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Theories Of The New Class: Intellectuals And Power (Contradictions of Modernity)

Lawrence Peter King

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Old as the notion of the "New Class" is-and the term was coined by anarchist Mikhail Bakunin around 1870-the idea of the ascendancy of an intellectual elite continues to engage, and perplex, social theorists to this day. In Theories of the New Class, Ivan Szelinyi, one of the most incisive and respected analysts of the intellectual class, and his colleague Lawrence King put New Class theories into a broad historical framework for the first time.

Addressing the intellectual history of Marxism and socialism, theories of the increasing role of the state and technocratic elites in capitalism, and theories of contemporary social change, King and Szelinyi's work clearly links the centrality of thinking about intellectual class formation to a variety of theoretical and political projects that have shaped social theory and influenced political realities over the past century.

King and Szelinyi show that the idea of the New Class has stubbornly entered and reentered the agenda of critical social theorizing throughout the last century. Indeed, they interpret that the last century as a history of projects by different groups of the highly educated-factions of intellectuals, bureaucrats, technocrats, managers, and the left-wing humanistic intelligentsia-to gain ultimate power. A rare empirical discussion of theory, Theories of the New Class invigorates class theories by grounding them in contemporary issues; at the same time, it uses modern polemics to revitalize historical debates on the origins of capitalism.

Lawrence Peter King, associate professor of sociology at Yale University, is the author of The Basic Features of Postcommunist Capitalism (2001).

Ivan Szelinyi is William GrahamSumner Professor of Sociology and professor of political science at Yale University. He is the author or coauthor of Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power (1979), Urban Social Inequalities (1983), Socialist Entrepreneurs (1988), and Making Capitalism without Capitalists (1998).

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