thought the first most important question in anthropology was, none of us in the seminar knew exactly what to say, and he said, "How the hell do we get rid of it [namely, social stratification]?" I had the honor of being a teaching assistant for Anderson in his introductory cultural

anthropology class. He perhaps more than anyone prompted me to shift from my early flirtation with psychological anthropology to a materialist perspective, although ultimately more of a historical materialist one than a cultural materialist one.

I began to call myself a “socialist” in my early thirties during my stint as an assistant professor at George Peabody College for Teachers (now part of Vanderbilt University) in Nashville, Tennessee. I told my students there that I was a socialist and have been doing so ever since, even though I have had many colleagues in various institutions who have said that I should have been more neutral about stating my political orientation. Given that much of my teaching career was spent in the American South, namely, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Arkansas, or the “Bible Belt,” as it is known, my admission sometimes met with horror among my students. While openly declaring that one is a socialist or an anthropologist who draws on a historical materialist or neo-Marxian perspective probably does not raise as many eyebrows at the University of Melbourne as it did at the various U.S. Southern tertiary institutions where I had taught, even at Melbourne I have felt somewhat isolated in my theoretical and political stances. Ironically, as an academic, I felt the most comfortable during my stint in 1988–1989 as a Fulbright Lecturer at Humboldt University in East Berlin in what was then still the German Democratic Republic (Baer 1998). It is not that my colleagues were all enamored of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany to which many of them belonged or that they believed that the GDR had even achieved an authentic socialism. Indeed, many of them hoped that the winds of *glasnost* coming from the east would somehow translate into a drive to pave the way for a democratic socialism in the most technologically advanced of the Soviet bloc countries. The opening of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 and the reunification of the two Germanys in December 1990 short-circuited such hopes. In reality, however, the reunification was an *Anschluss*, or annexation, in which the Federal Republic of Germany absorbed the GDR. Indeed, after the reunification, many East Germans spoke of the process as a form of *Colonisierung*, or colonization.

The Implications of Climate Change for the Human Condition

In mid 2005, while I was working on an introductory medical anthropology textbook with Merrill Singer, the penny dropped for me in terms of the devastating impact of climate change on human societies and the role of global capitalism as the principal driver of anthropogenic climate

change (Singer and Baer 2007, 2012). I have come to the conclusion that humanity is in an ever-growing crisis as it lurches ever deeper into the twenty-first century, probably the most critical century in our history as a species over the course of the past five to six million years. Various radical environmentalists, eco-socialists, eco-anarchists, and certain critical social scientists view climate change as yet one more manifestation of the contradictions, perhaps the most profound contradiction, of the capitalist world system. While humans indeed have been emitting greenhouse gases for many centuries, the mid-nineteenth-century Industrial Revolution, with its heavy reliance on fossil fuels, contributed to anthropogenic climate change, which some scholars trace back to the Agricultural Revolution. William Ruddiman (2005: 171) contends that “beginning in the late 1800s, use of fossil fuels (first coal, and later oil and natural gas) rapidly increased, eventually replacing deforestation as the primary source of CO₂ emissions by humans.”

It has become increasingly apparent that climate change constitutes a major threat to human well-being and even survival for many people. The overwhelming majority of climate scientists have come to the conclusion that the warming of the planet and associated climatic events that the planet has been experiencing is largely anthropogenic or the result of human activities, particularly since the Industrial Revolution. Over the course of the past two decades or so, a slow but gradual interest in climate change has emerged as well in the social sciences, including my discipline of anthropology (Crate and Nuttall 2009, 2016; Dove 2014). As a critical anthropologist who has come to view myself more and more as a historical social scientist who happens to have a Ph.D. in anthropology, I have attempted to contribute to the anthropology of climate change, particularly the critical anthropology of climate change, and to contribute to a dialogue between anthropologists working on climate change and other social scientists and natural scientists working on the same topic (Baer and Singer 2009; Baer 2012; Burgmann and Baer 2012; Baer and Singer 2014).

The work of natural and social scientists across multiple disciplines has demonstrated that the earth is steadily warming; that human activities, especially since the Industrial Revolution, have been the dominant driver of this process; that the pace and effects of warming have been increasing; and that this change in the world we inhabit threatens significant, if not severe, consequences for human well-being on the planet. Despite these momentous and potentially dire developments, the governments of the world, as a whole, have been slow to respond to this pending threat, as seen in the failure of a series of international climate conferences designed to generate such a response. Moreover, while manufacturing and

agrobusiness producers of greenhouse gases have developed a public discourse of *green capitalism*, continued emphasis on unceasing growth contradicts assertions that the world economic system can achieve sustainability. Indeed, as John S. Dryzek, Richard B. Norgaard, and David Schlosberg eloquently acknowledge, climate change has proven to be an extremely difficult challenge because “[t]he size of the threat calls into question received ideas about the inevitability of human progress: if progress requires continued economic growth based on ever-increasing emissions of greenhouse gases, then that kind of progress is clearly no longer sustainable. The economic stakes could not be higher, calling into question the future of industries such as coal and cars, and leading to deep political conflicts as those whose industries, profits, employment, and lifestyles feel threatened resist the necessary changes” (Dryzek, Norgaard, and Scholosberg 2013: 1).

At the same time, a corporate-sponsored climate change denial campaign has succeeded in sowing confusion, which, in turn, has contributed to lowering of public concern about climate change despite ever mounting scientific evidence that anthropogenic climate change is real and pressing fact. All of these events have produced a significant challenge for anthropological relevance and for Sidney Mintz’s (1985: xxvii) vision of crafting an “anthropology of the present” that entails detailed examinations and critiques of “societies that lack the features conventionally associated with the so-called primitive.” In that anthropogenic climate change will manifest profound impacts on human societies as they proceed further and further into the twenty-first century, the still evolving anthropology of the climate change can make an important contribution to the anthropology of the future.

Historically, anthropologists have concerned themselves with human societies of the distant past—the domain of archaeology—and of the recent past or present—the domain of sociocultural anthropology. In contrast to the age of the earth, the period that we humans have lived on this planet, roughly five to six million years, has been a blip in time. When we consider how long we have lived in farming and herding societies, some ten thousand years, or how long we have lived in state societies, some six thousand years, marked by different power relations and social stratification, our presence in such as social arrangements is a tiny fraction even of the already brief timeline of our species. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and other scenario setters often speak of what the state of humanity on this planet may be like in 2050 or 2100 but generally not beyond. As Sheila Jasanoff (2010: 241) observes, “[c]limate change invites humanity to play with time,” including with the mind’s eye into the future as we might imagine it will unfold. Over the past several decades,

along with other social scientists, anthropologists have often alluded to a cavalcade of “posts”: postcolonialism, postindustrialism, post-Fordism, postsocialism, postmodernism, poststructuralism, and postfeminism. Anthropologists might, indeed should, entertain the possibilities of two other “posts,” namely, postcapitalism and postanthropogenic climate change. White anticipated the anthropology of the future quite early on when he wrote in a letter to Elsie Clews Parsons dated 13 June 1931: “It is possible to discern trends in the development of civilization, trends that are living in the present, and which will push into the future. It seems to me that no one is so well equipped as the anthropologist to understand and to foresee the future. And I think he [or she] should render this service to society as best he [or she] can” (quoted in Peace 2004: 77).

Bronislaw Malinowski (1941: 166) placed hope in the emergence of a “superstate, or, better, a federation or union of nations,” an antidote to international wars, a vision that was partly fulfilled with the creation of the United Nations, but not one that successfully ended regional wars. White (1949: 164) predicted the eventual formation of a world state or something of that sort in his assertion: “Social evolution has been moving toward larger political units ever since the first human grouping was established, and the goal of a single world organization embracing the whole planet and the entire human race is now almost in sight,” a prediction that in retrospect was premature. Conversely, he did not regard the United Nations as an instrument for creating a world state, noting this task would not be achieved by “frock-coated diplomats in a United Nations *opera bouffe*.” On the issue of the “growth of great human communities,” Raoul Naroll (1967: 85) had higher hopes for the United Nations, arguing that “behind a reformed and strengthened United Nations, the two superpowers will establish a world order through negotiation rather than conquest.” Obviously he did not anticipate that less than a quarter of a century later, one of the superpowers as such would cease to exist, although its leading republic, namely, Russia, like the United States, continued to hold nuclear warheads. Thus, the threat of a nuclear holocaust still looms in the background, despite the end of the Cold War. Ruth Benedict (1971: 236) also commented on growing political centralization and stated that “we can project this upward curve into the future and recognize that someday mankind will organize the whole world.”

In the 1970s and 1980s, various anthropologists grappled with future scenarios for humanity. Margaret Mead (1978) argued that anthropology has the potential to contribute to the “science of the future.” Roger W. Wescott (1978: 513) argued that anthropology “has much to offer futuristics” and that the anthropology of the future constitutes a sub-discipline that could serve as a component of the emerging discipline of future study.

Eugene L. Ruyle (1978) delineated some of the features of a "socialist alternative for the future," including a participatory economy in which workers elect and control management; operate factories, farms, schools, hospitals, and other publicly owned enterprises; the replacement of money by socialist credit card system; and the popular election of all legislative, judicial, and higher administrative officials, subject to instant recall and paid at the same level as ordinary workers. *Cultural Futures Research* served as the official journal of future interest groups in the American Anthropological Association, the Society for Applied Anthropology, and the Futurology Commission of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnographic Sciences (Riner 1998).

The demise of the Soviet bloc countries and the disillusionment with grand theory under the guise of postmodernism appear to have predisposed a younger generation of anthropologists to steer away from seemingly grandiose projects of attaining a better world based on both social justice and environmental sustainability. Yet a revival of the anthropology of the future strikes me as long overdue and appears to be re-emerging (Pels 2015; Hannerz 2015). A notable effort in this regard is *All Tomorrow's Cultures: Anthropological Engagements with the Future*, in which Samuel Gerald Collins (2008) argues that activist anthropology is involved in creating future change and offering alternative future scenarios to those defined by corporations and governments. Arjun Appadurai (2013) argues that anthropologists need to construct an understanding of the future by examining imagination, anticipation, and aspiration as important components shaping the future as a cultural fact and that the anthropology of the future is significant for the future of anthropology itself. Another recent effort to revive the anthropology of the future is an anthology edited by Australian anthropologists Jonathan Paul Marshall and Linda H. Connor (2015) titled *Environmental Change and the World's Futures*, for which I have contributed a chapter (Baer 2015a). Anthropologists need to recognize that despite the historical association of their discipline with colonial powers and imperialism, anthropology has a long tradition of fostering progressive causes. The search for an authentically progressive stage in social evolution harkens back to Lewis Henry Morgan's (1964: 467; original 1877) prediction of a "next higher plane of society," which will involve not only the "termination of a career of which property is the end and aim" but also a "revival, in a higher form, of liberty, equality and fraternity of the ancient gentes." Almost 100 years later, White made a similar prediction by arguing that: "if civilization is not destroyed by warfare . . . there will undoubtedly be another political revolution and an entirely new type of society will be established. This new type will most likely be one in which the church-state will be nonexistent: a society in

which there will be an administration of *things* rather than the governing of men: and again society will be organized on the basis of personal relations rather than property relations" (White and Dillingham 1973: 65).

In seeking to assess possible future scenarios with respect to climate change, one must consider the possibility of a dystopian future, a grim possibility that I explore in chapter 3, with the hope that this will contribute to the realization that serious mitigation efforts will require an alternative to the capitalist world system, one that is based on both social parity and environmental sustainability and that will allow humanity to reach a steady state for itself and other forms of biological life, both large and small. Tariq Ali (2013: 3) argues that history "rolls along at its own unpredictable pace" and may entail a revolutionary acceleration that moves humanity or a portion of humanity forward, but that this movement may be followed by reversals.

Wallerstein (1984) envisioned a world socialist system with a world government that would require a transition of about 100–150 years. Later Wallerstein (1998) asserted in *Utopistics* that capitalism has only perhaps fifty years or so left and that humanity may be heading toward a great historical transition that will probably be culminated in some type of socialist world government. Wallerstein (2007: 382) more recently has asserted that the present historical period is in a terminal structural crisis that will culminate in a "chaotic transition to some other system (or systems)" within the next twenty-five to fifty years, with the possibility of being, on the one hand, more equitable, or, on the other hand, more inequitable.

Overview of Remaining Chapters in this Book

While the contradictions of global capitalism are numerous, chapter 1 (The Contradictions of the Capitalist World System at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century) focuses on what might be its principal contradictions in terms of social justice and environmental sustainability, namely: (1) profit making, economic growth, and the treadmill of production and consumption; (2) growing social inequality within and between nation-states; (3) population growth as a by-product of poverty; (4) depletion of natural resources and environmental degradation; (5) climate change; and (6) resource wars. Given that climate change scenarios prompt us to imagine dystopian visions of the future, I explore several mainstream and radical worst case scenarios that humanity must avoid in order to preserve itself as a species along with other species disappearing from planet.

In chapter 2 (Twentieth-Century Attempts to Create Socialism: Successes and Failures), I focus on the discrepancies between the ideals and

realities of socialism as they played out during the twentieth century. While others have grappled with these discrepancies, I seek to provide a concise overview of them by examining efforts to create socialism in five contrasting countries, namely, Russia and the Soviet Union, China, the German Democratic Republic, North Korea, and Cuba. I also examine various interpretations that seek to determine the nature of postrevolutionary societies, whether they were instances of (1) “actually existing socialism” or some form of state socialism; (2) aborted transitions between capitalism and socialism; (3) state capitalism; or (4) new class societies. This chapter also examines selected positive and negative features of postrevolutionary societies, particularly in terms of the economy and workplace, social stratification, and environmental problems. The history of postrevolutionary or socialist-oriented societies over the course of the twentieth century proved to be a very mixed record. However, when one considers not only issues of social inequality but also the limits to growth, even a reformed and supposedly more environmentally friendly capitalism may spell the end of much of humanity. This strongly suggests that the concept of socialism must be rejuvenated to ensure social parity, democratic processes, and environmental sustainability for humanity.

The growing realization of the gravity of the global ecological crisis and anthropogenic climate change has prompted the development of numerous mainstream visions as well as countercultural visions of the future, which I explore in chapter 3 (Technoliberal and Countercultural Visions of the Future). While by no means exhaustive, this chapter examines future scenarios devised by the Global Scenario Group; Plan B devised by Lester R. Brown and Plan C developed by Pat Murphy; cosmopolitanism devised by sociologist Ulrich Beck; the future trends model devised by sociologist Stephen K. Sanderson; the Green New Deal model; various postgrowth or low-growth models; the climate emergency mobilization model; various counter-countercultural visions of the future; and Al Gore’s views on the future. Ultimately, a shortcoming of some of these future scenarios is that they are premised primarily on ecological modernization, which advocates a shift to renewable energy sources and energy efficiency but does not adequately address issues of social parity. A shortcoming of the Green New Deal and postgrowth models is that they assume that some version of capitalism can function as a steady-state or zero-growth economy, when history tells us that capitalism is inherently committed to continual economic expansion as part and parcel of its pursuit of profits.

Chapter 4 (Efforts to Reconceptualize Socialism) argues that socialism remains very much a vision, one with which various individuals and groups continue to grapple, often by seeking to frame it in new guises. As

humanity enters into an era of significant climate change accompanied by tumultuous environmental and social consequences, it will have to consider alternatives that will circumvent the dystopian scenarios depicted earlier. After briefly reviewing several Marxian-inspired future scenarios, this chapter seeks to reconceptualize socialism by examining the notions of democratic socialism, eco-socialism, and democratic eco-socialism. This chapter also critically examines efforts to create socialism for the twenty-first century in Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Cuba, and examines the pros and cons of Amin's notion of *delinking* as a strategy for escaping the clutches of global capitalism.

Chapter 5 (The Role of Anti-systemic Movements in Creating a Socio-ecological Revolution) acknowledges that anti-systemic movements are sure to be a permanent feature of the world's political landscape so long as capitalism remains a hegemonic political-economic system. This chapter examines the role of specific anti-systemic movements, namely, the labor, ethnic and indigenous rights, women's, anti-corporate globalization, peace, and environmental and climate movements in creating a socio-ecological revolution committed to both social justice and environmental sustainability. Anti-systemic movements are a crucial component of moving humanity to an alternative world system but the process is a tedious and convoluted one with no guarantees, especially in light of the disparate nature of these movements.

While not seeking to create a blueprint per se for creating an alternative world system that will be manifested in different ways in the many societies around the world, chapter 6 (Transitional System-Challenging Reforms) proposes several system-challenging reforms that potentially could facilitate a transition from the present existing capitalist world system to a democratic eco-socialist world system. These include: (1) the creation of new left parties designed to capture the state; (2) emissions taxes at the sites of production; (3) public and social ownership of the means of production; (4) increasing social equality and achieving a sustainable population size; (5) workers' democracy; (6) meaningful work and shortening the work week; (7) challenging or rethinking the growth paradigm (8) energy efficiency, renewable energy sources, appropriate technology, and green jobs; (9) sustainable public transportation and travel; (10) sustainable food production and forestry; (11) resisting the culture of consumption and adopting sustainable and meaningful consumption patterns; (12) sustainable trade; and (13) sustainable settlement patterns and local communities.

Finally, in chapter 7 (Conclusion), I argue that as humanity proceeds into the twenty-first century, our survival as a species appears to be more and more precarious, particularly given that the impact of climate change

in a multiplicity of ways looms on the horizon. More so than has ever been the case, it is essential for critical scholars, including anthropologists and other social scientists, to envision possible future scenarios and strategies for achieving an alternative world system based on principles of social justice, democracy, and environmental sustainability, regardless of how we term our real utopian vision. Perhaps more important is developing strategies to shift from the existing system of globalized capitalism to an alternative that transcends its numerous contradictions and limitations.