

Harry Magdoff
(1913-2006)

Harry Magdoff was born in the Bronx, New York, to working-class Russian immigrants. He discovered Marx at the age of 15, and through his years of student activism during the Great Depression, subsequent employment in the US government, persecution during the post-War “red”-baiting era, and various jobs he turned to thereafter in order to make a living, he never lost the world-view he first came upon as a 15-year-old. His classic *The Age of Imperialism* (1969) exposed, for a new generation of students, the roots of the Vietnam war in the character of US capitalism. In the same year he joined Paul Sweezy as co-editor of *Monthly Review*, he remained at this post till his death on January 1, 2006. In those years he collaborated with Sweezy on path-breaking essays for *Monthly Review*, subsequently brought out as collections.

Magdoff showed that not only did imperialism still exist, but that “imperialism is the way of life of capitalism”. To this work, and to his collaboration with Sweezy, he brought a broad historical grasp and an extraordinary sense of the concrete. He also shared with Sweezy an identification with the revolutionary struggles of people everywhere, and with the task of building socialism. These two extraordinary economists have passed within two years of each other, but their work will endure as a vital part of the struggle against imperialism and for genuine socialism.

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