

The Uno Newsletter Vol. II, No. 32  
The Special Memorial Issue of the Uno Newsletter  
(Honouring Thomas T. Sekine, 1933 – 2022)  
Working Paper Series 2-32-1

28 June 2025

**Introduction**

Brian K. MacLean (Professor at Laurentian University)

([bmaclean@laurentian.ca](mailto:bmaclean@laurentian.ca))

[http://www.unotheory.org/news\\_II\\_9](http://www.unotheory.org/news_II_9)

The Uno Newsletter: Rejuvenating Marxian Economics through Uno Theory  
Office: Uno Newsletter, Musashi University, Toyotama Kami 1-26-1 Nerima-ku,  
Tokyo 1768534 Japan  
Email: [contact@unotheory.org](mailto:contact@unotheory.org)  
Homepage : <http://www.unotheory.org>

## Introduction to the Special Memorial Issue of the Uno Newsletter

(Honouring Thomas T. Sekine, 1933 – 2022)

Thomas Sekine—system-builder, translator of Kozo Uno, and mentor—devoted his career to clarifying Kozo Uno’s reconstruction of Marx’s economics and to nurturing an international community of scholars who pursue rigorous political economy. This English-language issue of the *Uno Newsletter* gathers two major research papers and a three-part recollective essay that together illuminate the breadth of Sekine’s influence, from theoretical disputes over the commodity-form to Sekine’s role in Japan studies in Canada and the convivial give-and-take of the Uno Study Group in Toronto.

In “The Dialectic of the Theory of the Commodity: commenting on Sekine’s *Dialectic of Capital* and Lange’s *Value without Fetish*,” **Kiyoshi Nagatani** inaugurates a planned three-part engagement with Sekine’s *Dialectic of Capital*. This first instalment revisits the treatment of the commodity in Chapter 1 of Marx’s *Capital*—and in its reformulations by Uno, Sekine and Elena Lange— and asks whether Sekine’s exposition is genuinely dialectical once his detailed correspondences with Hegel’s *Logic* are set aside. Nagatani emphasizes the importance of the substance of value, labour, being dealt with at the proper place. Future papers will examine Sekine’s handling of value formation and of the transformation of values into prices of production.

In “Thomas T. Sekine as a Japan Specialist in Canada,” Brian MacLean shifts the focus from pure theory to intellectual biography in “Thomas T. Sekine as a Japan Specialist in Canada.” Drawing on his years as Sekine’s student, teaching assistant, JSAC collaborator and Study Group member, MacLean documents Sekine’s course on the Japanese economy at York University, his bridge-building in the Japan Studies Association of Canada, and his eclectic applied analysis of the 1990s Japanese recession. The portrait that emerges is of a scholar whose intellectual flexibility matched his theoretical rigour.

The three-part essay “Remembering Tom Sekine and the Uno Study Group in Toronto,” begins with recollections from **Robert R. Albritton** (written by **Jennifer Welsh** and **John Simoulidis**). This short history of the Uno Study Group evokes two decades of monthly meetings marked by intense textual debate, polite dissent, visiting Japanese scholars, and enduring friendships.

**Colin Duncan** stresses the Uno Study Group’s “friendly seriousness,” the pleasure its members took in abstruse argument, and the resonance he sees between the Uno-Sekine project and Karl Polanyi’s critique of market society.

Finally, **Stefanos Kourkoulakos** offers a personal tribute that portrays Sekine as an exemplar of Aristotelian moderation whose quiet authority shaped both scholarly method and human character.

These pieces show Sekine as theorist, teacher, collaborator, and friend. His combination of logical precision and openness to dialogue continues to set a valuable example.

---

## Author Biographies

**Kiyoshi Nagatani** is Professor Emeritus of Economics at Shinshu University whose major works include *From the Labour Theory of Value to the Law of Value* (2001, in Japanese), and *The Specter of Market Economy: A Challenge by Marx's Capital to Market Economy and the Present* (2013, in Japanese). His English-language studies include "Capitalist Exploitation and the Law of Value," (*Science & Society*, vol. 68, 2004), "Value-Form and the Mystery of Money" (*Capital & Class*, vol. 46, no. 2, 2021), "The Reality of the Law of Value" (*Capital & Class*, vol. 46, no. 2, 2021), and "The Value Form and the Fetishism of the Commodity," (*Review of Radical Political Economics*, vol. 51, no. 1, 2024).

**Brian K. MacLean** is Professor of Economics at Laurentian University in Sudbury. Trained at Dalhousie, York and Tohoku universities, he researches macroeconomics, Japanese economic history and Canadian economic policy. A former student and teaching assistant of Thomas Sekine, he has recently written on topics such as Japanese monetary policy, labour markets and aggregate-demand management.

**Robert R. Albritton** is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at York University in Toronto, whose recollections of Thomas Sekine for this issue were written by **Jennifer Welsh** (formerly of Toronto Metropolitan University and married to Albritton since 1987) and **John Simoulidis** (a former student of Albritton who is now an associate professor in social sciences at York University). Albritton taught at York University from 1969 until his retirement in 2005. He earned his B.A. at UC Berkeley (1963) and his M.A. and Ph.D. at UCLA (1967, 1973). A leading Marxist political economist, Albritton has authored books such as *A Japanese Reconstruction of Marxist Theory* (1986) and *Let Them Eat Junk: How Capitalism Creates Hunger and Obesity* (2009).

**Colin Duncan** is a Canadian historian and political economist who taught at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, and McGill University in Montreal, Québec. He was a leading member of the Uno Study Group in Toronto during the 1980s and 1990s. His work bridges environmental history, political economy, and agricultural transformation, often drawing on the intellectual legacies of Karl Polanyi, Karl Marx, and Fernand Braudel. Duncan is best known for his book *The Centrality of Agriculture: Between Humankind and the Rest of Nature*, in which he argues that agriculture is foundational to understanding social and economic history.

**Stefanos Kourkoulakos** is a Greek, native-born and raised Athenian, political theorist who was formally trained in Canada. During his graduate studies at York University he became a prominent member of the Uno Study Group in Toronto. He contributed "The Specificity of Dialectical Reason" to *New Dialectics and Political Economy* (2003). Drawing on Aristotelian virtue ethics and Sekine's Unoist reconstruction of *Capital*, he has recently taught undergraduate political-philosophy and graduate environmental-philosophy courses at University West, Sweden. His current projects include new readings of Plato's *Symposium*, *Alcibiades I* (attributed to Plato), and Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics*.