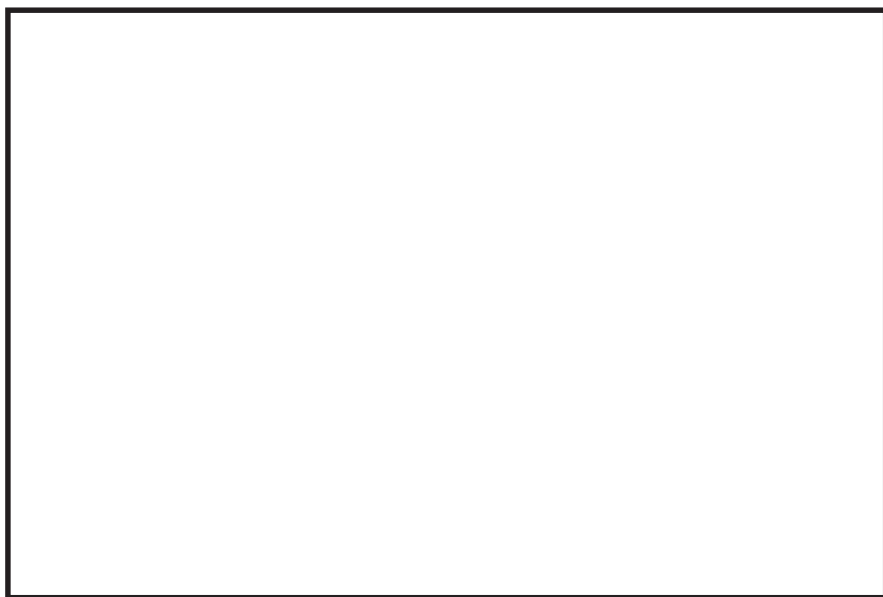


Contents

THE RIGHT AND THE POLITICS OF RAGE Kent Worcester	5
SHREDDING THE SAFETY NET Betty Reid Mandell	8
RACISM AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION Barry Finger	23
RACISM REMAINS PERVASIVE Leith Mullings	31
BLACK INTELLECTUALS IN CONFLICT Manning Marable	35
RACE AND RADICALISM IN THE 1960s Stephen Steinberg	41
PAGES FROM LABOR HISTORY Paul Buhle	55
THE ENLIGHTENMENT AND ITS CRITICS Stephen Eric Bronner	65
THE INTELLECTUAL AS OUTSIDER Grant Farred	87
ZIONISM AND PEACE Gilbert Achcar	95
CUBA: THE ONE-PARTY STATE CONTINUES Samuel Farber	116
RACIST AND ANTI-SEMITIC VIOLENCE IN GERMANY Hanna Behrend	123
SYMPOSIUM: THE GERMAN LEFT TODAY	
INTRODUCTION Stephen Eric Bronner	132
FIVE YEARS OF THE PDS Gregor Gysi	135
GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY TODAY Iring Fetscher	143
ALLIANCE 90/GREENS Margareta Wolf/Cora Stephan	152
THE CASE AGAINST MARKET SOCIALISM Mel Bienenfeld	157
THE "RUSSIAN QUESTION" AND WORLD WAR II Julius Jacobson	164
BOOK REVIEWS	
Reginald Wilson/Stephen Steinberg/Jennifer Scarlott	178
Michael Löwy/Dave Roediger	



The Right and the Politics of Rage

Kent Worcester

THE CARNAGE OF THE OKLAHOMA BOMBING PUTS A NEW SPIN on what has been called the politics of rage. Before Oklahoma, the most visible expression of the country's march to the right was the construction of a hard Republican majority in Congress. In the wake of Oklahoma, the putschist fantasies of a radical, sometimes "revolutionary" right have come into sharper focus. The bombing not only highlights the dangers posed by domestic neo-fascists, but raises questions about the porous borders dividing mainstream conservatives from the radical fringe. For this reason, the potential significance of Oklahoma is that it represents a rare opportunity to recast the terms of political debate.

The paramilitary unit that took out the main Federal building in Oklahoma City on April 19 had its sights trained, not only on federal agencies, but also on public employees, their children, and passersby whose only connection was their physical proximity. (The fact that many federal employees are African-American or Hispanic is unlikely to have escaped their attention.) The bombers were almost certainly inspired by the Aryan tract *The Turner Diaries* (1978), which recounts the activities of a racist organization that detonates an ammonium nitrate fertilizer bomb in front of the FBI headquarters just after 9 am. The Order, as they call themselves, intend for the bomb to serve as a wake-up call to white America — and they succeed, to the point of turning most of the country into a charnel house.

The Turner Diaries offers a particularly grisly example of what has become a genre of books, tapes, tactical manuals, and so on, denouncing the feds, railing against "enemies within," and calling for a "second violent American revolution." Virulent strains of right-wing thought have always enjoyed a presence in American life, but reactionary propaganda has found an especially appreciative audience in the last ten to fifteen years, and particularly since the Democrats recaptured the White House in 1992. Two events — the immolation of the Branch Davidian compound in 1993, and the siege of the home of tax resister Randy Weaver a year earlier — have heightened rightist anxieties about an imminent government take-over of arms and private property.

THE RADICAL RIGHT IS COMPRISED OF AN EMBATTLED SUBCULTURE of fundamentalists

KENT WORCESTER is a member of the New Politics editorial board and the author of *C.L.R. James: A Political Biography* (SUNY Press), November 1995.

and conspiracists conjoined by the usual litany of grievances. Most conservatives broadly sympathize with many of their concerns, but distrust their new world order paranoia and malevolent rhetoric. Radical rightists are also tied together by newspapers (*Spotlight*, *Human Events*), organizations (Klan groups, Aryan sects, Reconstructionist ministries), and informal media (fax, internet, short wave radio). The information age has facilitated greater international outreach, while permissive gun laws have allowed racist groups (and extreme anti-abortion groups) to stockpile guns, ammo, and explosives.

The militias are a recent innovation, concocted by savvy political entrepreneurs who have launched themselves as saviors of the Second Amendment with the aid of armed camps of weekend warriors. They provide a context where enraged gun-nuts and credulous Ditto-heads can be inducted into an explicitly racist and supremacist milieu. As a war veteran and foot soldier in the army of white supremacy, Timothy McVeigh attached himself to the militia movement, selling weapons, exchanging information, and gaining reassurance that a massive confrontation was indeed brewing between "patriotic Americans" and an illegitimate state.

What does all of this obsessive madness have to do with today's triumphant conservatism? Absolutely nothing, to judge by responses to Clinton's timid suggestion that "purveyors of hatred and division" fostered a climate that helped facilitate the Oklahoma bombing. George Will found the president's words "contemptible." William Safire said that Clinton was indulging in a "form of extremism." Rush Limbaugh blamed liberals for whipping up "national hysteria." Gingrich, for his part, said that efforts to link his self-proclaimed "revolution" with the Oklahoma bombing were "grotesque and offensive." For these critics, the perpetrators of the Oklahoma attack are merely lawbreakers. "Responsibility rests on the criminals themselves," intoned Safire, "not on chosen motivators or 'root causes.'"

A more common response has been to attack "extremists on both sides." In this spirit, Jacob Weisberg, in *New York* magazine, drew parallels between McVeigh and the Weather Underground, and Newt Gingrich and Leonard Bernstein, who hosted a 1970 fundraising benefit for the Black Panthers. Several pundits played up the fact that the northern Californian wood-fetishist Unabomber killed his third victim within hours of the Oklahoma disaster. After chiding the hard right in his *New York Times* column, A.M. Rosenthal lashed out at his real targets — "intellectuals of the movie business who make big money portraying America as viciously as any militiaman...lobbyists who cry out that if antiterrorism is tightened, hundreds of thousands of Arab-Americans will be dragged off to concentration camps...[and] the campus Bullies for Hatred across the country."

JUST AS THIS HYSTERIA WAS REACHING A HIGH-PITCHED CRESCENDO, fresh revelations emerged about the real world co-mingling of the radical fringe and more respectable elements. It turned out, for example, that at least two new members of Congress, Helen Chenoweth (Idaho) and Steve Stockman (Texas), are aligned with the militia movement. The Militia of Montana, led by former members of the Aryan Nation, merchandise a video in which Chenoweth explains that more than fifty percent of the United States is under "the control of the New World Order." Along with Stockman and Chenoweth, Senators Lauch Faircloth (North Carolina) and Larry Craig (Idaho), wrote militia-inspired letters to Janet Reno

prior to the bombing to complain that nefarious agents of a one-world dictatorship were mobilizing troops and black helicopters against ordinary citizens. Reports have also come out about radio call-in hosts who incite listeners to engage in acts of violence against liberals and public officials. Chuck Baker, Bob Mohan, and other talk show personalities provide listeners with the addresses and phone numbers of radical right groups. G. Gordon Liddy, said to be the nation's second most popular talk show host, gleefully offers on-air suggestions about how to inflict maximum damage against political targets. Newt Gingrich, Bob Dole, Phil Gramm, and others have been regular guests on Liddy's show.

The bombing has brought to light a dense network of racist activists working to restrict immigration, fight gun control, illegalize abortion, and combat federal tyranny. One columnist cited the example of Lawrence Pratt, who heads both Gun Owners of America and the Committee to Protect the Family Foundation, a fund-raising front for Operation Rescue. Pratt regularly speaks alongside Mark Koernke, the notorious leader of the Michigan Militia, and funnels money into the coffers of House member Steve Stockman and other friends of the movement. One of Pratt's collaborators is the survivalist guru Bo Gritz, who characterized the Oklahoma bombing as "a Rembrandt — a masterpiece of science and art put together." While these people are not as well known as, say, Jesse Helms or Robert Dornan, their strategy of "leaderless resistance" resonates more effectively in some quarters than either Jack Kemp's opportunity conservatism or Gingrich's crackpot futurism.

At the local level, there are a number of causes that blur the distinction between conservatism and right-wing radicalism. One is the anti-gun control movement, led by the National Rifle Association, which has extensive ties to the militia movement. Another is the Wise Use movement, which views private property as sacred and opposes all forms of land use planning. The most significant, perhaps, is the anti-abortion movement. From the 1980s on, militant anti-abortionists have engaged in numerous acts of arson, bombing, intolerable harassment of clinic workers, and even murder. While each of these movements contains a wide range of activists — most of whom were appalled by the Oklahoma bombing — each offers critical points of contact between grassroots conservatism and the radical right.

Another key point of contact is the Christian Coalition of Pat Robertson and Ralph Reed, which is currently amassing power within the Republican Party. Fueled by Robertson's theories of a New World Order headed by financiers (who happen to be Jews), the Christian Coalition is working overtime to transform the country into a straight-jacketed theocracy.

The tragedy of Oklahoma is that it took an act of mass murder to show that the right is infested with homicidal crazies who want to turn Patrick Buchanan's "culture war" into a bloodbath. Even now, most pundits, as well as Clinton and the Democrats, view Oklahoma as an aberration, or an opportunity to roll back individual liberties through counter-terrorism measures. The sad fact is that Oklahoma was exceptional only in terms of scale. Placed in the context of escalating levels of anti-abortion clinic violence, and the emergence of a militia movement that has effectively tapped into the politics of vengeance, Oklahoma becomes a potent symbol of the right's capacity to engage in acts of unspeakable barbarism.

Shredding the Safety Net

Betty Reid Mandell

DAVID STOCKMAN, RONALD REAGAN'S BUDGET DIRECTOR, PREDICTED the future when he said, "There are *no* entitlements, *period!*" The goal of the Republicans then, as now, was to destroy the idea that the government owed *anything to the people*. Once that is accomplished, the safety net of the U.S. welfare state, never very strong compared to those in Europe, can be shredded entirely. Then, there is no buffer to protect people from having to take any low-waged job, or to protect women from having to remain in a painful marriage, or even to protect them from homelessness.

The dismantling of the welfare state is not just a Republican venture. Although they have been the most aggressive about it, the Democrats have done their share. But the Gingrich Republicans have dealt a body blow to Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), the main program of support for poor children and their parents, by their passage of the Personal Responsibility Act (H.R. 4). This Act would convert the AFDC program into a federal block grant and turn the program over to the states with fixed funding for each of the next five years. If the Senate passes that Act and the President signs it, entitlements are over and state discretion is the order of the day. The federal/state cooperation in the program that has been in place since the original Social Security Act of 1935 is ended. No child would be assured of receiving help in times of need — regardless of the depth of the child's poverty or the parents' willingness to work.

The Republicans call it devolution. George Will, writing in *Newsweek*, boasted that it would send power "back to where it came from and belongs, back to the people and their state governments." They say it will give states more flexibility to suit the program to local conditions. They even claim that it will help move people out of poverty and change their behavior. Yet there is not a shred of evidence that a block grant will either move people out of poverty or change their behavior and attitudes. What the block grant says is that people who play by the rules, whatever they may be, will be denied benefits arbitrarily when state politicians cannot decide on a tax increase or a local aid cut or whatever when a fiscal crisis

BETTY REID MANDELL *has been a welfare rights activist since the 1960s. She founded and co-edits the newspaper, Survival News, written by and about poor people. Professor Emeritus from Bridgewater State College in Massachusetts, she is the author of several books on social welfare issues, most recently, An Introduction to Human Services: Policy and Practice, co-authored with Barbara Schram.*

occurs.

WE KNOW WHAT THE STATES DO WITH WELFARE when they decide to cut back expenses — they cut it. The program that is funded entirely by states, General Assistance (GA), is always the first welfare program to be cut, even before AFDC (a state/federal matching program) is cut. The General Assistance program (sometimes called General Relief) is for people who do not qualify for AFDC or other entitlement programs — disabled people in the process of applying for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI); unemployed, able-bodied individuals with little or no income who are ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits; and poor two-parent families whose primary wage-earner lacks a recent work history. Not all states even have the program. The Center on Budget and Policy Priority points to a 1992 survey which showed nine states with no GA program and ten other states that had GA programs only in some parts of the state. Even the 31 states and the District of Columbia did not cover all — or even close to all — categories of needy people and the level of aid was very low, a median of \$215 a month, 36% of the poverty line.

During the 1991-1992 recession, Michigan abolished its General Relief program, ending benefits for about 82,000 recipients, and Illinois cut off benefits for about 66,000 GA recipients. Rhode Island abolished its program. Ohio ended aid after six months. Several other states cut back the program in various ways. Follow-up studies in Michigan and Ohio showed that relatively few former GA recipients became employed after their benefits were ended and those who did were in low wage and often temporary jobs. In Michigan, there was a 50 percent increase in homelessness. In Ohio, the ranks of the homeless increased substantially.

The Personal Responsibility Act

THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT (PRA) OF THE CONTRACT WITH AMERICA would attach some tight strings to the AFDC program before turning it back to the states. Couching their language in phrases that seem benignly protective of poor people's character, they promise to "end dependency" by getting women off the rolls by forcing them to work. They claim that their bill will increase women's self-sufficiency. They further promise to "strengthen family values" and end illegitimacy by denying support to unmarried teen mothers. At first, they threatened to put some children into orphanages if mothers could not care for them, but in the final version of the PRA, there was no mention of orphanages. And they promise to discourage women from having babies while they are on the dole by denying support to babies born to a mother who receives AFDC. They claim that all of this will reduce poverty.

This is voodoo social science. Taking away the economic life-line of poor women and children will only make their lives vastly more miserable than they already are on AFDC grants that are 50% below the poverty line. Women and children will swell the ranks of the homeless. But the Personal Responsibility Act brandishes a sword over women's heads, telling them that they had better get a man or a job to support them, *or else*. Following is a summary of its main provisions, as explained by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities:

- Lumps monies from AFDC and Emergency Aid to Families into block grants paid to states with virtually no federal government oversight and with no requirement that states provide matching funds.
- Sets a “drop dead” five-year lifetime limitation on cash assistance and workfare slots. Most families would be *permanently* banned from receiving any further assistance from the block grant. All parents who have received cash aid for two years will be required to participate in “work activities,” as defined by the state. A specified percentage of the adult caseload must participate in a work program — 50 percent by 2003. At least one parent in 90 percent of two-parent families would be required to participate. Parents may also participate in training, but must also do one other work activity for at least 20 hours a week (30 hours for adults in two-parent families).

States would be required to end both cash assistance and workfare slots for families who had received AFDC for five years. States could end assistance after two years. After their limit has been reached, families could not receive assistance again *for a lifetime*. The PRA would not provide jobs, education, or job training. It provides for no exemptions from work. States could require parents caring for disabled children or infants to work full time.

A large fraction of recipients would be required to work their AFDC benefits off for 35 hours a week at “wages” that would equal \$2.42 an hour for a family of three in the typical state. Nationally nearly half of all children receiving assistance today — or about 4.5 million children — are in families that have received benefits for a cumulative total of five years. The five year cut-off would make millions of poor children ineligible for federal aid.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities says, “The bill includes a perverse incentive that allows states to meet their work participation rates simply by denying large numbers of families cash assistance under the block grant. If a state simply denied assistance to one-half of its caseload, it would reduce by one-half the number of parents that would be required to participate in the work program.”

- Prohibits states from using federal block grant funds to provide cash assistance to children born to a family already receiving aid or to a family that received aid at any time during the 10-month period before the birth of the child. *The child would remain ineligible for aid throughout his or her childhood.* The Department of Health and Human Services estimates that this provision would ultimately deny aid to more than 2 million children a year.
- Eliminates cash assistance provided through the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program for the 80 percent of the low-income disabled children who would otherwise become eligible for aid in future years, including children suffering from disabilities such as Down Syndrome and cerebral palsy. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that about 80 percent of low-income disabled children who would have become eligible for SSI assistance in the future would be denied aid under this bill. Under current law, about 1.25 million children are projected to receive SSI benefits by the year 2000. Under this bill, only about 500,000 children would receive SSI.
- Denies AFDC and housing benefits to unmarried mothers who have a child before their 18th birthday, and would allow states to deny cash aid and/or housing assistance to unmarried mothers under 21. This will deny aid to 70,000 children a year, according to a Department of Health and Human Services estimate.

- Rewards states by granting them up to a 10% increase if they reduce their "illegitimacy ratio," the ratio of live births to out-of-wedlock births and the sum of abortions in the general population.
- Reduces the cash grants of families that include a child for whom legal paternity has not been established by the state. Even when the mother has fully cooperated with the child support agency but the state has been unable to establish paternity, the family's grant would be reduced by \$50 or 15 percent, whichever is less.
- Merges federal food assistance programs including the school lunch and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) programs into a block grant and sets the block grant's funding level several billion dollars below what is needed to maintain current benefits. The school lunch and school breakfast programs would no longer be entitlement programs.
- Cuts \$23 billion from the Food Stamp program over five years. Sets a 90-day time limit for people 18-50 years old to receive Food Stamps. Includes a work requirement. While agribusiness and food corporations succeeded in keeping Food Stamps out of a block grant, Congress compromised with their lobbyists and allowed states to take over the Food Stamp program if they set up an electronic transfer system.
- Makes poor *legal* immigrants ineligible for about 60 federally-funded health, education, job training, housing, social service, and income security programs. About the only program they could still get is emergency medical services.
- Replaces federal child welfare programs, including foster care and adoption assistance, with a block grant. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the federal financial commitment to abused and neglected children will be reduced by \$1.7 billion over the next five years.
- Repeals the current Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program which requires states to provide a range of education, training, and work programs for AFDC parents.
- Reduces federal resources for child care. At the same time that states are supposed to place more parents in work programs, the child care assistance will be reduced.
- Denies SSI benefits to *all* persons disabled by drug or alcohol abuse. Last summer, Congress (both Republicans and Democrats) enacted tough legislation to limit disability benefits for substance abusers under the SSI and Social Security disability programs. SSI recipients can only get assistance for three years, and are required to participate in treatment programs as a condition of receiving benefits.
- Imposes spending caps on many important programs for the poor, including AFDC, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), child support enforcement, child care programs, and child protection programs. The caps are well below what is spent now, and spending would continue to be cut in future years.

The Department of Health and Human Services estimates that ultimately about half of the children, perhaps as many as six million, who receive AFDC under current law would be denied benefits due to the time limit, the child exclusion provision, or the provision denying aid to minor mothers and their children. Net reductions in programs under the PRA would amount to \$65 billion over five years. These reductions in funding, they add, "represent a significant retreat in the federal government's commitment to protect vulnerable children and provide

a safety net for poor families.”

Clinton's Proposals

PRESIDENT CLINTON MADE A WEAK PROTEST ABOUT THE CONTRACT WITH AMERICA hurting children, but engaged in some macho posturing himself by saying the Republicans were not tough enough on work. His Work and Responsibility Act of 1994 called for a two-year time limit on AFDC, but recipients who had received two years of cash assistance would be required to work. If they could not find an unsubsidized job, they would be provided a subsidized work slot (workfare) and paid at least the federal minimum wage. Clinton's plan also called for parents who are minors to live at home or in a specified setting in order to get assistance; allowed states to implement a “Learnfare” program, cutting benefits if children fail to meet school attendance requirements; denied aid to children born while a mother is on AFDC; and denied aid to a mother who cannot name the father of her child.

When he was campaigning for president, Clinton talked of the importance of providing education and training to help welfare recipients succeed in the workplace and leave welfare for good. As Governor of Arkansas and chairman of the National Governors Association, Clinton helped shape the Family Support Act of 1988 which includes education and training. Now, however, Clinton has moved away from this position. His Work and Family Responsibility Act emphasized low wage or forced work rather than education and training.

Mistrust of the Government; Mistrust of the Poor

TWENTY YEARS AGO, RALPH NADER WARNED THAT THE REPUBLICANS WERE ENGAGED in a campaign to undermine people's trust in government so they could dismantle it, since it sometimes prevented the worst depredations of capitalism. Now we see how prescient Nader was. The Republicans, often aided by the Democrats, have succeeded in creating widespread mistrust of government. They have also succeeded in creating, or at least exacerbating, widespread mistrust of the poor. The two together create an explosive mixture that has led to a terroristic campaign against all poor people, but especially AFDC mothers, and particularly teenage mothers. Having created their designated scapegoats to draw the public's hostility, politicians, in the service of corporate interests, were free to close in for the kill and take away the supports that made it possible for the poor, at least, to survive. Corporate welfare went almost unnoticed while the public cried for the blood of welfare mothers.

The divide-and-conquer diversionary tactic worked. A flood of conservative rhetoric condemned the “dependency” of people who got help from the government and who “didn't work.” They never conceded that caring for children is work, unless it is caring for other people's children for pay. Welfare mothers were pictured as lazy and immoral, breeding children simply to get more welfare money. People who were stressed-out by falling wages, disappearing jobs, overwork, and lack of health insurance and child care, turned on those “lazy dependents” who seemed to be abetted by government “handouts.” They let the Savings and Loan crooks off the hook, even though the money lost could have paid for AFDC in all 50 states for nearly seven years. The federal and state spending on AFDC is

about \$22 billion a year, \$128 billion less than the government spent on the bailout resulting from the Saving and Loans scandal. But the media features endless stories about the dependency and fraud of welfare moms, not the dependency and fraud of S & L thieves. Nor does the media pay much attention to the vendors — agencies and professionals such as doctors, dentists, and pharmacists who serve welfare clients and who commit 93% of the welfare fraud in Massachusetts.

The War Against Women

THE ECONOMIC WARFARE AGAINST THE POOR is combined with cultural warfare. Charles Murray, a man who seems crazed by the thought of teenagers having sex, has provided the theoretical underpinnings of much of the Personal Responsibility Act (if one can call his pseudo-science, palmed off as “research,” theory). He blames teenage mothers for most of society’s ills and claims to believe that depriving them of AFDC grants will prevent their getting pregnant. Of course that is absurd. But it will help to re-stigmatize having babies without getting married, which is what the right wing quite clearly says that it wants to do. Title I of the Personal Responsibility Act is entitled, “Reducing Illegitimacy.” It declares that “marriage is the foundation of a successful society,” and goes on to give a laundry list of “facts” about illegitimacy which features teenage mothers and links criminality with absent black fathers. States have joined in this warfare against teen parents, passing laws restricting welfare and giving them rewards (dubbed “Bridefare” or “Wedfare” programs) if they marry any man, not necessarily the father of their child.

Welfare is one of the battlegrounds of the war on women. The National Organization for Women has organized a “Committee of One Hundred” to fight against punitive welfare legislation. They say that not only does the Personal Responsibility Act wreak its havoc on poor women and their children, but it also “suggests a broader effort to pressure all women into a repressive sexuality, limited reproductive choices, and conventional family arrangements.” The radical right understands the connection between a safety net and women’s autonomy. By withdrawing federal assistance for women without male support (and by also attacking affirmative action, Title IX, and college financing), by branding welfare mothers with demeaning racial stereotypes, by pauperizing them and questioning their fitness as mothers, the right is pressuring all women to depend economically on men within a traditional marriage whether or not they want to, and whether or not the men are dependable. The economic alternative is so harsh that women may find themselves unable to provide for their families and have to give up their children to foster care or adoption.

AFDC does not encourage family break up and out of wedlock births. Single-parent households are on the rise but it is not due to AFDC. While the value of the AFDC benefit fell during the last 20 years, the number of mother-only households rose.

Unwed teenage mothers comprise a small portion of welfare mothers. Only 11 percent of welfare mothers are teenagers, of whom 65 percent live with their own parents, and 20 percent live with other adults. Unwed motherhood is on the rise due to divorce, delayed marriage, changing sexual norms, the falling standard of living, and other social conditions. The problem of teenage pregnancy has

been vastly overstated and misrepresented. The teenage birthrate declined 20 percent between 1970 and 1984. Even as late as 1990, the teenage birthrate was just about back where it had been at the beginning of the 1970s.

If abortion were easily available to poor women, there would be fewer out-of-wedlock births. Predictably, the Hyde Amendment resulted in more births to low-income mothers by prohibiting federal funding for abortions. Sharon Thompson, writing in the *New York Review of Books*, noted that in the late 1970s, before the right to life movement interfered, pregnancy and maternity rates fell to their lowest level since the 1940s. They began to rise as abortion became increasingly stigmatized and restricted, and the harder it has become to obtain abortion in a given state, the higher the teenage pregnancy rate. While the Reagan and Bush administrations' anti-abortion stance stigmatized *pregnancy*, the Clinton Administration, along with the Republican Congress, stigmatizes *motherhood*.

Teenagers are more likely to have babies when they see no other future for themselves. Those who go on to higher education or fulfilling careers are not as likely to have babies as those who drop out of high school. President Clinton acknowledges that the best approach to birth control in Third World countries is to educate the women, but he does not apply that insight to teenagers in the U.S. In European countries there is, by and large, as much teenage sex as there is in the U.S., but many fewer babies are born as a result of it. That is because Europeans give early and adequate sex education and contraception in schools, and have a healthier and less ambivalent attitude toward sex.

All these policies limit the choices of poor women, and further deepen the rift between poor women who have no choices and affluent women who do. These reproductive issues affect only poor women now, but they are related to the drive to limit reproductive choice for *all* women. Katha Pollitt of *The Nation* points out that the conservative talk about putting poor children into orphanages is not really about orphanages, but about women — about reinforcing the sexual double standard.

Universal vs. Means-Tested Programs

THERE ARE ABOUT 3 MILLION CHILDREN WHO RECEIVE SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS, along with their parents. These children are the dependents of retired, deceased, or disabled workers or are themselves disabled. Most people are not even aware of the existence of these "dependents." Certainly their mothers are not subjected to scrutiny of their sex lives, work habits, housekeeping standards, or budgeting and shopping skills. That is because Social Security is a "universal" benefit, that is, everyone whether rich or poor is entitled to the benefit if they meet the basic qualifications, and over 90% of the population does. Universal programs have much stronger political support than do means-tested programs which are only for the poor. People who receive Social Security are called "claimants"; people who receive AFDC are called "recipients." As the late great British social welfare scholar, Richard Titmuss, said, "Programs for the poor are poor programs." Universal programs, however, are not invulnerable (nothing is), and we see both the Republicans and the Democrats itching to slash Social Security and Medicare. Congress has already cut vulnerable and little noticed populations from Social Security, such as college students and many of the disabled. They also reduced benefits for the very poor by eliminating the minimum level for benefits of \$122

a month.

In her book, *Pitied but Not Entitled*, Linda Gordon argues that the deserving/undeserving, universal/means-tested, split was built into the Social Security law at its inception because of the differing philosophies of the men who developed the universal parts of the Act and the women who developed the means-tested ADC. The women were social workers who directed the Children's Bureau. Although they had been heavily influenced by the suffrage movement and helped to create many programs for children, they shared the elitism and racism of many in the Progressive movement. They felt morally superior to immigrants and blacks, and as social workers they felt it their duty to supervise them on an individual, case-by-case basis. They envisioned a small program with "nice" women, mostly widows and their children. They thought of it as a temporary program, presumably until women remarried. They ignored the large numbers of single mothers who could not or would not rely on a man for support.

The men who created the Social Insurance program, on the other hand, wanted a program to which workers were *entitled*. They were not interested in people's character flaws. Many of them were from Europe and had studied Germany's social insurance system. They developed the unemployment compensation system, workers' compensation, and Old Age Insurance. But they shaped a program that responded to the needs of working men, and the elite of the working class — those with steady jobs with major employers, and professionals. It left out single mothers, the working poor who had low wages, and the workers who were not wage earners like farmers, sharecroppers, and small businessmen. Only much later were those people included. Women homemakers were never included in their own right, only as dependents of their husbands.

The framers of social insurance did not like the fact that ADC was means-tested rather than an entitlement program, and that it required supervision of clients. They were correct in believing that only by making social insurance a universal program could it avoid the "stigma of the dole and the humiliation of dependence." Yet, while creating a non-stigmatized program for the workers' male elite, they never seriously considered a universal program that would include housewives, sharecroppers, or domestic servants. To build political support for their program, they even created hostility in the public mind about the means-tested ADC program, thereby increasing its stigma. ADC (later called AFDC) continued as a stigmatized means-tested program giving its *recipients* much less money than social insurance *claimants* received, and scapegoating them as the "unworthy poor."

Women reformers criticized social insurance because it was based on insuring wage earners (leaving out women who cared for children), and was based on the assumption that women would be taken care of by men's insurance. Yet both the men and the women agreed with the concept of the "family wage," i.e., that a male worker's wage should be enough to support him and his family, while his wife should stay home to care for the children. The "family wage" ignored the many single mothers who had to support their family alone without the help of a man. The women were "maternalists," who framed their fight for poor women in terms of the needs of children rather than in terms of the mothers' right to an independent income. This weakened their position, since officials argued that the state was not *obliged* to meet those needs. It also meant that *mothers'* needs were ignored. The ADC program began in 1935 but did not include mothers until

1950. This strategy of appealing to people's pity for children and ignoring the mothers is similar to the strategy of the Children's Defense League (CDL) today. In an effort to placate conservative lawmakers and gain public sympathy, the League has emphasized the needs of children rather than the rights of mothers to compensation for their service as caretakers. It promoted children's nutrition programs and Head Start, but did not defend AFDC. As a result, the CDL left AFDC mothers, along with their children, undefended and at the mercy of right-wing assault without any support.

The men who framed the social insurance part of the Social Security Act were responding to powerful social movements from the grassroots, including workers' militancy, the Townsend movement, Huey Long's movement, and the unemployed movement. The women who framed the ADC program had no women's movement to support them in the 1930s. Poor single mothers had no movement to advance their claims in the political arena until the welfare rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s. The second wave of the women's movement virtually ignored them until about two years ago, when the National Organization for Women (NOW) took up their cause. Only after they recognized the threat in the Contract With America did single-issue reproductive rights groups, such as the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) begin to fight for the reproductive rights of mothers on welfare. They had not at first fought vigorously against the Hyde amendment, but they now recognize it as an assault on *all* women's reproductive rights, as are the current proposals in various state legislatures to force Norplant contraception or to sterilize welfare mothers. Recently battered women's service groups have also included welfare mothers in their political action, since so many of the mothers have left battering men. (Some say as many as 60%.)

Myths and Stereotypes

IT IS THE MEANS-TESTED "RECIPIENTS" WHO ARE STIGMATIZED. The media are willing accomplices of business interests and public officials in stereotyping "welfare moms." The general public is abysmally ignorant about welfare. Myths abound. Mimi Abramovitz, author of *Regulating the Lives of Women*, debunks some of them, as follows:

- Women on welfare have an average of two children, slightly less than the size of the average family in the U.S.
- The average welfare benefit nationwide is \$367 a month or \$4,400 a year. This is almost \$9,000 less than the federal poverty line for a family of three.
- Contrary to the belief that welfare mothers don't work, more than half of women on welfare stay on the rolls for less than one year. A quarter leave within four months, and only one-third stay more than two years. Yet many return to the rolls because their jobs don't pay enough to support their families.
- Almost half use welfare as a form of unemployment benefits between jobs or when they first enter the labor market, one-fifth work at such low-wage jobs that they continue to qualify for welfare, and nearly one-fifth use welfare as temporary disability insurance.
- Of the 13 million AFDC recipients, only 4 million are adults, 90% of whom are women — many, mothers of young children. In more than half of welfare homes, the youngest child is under 5 years of age. Many adult women on welfare are not

able to work due to illness, disability or lack of education and job skills.

- Contrary to the belief that women on welfare have “kids for money,” studies have found no link between the AFDC grant and births outside of marriage. Those births are no more frequent in high benefit states and no greater in states with rising grant levels than in states with flat or falling AFDC payments. In Mississippi, for example, the illegitimacy rate is higher than in Vermont, despite the fact that grants levels in Mississippi are much lower. States provide between \$40 and \$65 a month per additional child — not a very attractive bonus for such a tough job as raising a child.

- AFDC costs only 1% of the federal budget and 3.4% of the average state budget. The federal and state governments together spent \$23 billion on welfare in 1991.

- Mandatory programs such as workfare do not work very well, and are expensive. The best way to encourage AFDC parents to go to work is to expand the economy and pay high enough wages to support a family. Then, people go to work if they can. The most highly touted workfare program, the GAIN program in California, showed that workfare participants averaged only \$1,901 in annual earned income. Participants earned an average of \$271 more per year than non-participants and received \$281 a year less in welfare. A University of Wisconsin study found that Learnfare (the program which docks up to \$200 a month from a welfare mother's check if her children miss school without an acceptable excuse) failed to improve the school attendance of welfare children, but did exacerbate pre-existing family problems.

Repression on the State Level

Many of the features of the PRA have already been put into practice by the states, with the help of the Clinton Administration. Donna Shalala, Secretary of Health and Human Services, has granted states many waivers from AFDC federal regulations to conduct “experiments” on recipients. These include a “Learnfare” program in Wisconsin that cuts AFDC grants when a child misses school a certain number of times; workfare programs in various states; “shotfare” programs that cut the grant if a mother does not get her child immunized; and “family cap” programs that refuse benefits for a child born after mother is on AFDC. Massachusetts is currently asking for permission to implement certain aspects of its recently passed law, including putting a two year time limit on AFDC grants. Lawyers are suing the state on the ground that these “experiments” violate the intent of federal AFDC law, which allows genuine experimentation to test a program on a small scale with the goal of improving it. The state proposals are not real experiments since they are applied wholesale to the entire AFDC population without any control group and, lawyers argue, they violate the rights of human subjects.

Disciplining the Work Force

In their book, *Regulating the Poor*, Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward make a convincing argument for the thesis that welfare expands during times of civil turmoil, as during the Depression and the 1960s, in order to quell the turmoil, and contracts after the turmoil has subsided in order to discipline the work force. Income maintenance programs lessen economic insecurity, thus weaken-

ing capital's ability to depress wages. According to a principle in social welfare theory called "the principle of less eligibility," welfare pays lower than the lowest paid wages, in order to make *any* kind of work at *any* wage more desirable than welfare. However, that principle was challenged in the early 1970s when unemployment rose to the highest levels since the 1930s, and wages did not fall. Welfare benefits were sometimes competitive with wages during that period. Employers concluded that the expansion of income maintenance programs in the late 1960s and early 1970s had insulated wages from the effects of rising unemployment. They pressured legislators to slash benefits to remove the safety net that made it possible for people to avoid low-wage jobs. AFDC grant levels continued to fall until now they are only about half of the official poverty level in a majority of states, and less than a third of that level in a quarter of the states. And the poverty level is itself a very inadequate index of poverty.

Unemployment insurance has also been slashed. Although originally tax-exempt, it became fully taxable during the 1980s. When the unemployment level required to trigger benefits was raised, fewer people received benefits beyond the basic 26 weeks. The number of workers who have exhausted their benefits is higher than at any time since 1951, when they began collecting data on the program.

The repeal of the Comprehensive Education and Training Act removed 400,000 people from public service jobs. Disability rolls were slashed from both the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability (SSDI) rolls. The food stamp program introduced various rules that cut people from the rolls, including work registration requirements and making strikers ineligible.

Piven and Cloward point out that the expanding service sector of the economy relies on a new "service proletariat" of low-wage workers, the vast majority of whom are women and minorities, who cook, serve, and clean. The attack on social programs occurred at the same time as increasingly large numbers of women entered the labor market. Cutting back programs that supplement their wages such as health benefits and food stamps makes them even more vulnerable in the job market.

Stigmatizing welfare recipients is a form of terrorism to frighten the entire population off the rolls. If people can be made to believe that welfare recipients are a lower form of humanity, they will go to great lengths to avoid becoming members of that degraded population. The scapegoating takes on racial dimensions when the majority of women and children on AFDC are blacks and Hispanics (40% black and 16% Hispanic in 1992). Piven and Cloward point out that the post-World War II black movement was largely responsible for creating the political pressures which led to the expansion of social spending in the 1960s. The current cutbacks are part of a racist backlash by whites against the rights that blacks gained in the 1960s.

Where Are the Jobs?

CONSERVATIVE SOCIAL SCIENTISTS PROPOSE TO DISMANTLE THE WELFARE STATE; liberal ones tinker with it. But both the liberals and conservatives are preoccupied with getting AFDC mothers into the work force. A liberal proposal that has been getting some attention recently, including an article in *The Nation*, was proposed by economists Barbara Bergmann and Heidi Hartmann, Co-chairs of

the Economists' Policy Group for Women's Issues. They say that AFDC mothers could work and support their families, even with minimum wage jobs, if they were provided with health care, child care, Earned Income Tax Credit, food stamps, and housing assistance. But they minimize the difficulty of finding jobs and exaggerate the level of job skills of AFDC mothers. They claim that most AFDC recipients have a high school diploma, when in fact over one-half do not. In the last 20 years, the incomes of high school dropouts entering the work force have plummeted 41%.

Compared to other single mothers, AFDC mothers are not only less educated, but also younger, have younger children, and are more likely to be African-American or Latina — all factors leading to lower earnings potential. Young workers have faced deteriorating employment prospects and lower earnings in recent years.

Bergmann and Hartmann recommend education and training, but they make no mention of the importance of a college education in these days of high unemployment. While a college education offers no guarantees, without it women will surely be tracked into the low-wage female sector of the work force.

Bergmann and Hartmann do not call for raising the minimum wage, even though that would be the single most effective way to raise workers out of poverty. Although the Earned Income Tax Credit helps to raise a minimum wage, it is in fact a subsidy to employers. Why let them off the hook by subsidizing their low wages, rather than forcing them to pay better wages? And, although food stamps are a life saver to many families, they are also a means to subsidize agribusiness and food corporations. Furthermore, those who use them are subjected to humiliating ceremonies every time they buy groceries. Why not give people cash to buy their food, either in the form of wages or adequate welfare grants?

Bergmann and Hartmann do not support the right of a mother (or father) to care for young children themselves rather than putting the children into day care. Many women (and probably some men) would prefer to stay home to care for their children. In fact, a 1992 Roper poll showed that to be a majority opinion, with 53 per cent of all women and 64 percent of married women in the United States saying that they preferred to stay at home. Only a third of married women worked full-time throughout the year in 1992, and only 23 per cent of them had children under the age of three, even though they had a male partner to help juggle earner-parent roles.

Or is the right to care for your own children at home to be reserved for two parent affluent families and not single welfare mothers burdened with working and caring for children, without the help of a partner? Even David Ellwood, Clinton's welfare advisor, concedes that single parents of young children should not be expected to work full-time since they are doubly burdened by work and child care. And part-time work usually does not even support a single person, let alone a family.

Because of their child care responsibilities, women with children work for wages considerably fewer hours than women without children. In their book, *Glass Ceilings and Bottomless Pits*, Randy Albelda and Chris Tilly point out that in 1991 in Massachusetts, single women with children worked an average of 908 hours a year while single women without children worked an average of 1,423 hours a year. (A year-round, full-time job typically is 2,000 hours per year.) And after their waged job, they have two other full-time jobs. Even when mothers put

their children in child care, they spend “an average of 37 hours a week taking care of children — another full-time job.” And household work amounts to another full-time job — 50 hours a week, according to one estimate.

Many European countries do not view single mothers as a “problem.” In fact, in Britain single mothers are expected to stay at home with their children and be supported by the public if they are in financial need. In Norway, about 70% of all single mothers with children under age 10 receive a Transitional Benefit Program which is indexed and tax-free, and is worth about two-thirds of the wages of the average female worker. All of the Nordic countries (Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Iceland) have established some form of guaranteed child support payment, paid for by the government when non-custodial parents fail to pay or pay inadequately.

Assuming that the mother has child care, health insurance, and housing subsidy in place and is ready to go to work — where are the jobs? The National Jobs for All Coalition points out that although the U. S. does not regularly collect job vacancy data, “the occasional surveys of jobs vacancies show that even when unemployment rates are much lower than the current national average, there are several times as many job seekers as available jobs.” One study in Harlem, New York found that 14 people applied for every job opening in fast food restaurants during a five month period in early 1993. Among those who were rejected, 73% had not found work of any kind a year later. The younger applicants, especially those under 20, had the most trouble finding a job.

Wall Street quakes when unemployment drops. The Federal Reserve bank raises interest rates whenever unemployment dips below six percent, keeping 18 million Americans either fully or partially unemployed. As the National Jobs for All Coalition puts it, “The unemployed are, in effect, involuntary ‘inflation fighters,’ drafted to hold down wages and prices.” What will happen when millions of AFDC mothers enter an already depressed labor market?

Economists and policy makers are speculating about the permanent loss of jobs due in part to technology. There are many different points of view about this. The National Jobs for All Coalition calls for creating jobs in order to have full employment (“Fair Work, instead of Workfare”). On the other hand, Stanley Aronowitz and William DiFazio say in their book, *The Jobless Future* that large-scale unemployment is a permanent feature of the economy and we therefore need a guaranteed annual income. A proposal called the Basic Income Grant, a form of guaranteed annual income, is being seriously considered in Europe.

The French political philosopher, André Gorz, argues for *both* guaranteed work and guaranteed income. He fears that a guaranteed income without guaranteed work is fundamentally flawed because it leads to a dual stratification of society, consolidating a system dominated by capitalist relations of production and by what he calls the “working elite.” The guaranteed minimum, he says, is a way of accepting this split-up and making it more tolerable. Gorz advocates distributing the labor savings brought about by technological changes in such a way that everyone can work, but work less without losing income. In his plan, there would be less work but greater flexibility of work time — perhaps a total of 20,000 hours of work over a lifetime which could be divided up in many ways — “ten years of full-time work, or twenty years of half-time work; or — a more likely and sensible choice — forty years of intermittent work.” Regrettably, Gorz categorizes caretaking as a “spare time” activity in between intermittent work periods,

when it should be regarded as paid work, and hard work at that.

I prefer Gorz's approach to the problem, but regardless of where one stands in this debate, everyone agrees that the labor market as it now exists cannot serve the needs of most workers. One should not, of course, accept the dominant capitalist view of how much "necessary work" there is. There is a vast amount of socially necessary work that needs to be done to meet presently unmet human needs. Caretaking is one of those important jobs. It seems ironic that in an era when jobs are disappearing forever, policy makers should be so eager to force single mothers into the waged work force. We should instead be placing a greater value on caretaking and providing decent remuneration for it.

Bergmann and Hartmann propose a fall-back package for unemployed parents, consisting mostly of vouchers for necessities. But here their distrust of the poor rears its ugly head. Since welfare began, there have always been policymakers who believed that the poor could not be trusted to spend their own money and needed supervision. Where is their evidence that they are not capable of spending their money wisely? The poor correctly perceive vouchers as an insult.

The Family Support Act of 1988 called for requiring waged work of welfare recipients, but it also called for the supports to make this possible, including child care and health insurance. Many policy makers agreed with the work requirement, arguing that the supports would enable welfare recipients to get a waged job. However, it did not work out. Proposals for health insurance were killed. Child care subsidies were increased only slightly. Subsidized housing was cut back. The realities of recession and conservatism took over and the welfare "reform" which some people thought held much promise became merely another punitive law making life more difficult for poor mothers.

Reformers can concoct schemes that look good on paper, but they would do better to put their energy into saving the essential programs that exist, weak though they are. The Republicans' proposal for ending AFDC as an entitlement program and turning it over to the states in a block grant would tear apart the meager safety net that exists for poor mothers and children. The first order of business is to save AFDC as a federalized program and improve it, raising the grants to at least the poverty level. After we do that, we can begin the long hard road to win universal health insurance and universal day care. After that, perhaps we can begin to work for a guaranteed annual income or, at the very least, a universal family allowance. Whatever we work for, it should be universal and not means tested.

The only good thing about the Contract With America is that it frightened a lot of people into an awareness that legislators are increasingly becoming the lackeys of the avaricious and powerful rich. It has the potential for uniting people on the left who had previously been working on single issues, and it has inspired a new spirit of activism.

The National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO) died in the early 1970s, and there was no large-scale national welfare organizing until the formation of the National Welfare Rights Union (NWRU) in 1987. It was formed by people from various advocacy groups. It has chapters in several states and holds national board meetings and conferences. The president, Marian Kramer, has been one of the main speakers at NOW marches and is frequently called upon to speak by other organizations. Many of its members and allies are veterans of the NWRO movement.

Welfare organizing continued in some states even after the demise of the NWRO. Massachusetts has a particularly strong network of welfare organizing and advocacy which includes a state-wide organization of welfare mothers, the Coalition for Basic Human Needs, and Massachusetts Welfare Rights Union, as well as several advocacy groups working on welfare issues. Two U. Mass. professors, Ann Withorn and Randy Albelda, organized about 100 academics into a group called Academic Working Group on Poverty. Its members are popularizing welfare information for the general public. In cooperation with *Survival News*, a newspaper for and by low-income people which I founded in 1987, they are setting up a speakers' and consultants' bureau. They are also doing research requested by Mass. Law Reform to help in a suit against the state regarding waivers.¹

The Failure of the Left

THE OLD LEFT HAS, FOR THE MOST PART, BEEN CONSPICUOUSLY ABSENT from the welfare debate until recently, and while the new left has considered it in their theoretical works, they have not been put welfare struggles very high on their agenda. The reasons for the absence of the old left may be similar to the reasons of the men who constructed the first social insurance program in this country. They responded to the demands of an elite, largely male, white working class and did not ally themselves with married mothers in their role as caretakers, single working mothers, domestic workers, or black sharecroppers.

Radicals have always been ambivalent about the welfare state, ever since the German Chancellor Bismarck gave pensions to state workers to "silence the siren sounds of Socialism." Welfare is often used for social control and to stave off more radical reform. It has often bought off militants at a very low price. Yet it has also been fought for by workers, parents, and students. The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights asserts that people have a right to have their basic needs met. Although the United States never signed that declaration, we are *entitled* to a guarantee that our basic needs will be met, and we are *entitled* to have a voice in how our welfare state will be run.

Newt Gingrich professes to admire Thomas Jefferson, but has he read his 1785 letter to Madison in which he warns against an inequity of wealth? "The consequences of this enormous inequality (in France) producing so much misery to the bulk of mankind, legislators cannot invent too many devices for subdividing property." As an Enlightenment man, Jefferson argued for a more equitable distribution of wealth with reasons based not on morality, but on self-interest. The French Revolution was only four years away.

Gingrich considers himself a futurist. Can he, or anyone else, imagine what our country will look like in four years if he and his like continue to turn their back on the poor? Who among the right will be the McNamara to come forth then and weep tears of contrition for homeless bands of starving people?

¹ For a fuller discussion of the history of welfare organizing in Massachusetts, see Betty Reid Mandell and Ann Withorn, "Keep on Keeping On: Organizing for Welfare Rights in Massachusetts"; in Robert Fisher and Joseph Kling, Eds., *Mobilizing the Community: Local Politics in the Era of the Global City*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1993.

Racism and Affirmative Action

Barry Finger

THE AMERICAN POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IS RIDDLED with the most intractable symptoms of cognitive dissonance: rampant cynicism about any arrangement whereby money changes hands, combined with an almost dewy-eyed belief that the distribution of society's benefits and opportunities tends to conform (with appropriate allowances for the frailty and imperfection of everything mortal), to a meritocracy.

On the face of it, Senator Jesse Helms' "observation" that affirmative action "flies in the face of the merit-based society [envisioned by] the founding fathers" is merely a sick joke, given that merit was ascribed primarily, if not exclusively, to the species-genus known as the property-owning white male, as opposed to the common-run of humanity otherwise dismissed as rabble. Less amusing perhaps, if only because it purports to reflect over the entire expanse of American history, is Senator Joseph Lieberman's flight of fantasy that, "You can't defend policies that are based on group preference as opposed to individual opportunities, *which is what America has always been about.*" Bob Dole, undoubtedly exercising his legendary appreciation for the absurd, pointed out that, "After 30 years of Government-sanctioned quotas, timetables, set-asides, and other racial preferences, the American people sense all too clearly that the race-counting game has gone too far." This prudent warning provides a timely reminder that there is a limit to the social quotient of equality beyond which the proper functioning of our fragile meritocracy is placed in jeopardy.

That is not by any means meant to discourage those minorities or women who nevertheless feel set upon by the "vestigial" forces of discrimination, from standing on line at the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission, behind the 90,000 already queued up. Neither should any additional measures reflecting some heightened sense of urgency be expected from the Democrats. For as President Zelig's pollster, Stanley Greenberg, has declaimed, "the Democratic coalition cannot be based on social justice claims of some segment of their coalition against other segments of the coalition." All of which has not stopped the President from proposing a study to test whether the converse also holds.

SUCH TOUCHING DECLARATIONS OF FAITH IN THE FOLKLORE of American capitalism, now conveniently characterized as a meritocratic free-enterprise system, are little

BARRY FINGER is a union activist and a member of the New Politics editorial board.

more than an updated adaption of the old Jim Crow alibi, excusing racial oppression as an unfortunate by-product of “maintaining standards.” Only the language loading the debate framework has now subtly shifted. The public is asked by the ruling class’ propaganda machine to consider precisely what measure of economic “efficiency” it is willing to sacrifice for an additional dose of black equality. That a system so fundamentally rooted in class exploitation — whose structure of class oppression is itself constructed over a bedrock of racial and gender privileges — has the gall to approach the public as if in defense of individual social mobility, as opposed to group privilege, testifies to the utter lack of even the rudiments of an oppositional political culture in the U.S.

Would it not otherwise be transparently obvious that the boundaries of hierarchical advantage are secured by inherited wealth, marked by skin color and preserved by an elaborate self-contained network of social connections? That the habits of social thought and political conceptualization are inculcated through access to different, largely dynastic and therefore non-public, educational structures catering to the maintenance and transmission of the ruling class’ cultural capital and ideological predispositions? The black population can perhaps be forgiven if it has somehow overlooked the announcement of an open, competitive exam for oil tycoon — or for *National Review* or *The New Republic* editorial board members for that matter.

But what exactly should “equal opportunity” in practice mean for those, not only shackled by class background, but stereotyped and dismissed by a pervasive culture of racism and sexism that brands blacks and women as, by definition, unqualified, and their presence, in more than token numbers, an affront to the efficient accumulation of capital?

LIBERALISM, EVEN IN ITS FAINTLY PINKISH HUE, HAS LARGELY CAPITULATED in the face of this right-wing attack on affirmative action, the opening salvo in a mounting assault against black aspirations. The vendetta against the cities as breeding grounds for “high living” welfare recipients — now demagogically scapegoated as the primary causes of the burgeoning burden of working class taxes — combined with smearing those relatively few well-paid black workers as qualitatively unfit, conform to a lamentably familiar theme in American public life: that white prosperity is crucially linked to black poverty.

Instead of a comprehensive analysis of the *structure* of black oppression and the indispensable relevance of affirmative action in redressing significant aspects of this oppression, the discussion is clouded by an impenetrable haze of largely irrelevant and diversionary philosophical questions concerning “merit” and the place of the individual in “society.” Or by the assertion that affirmative action is essential in providing role models for “disadvantaged blacks” and dispelling stereotypes. This is compounded by the implicit belief that the institutional back of racism has been long broken and that the disadvantages now experienced by blacks are a self-perpetuating legacy of *past* wrongs intensified by self-inflicted or historically acquired social vices.

From this it is deduced that the discrepancy between black and white incomes is largely attributable to lower average levels of job skill acquisition and employment preparation in the black community, resulting in lower rates of pay and higher unemployment. It follows that if affirmative action “remedies” this, it does so in a purely formal sense by forcibly inserting blacks into positions for

which they are unqualified.

IN ESSENCE, THIS APPROACH DENIES THE PRESENCE OF AN ONGOING institutionalized differential between black and white workers, which serves as the social sustenance and material transmitter of racism. Poverty is treated *generically*; the problems of white Appalachia are considered largely interchangeable, in their fundamentals, with the problems of black America. By repudiating the existence of any special mechanism of black oppression, liberal attention to social justice is invariably drawn to *class* based set-asides in education, entry-level employment and public contracting.

Yet if this were to comprise, if not a comprehensive then at least an adequate depiction of black poverty, one isolating the pertinent data, the expectation would be for equal pay rates to prevail between black and white workers at each level of skill, despite whatever differential distribution of skills exists between the two communities. The level of skill is itself closely correlated to educational achievement. It is this that determines the range of tools and concepts a worker can be expected to master, and the range of stimuli to which he/she can be expected to knowledgeably respond, *irrespective of direct personal experience*.

In 1983, the Census of Population reported that remuneration of administrative and managerial personnel was 27% lower for black males than for white males; 31% lower for black male professionals and 25% lower for skilled craftsmen. For machine operators and assemblers blacks received only 85% of whites pay levels; for laborers 89%.¹ Updating this through 1992, Andrew Hacker has shown that

...(A)mong men with bachelors' degrees, blacks earn only \$764 for each \$1000 going to whites at that level. Even worse, the racial ratio for black men who completed college is actually lower than that for black men who only finished high school. When black men do persevere to graduate school, they end up with only \$870 compared with their white counterparts' \$1000, even less than for black men who never finished college. (*Two Nations*, p.102)

This means that an economic rent — a *racist subsidy* — is, in effect, exacted — and not in the remote past, not during slavery, not during Jim Crow, but continuously and on an ongoing basis — by American capitalism from the labors of black workers. To put it somewhat differently, black labor is paid below the value of its labor-power. Racist oppression is structured so that the bulk of privileges accrue to those whites who control capital, while at the same time assuring special immunities to white workers. These gains from discrimination are realized as additional profits or diminished overhead costs, depending on whether the labor performed contributed to the self-expansion of capital, or was employed in capitalistically necessary, but unproductive domains, such as commodity circulation or government.

These gains can be variously estimated by multiplying the income differentials between black and white workers at each skill level by the number of black

¹ Estimates are limited in these illustrations to male workers, because statistics as they are customarily collected compare black women's wages not to those of white males at the same skill level, but to those of white women, so that the combined effect of racial and gender discrimination is not as easily illustrated.

workers in that category. Using somewhat different techniques, Lester Thurow found these gains to be \$4.6 billion in 1960; Victor Perlo estimated them as \$16 billion in 1972 and \$91 billion in 1984. Even these calculations, however, underestimate the tribute exacted from the black community, because they fail to incorporate additional estimates of the “commercial exploitation” which plagues the ghettos. For when the same or shoddier merchandise is priced in excess of the prevailing price in white communities, there is a further erosion of real income, the effect of which is tantamount to a massive bout of inflation concentrated solely on the black consumer.

This speaks to the persistent existence of a racial dual labor market. Employees in the same factory or office or commercial establishment cannot be paid a differential race (or gender) wage directly. But there are *parallel* sectors of the economy separated sometimes by industry, sometimes by firm, by department within a firm or by geography, that require a full array of work skills but are subject to their own derivatively distinct laws of supply and demand for labor, which *politically advantaged* sectors of the working class can shun or from which they can more easily extricate themselves when opportunities to do so newly arise.²

The racist and sexist underpinnings of social life itself readily equips the capitalist structure with a powerful institutional dynamic for self-generating ever new ancillary subdivisions that economize on the total wage bill by segregating the working class along racial and gender lines. This not only provides a powerful boost to overall profitability, but also eviscerates the resistance struggle against capital through its reinforcement of caste rankings. Such sectors and subsectors are often characterized by sluggish growth and high turnover, rendering them unable to provide occasion for wage or promotional upgrading and still sustain even marginal levels of profitability. Or they are characterized within large firms by work assignments artificially separated from those lines of potential commercial growth, where opportunities for job enrichment and career advancement might otherwise first present themselves. It is only in tight labor markets — when capital accumulation is vigorous — that new prospects open for black workers brought in to those relatively less undesirable jobs vacated by white workers on the march to more promising avenues of employment.

THUS ONCE SET IN MOTION, THE SELF-SUSTAINING ARC OF RACISM, like the movement of a pendulum, requires no on-going deliberative intervention. That is why it is so patently ludicrous to look toward legal struggle, no matter how muscularly conscientious, to provide a comprehensive antidote to racism. All of which is to assert that the racism of the labor market is not fundamentally a conspiracy of the boardroom, though such conspiracies no doubt abound. The persistence of racism is rather the cultural by-product of that unseemly frenzy on the part of American capitalism to save, wherever possible, on labor costs by relentlessly winnowing out and seizing those segments of the population most lacking in the

² In 1990, researchers from the nonprofit Urban Institute sent blacks and whites with comparable resumé's, styles of dress and speaking ability to apply for the same job. The black candidates got the job or proceeded to the next hiring level only about 80 percent of the time that the white applicants did.

social and political means of defending their own vital interests. Where, in other circumstances, this necessitates the large-scale importation of guest workers, national rather than racial chauvinism arises as the predominant social expression of prejudice.

Racism in its virulent American form, on the other hand, has its roots in the role forced on black labor by slavery. This set the pendulum in motion and it is on that basis that the conglomeration of attitudes associated with race emerged. But its momentum is sustained by specific and identifiable forces called into play by capitalism, which assimilated and developed the basic cultural relations of slavery-in-defeat and adapted them to the demands of accumulation.

Uprooting racism therefore requires the destruction of its institutional base under capitalism — the *racial* dual labor market. Affirmative action, set-asides, quotas and timetables, an ever broadening scope of application for “comparative worth” all comprise essential components in the social arsenal targeted to its defeat. This is not to claim that the dual labor market *per se* can be eradicated by such means; only that its arena can be massively diminished when its residual burden becomes randomly distributed. The purpose of these programs is therefore not to forcibly insert people into positions for which they are unqualified, but rather to assure that enterprises develop realistically appropriate hiring and promotional criteria that result in a diverse work force at all levels. It is essentially a demand that blacks be allowed to move *horizontally* within their basic educational-skill niche and out of their caste enclaves.

It would be an abuse of language and logic to term such programs of minority preference “reverse discrimination.” True, the success of affirmative action would mean an end to that wonderfully peculiar mainstream notion of meritocracy which “blindly” operates through shielding white males from meaningful competition with minorities of color and women at every tier of society. Still, it is no more accurate to term affirmative action “preferential treatment” than it is to term the demand for randomly distributed seating on public accommodations “preferential seating,” merely because it eliminates white entitlements and vigilantly monitors all efforts of collusion between white drivers and passengers to informally reintroduce them by other means. Genuine “reverse discrimination,” and not the hyperbole and overheated rhetoric with which some whites torment everyone within earshot for loss of privilege,³ would aim to reconfigure society so that whites would be systematically excluded from access to decent jobs, housing, schools and professional careers. Yet no one this side of a lunatic asylum actually purports to see a trend in this direction or detect what in the workings of affirmative action could possibly bring this about.

For when the dust clears, *the demand for affirmative action in employment actually boils down to the rather modest demand that black labor be exploited at the same rate as white labor.* That is why the alternative approach of “class based” affirmative action is monumentally irrelevant. Its appeal is predicated on the

³ Actually, affirmative action has caused very few claims of reverse discrimination by white people, according to a recent draft report prepared by the Labor Department. Of the cases that were reported, many were the result of a disappointed applicant failing to examine his or her own qualifications and erroneously assuming that when a woman or minority got the job, it was because of race or sex, not qualifications.

promise of cross-racial alliances and intra-class unity among society's rank-and-file. What this fails to appreciate, however, is how the caste-based divisions of race reproduce themselves within and through the class structure itself. Competition for employment always occurs within the contexts of shared basic educational and skill levels. Accountants rarely compete for employment with janitors, except during catastrophic economic downturns. The question is rather, why should the college educated child of a black professional be given preferential consideration in employment over the college educated child of a white steel worker? The answer is, because college educated blacks, on average, earn three-quarters of the salaries of white college graduates. Such preference therefore must persist until the dual labor market is drained of its racial dimension. The burden, therefore, falls on those who oppose race-based affirmative action to identify some other fundamental mechanism of *black* oppression, beyond the occupational apartheid system, and to propose relevant programs to counter it.

Affirmative action in favor of the white steel worker over the black lawyer both of whom are competing for a judgeship or a corporate executive position is an economic and social *non sequitur*. That is why proponents of class based programs almost always illustrate the supposed disadvantages of some whites relative to middle class blacks, not concerning access to relevant employment, but over access to college admissions, the site where preparation for upward mobility, in part, occurs. In fact, class-based affirmative action has little relevant applicability outside of the education and capital markets.

With all its agonized concern to fashion the right geometric formula however — combining and balancing parental income, net worth, and occupation with the quality of secondary education, neighborhood influence and family structure — it is difficult to allay the suspicion that class based affirmative action is anything more than an alchemist's formula for displacing middle class black children with whites. This is especially so, since the justification usually provided for class based affirmative action is that preference extended to middle class blacks at the expense of poor and working class whites is unjust.

This simply fails to appreciate the extent to which racist institutions and structures encompass all classes and strata of black life. Yet, that is the very heart of the special, double oppression of black people as a separate caste embedded within the class structure of American capitalism. The black middle class experiences no special exemption from the various forms of oppression that otherwise contaminate every sphere of social relations, ranging from verbal abuse to psychological violence and cultural devaluation; from economic exploitation to political subordination. These merely assume the special manifestations and appropriate variations befitting the daily circumstances of *middle* class black life — through legally imposed or informally encouraged residential and school segregation; in the skewed allocation of business loans and home mortgages; through discrimination in the dispersal of government contracts and agricultural price supports; in the disparity of dismissal rates; in the restriction of professional opportunities; and in the violence of a blatantly biased justice system. It is in fact the very pervasiveness of racist oppression which unifies blacks of all classes and lends their struggle against racism a quasi-nationalist character, stimulating a concomitant panoply of separatist ideologies.

The drive to substitute class based affirmative action programs in college admissions represents a failure to fully recognize the comprehensiveness of ex-

isting forms of inequality, and substitutes for this recognition a primitive form of class reductionism. It is, therefore, a partial repudiation of any honest attempt to lessen the effects of racial inequality through direct confrontation with the mechanisms that sustain it.

ANY SERIOUS EFFORT AT CROSS-RACIAL WORKING CLASS UNITY would instead raise the issue of open admissions and challenge the accepted view of higher education as a privilege rather than a right. The demand that free, subsidized and open universal higher education be underwritten through corporate taxes redirects white working class goals toward *complementing* black interests rather than obstructing them. These demands should be extended to encompass technical, secondary education to train young skilled workers conjoined to a radical dismantling of the tracking system. Such demands begin to raise salient interlocking issues concerning the relationship of state and class in the economy. Moreover, in doing so, they harness some of the anger in white working-class communities for falling standards of living and declining economic prospects that can lead to challenging a social system whose priorities stand in opposition to working-class needs and aspirations.

A word of caution. It would be entirely unwarranted to draw a parallel between the demand for open admissions and the demand for full employment as an *alternative* to affirmative action. While tight labor markets expand the prospects for occupational mobility, they do nothing to fundamentally challenge the existence of racial dual labor markets. Such racist structures have proven both in theory and historical practice to be entirely compatible with low levels of unemployment.

BUT AFFIRMATIVE ACTION CANNOT TOTALLY COUNTERACT the appalling level of underdevelopment and immiseration prevailing in the black community. Technological advancement and international competition have now rendered disproportionately large sections of the community occupationally expendable and therefore entirely immune from whatever benefits affirmative action offers. The black unemployed increasingly represent not a reserve army of labor, but an entity largely devoid of marketable skills and consequently excluded from every legitimate job market. The ghetto is the intersection where all the reciprocal and overlapping spokes of society-wide oppression converge — producing a unified network of unlivable housing, high prices and inferior diets, rampant violence, second class education, retrogressive taxes, police occupation and 19th century medical attention. And it is these conditions which magnify and intensify the massive obstacles already imposed by the dual labor market against the reconstitution of black labor-power as a viable commodity.

It is clear that the achievement of full social equality for the black community requires raising demands far more radical and extensive than affirmative action, demands that challenge the fundamental interests and needs of the wealthy. It necessitates confronting the legacy of nearly 400 years of *racist* exploitation with a program for economic reparations on a scale commensurate with the current and anticipated requirements of the black community. Contrary to much radical opinion, affirmative action is not a form of compensation for racist disadvantage, any more than radical excision is a form of compensation for cancer. It is a tool to curtail the reproduction, reoccurrence and spread of, in this

case, racist tribute structurally exacted by capitalism.

The real key to understanding reparations is to examine an issue so popular in the conservative community: crime victims' rights, the obligation to make whole those who were illegitimately damaged. It is on this basis that the Supreme Court ordered the federal Government to pay \$105 million to eight tribes of Sioux Indians for land seized by Congress in 1877, and \$1.2 billion to surviving Japanese Americans interned during World War II. Cruel as these crimes were, they are historical misdemeanors compared to what the black community has endured. But, whereas nearly one-third of those who have paid taxes since then were born subsequent to World War II and could not have supported the government's anti-Japanese policy, and since no taxpayers could have directly benefited from the shakedown of the Sioux Indians, capital has continuously been pumped out of the black community and collectively shared by the ruling class through the pricing system, its benefits compounded and inherited throughout successive generations. Reparations should therefore be drawn not from general revenues, but from surcharges on business profits, dividends, and interest and beyond that on estate taxes of wealthy legatees.

Whereas those crimes previously deemed worthy of compensation, were those committed by the government speaking in the name of the "people," the social system itself has never been placed on trial. Before this happens, it must be placed before the court of public opinion. Because of the importance of racism to American capitalism, there is a crucial relationship between the struggle of black workers and that of the entire working class. Steps in the direction of a unified class struggle, therefore, require both self-confidence on the part of black workers and respect for the power of black workers by the white working class. For the black community to abandon or dilute its own particular demands in the teeth of reactionary backlash would reinforce racism throughout society. A radical movement which shirks the responsibility of standing with the black community in asserting the priorities of its grievances betrays its political responsibilities and loses all sense of purpose. That is why the *first* test of that resolve is the willingness on the part of would-be radicals to understand and consistently champion the cause of affirmative action.

Racism Remains Pervasive

Leith Mullings

RACISM CONTINUES TO BE A REAL FORCE IN AMERICAN LIFE with severe consequences for millions of people. What is more, aspects of it can be scientifically measured. Hopefully, this is old hat for those who have been supportive of civil rights struggles but, unfortunately, we must continue to assert and demonstrate it. Because the right, as well as segments of the liberal camp, argue that affirmative action is based on past discrimination that no longer exists, it continues to be necessary to point out that discrimination is demonstrable and real today.

Studies document hundreds of examples of racial discrimination every year. For example, the Federal Office of Personnel Management recently reported that when education, performance rating, and other factors are held constant, African Americans are twice as likely as whites to be dismissed from government jobs, and no one can explain why. Federal Reserve Board studies find that in several cities, African Americans are turned down for loans at two-and-a-half times the rate of whites. In a study by the Urban Institute in 1991, teams of equally qualified, equally articulate, conventionally dressed black and white men applying for jobs, found pervasive and widespread discrimination against young black men. In the same year, *Harvard Law Review* published a study that examined 90 car dealerships in Chicago. Black and white, male and female researchers were sent out to bargain for the same automobile with a list price of \$11,000. All relevant factors were controlled — they had identical strategies, used the same language, had the same amount of money for a downpayment, wore the same style of clothing. The only differences were gender and race. Euro-American men were able to buy the car for an average of \$11,305; Euro-American women for \$11,504; African American men had to pay \$11,783 for the same car; and African American women were charged \$12,300. If that happens to African Americans when they buy a car, think about what happens to them when they buy a house.

SOME ARGUE THAT AFRICAN AMERICANS BORN INTO MIDDLE-CLASS FAMILIES no longer suffer the effects of racism. But one need only examine the numerous studies of employment, income, housing discrimination, and patterns of awarding mortgages and contracts, to note the pervasive nature of racism. Black middle class

LEITH MULLINGS is a professor of anthropology at the CUNY Graduate School in New York. This article is based on a talk she gave at a panel on affirmative action sponsored by New Politics at the Socialist Scholars Conference in April 1995.

people encounter forms of personal and institutional discrimination every day, from the infamous examples of trying to take taxis to violent — and sometimes deadly — encounters with police officers. African Americans, regardless of income, experience racism.

Shifting our focus to look at the positions in society held by white men, we find that white men constitute 95 percent of senior corporate executives, 92 percent of the Senate, 97 percent of school superintendentships, and one could go on and on.

The point is that racism is not a legacy of the past. It is an active, destructive aspect of the present and at the heart of it is economic exploitation. It is this *exploitation* that distinguishes racism from some of the other forms of intolerance.

Why are affirmative action policies — which were developed to help to dismantle segregation and to force institutions to grant equal opportunity — being debated now? It is critical for us to understand the social context in which this discussion arises and its importance for the right-wing agenda. On the international level, the context is one of ascendent globalized capitalism. This is a time when few institutions can stand against multinational corporations; a time in which inequality among regions of the world, among countries, and between classes is increasing at historic rates.

In the United States between 1973 and the present, real incomes have fallen significantly for 80 percent of American workers. Simultaneously, the U.S. has experienced the most massive redistribution of wealth and income upward to the rich, producing conditions of severe insecurity for the majority of Americans.

The agenda of the right is to consolidate the process begun during the Reagan regime and, as Frances Fox Piven has pointed out, to destroy the admittedly minor redistributive functions of the state. In carrying out this agenda, the right devised a comprehensive strategy. They developed: 1) a mass movement through the Christian Coalition; 2) political institutions through the Republican Party and the “Contract with America” and 3) most significantly, for our purposes, an extensive ideological apparatus that includes think tanks; books, publications, publishers and publicists; and the popular media, most notably the radio talk shows. They recognized, long before elements of the left, the importance of ideological warfare.

Race is central to this strategy: the attack on affirmative action, on immigration, on welfare all masterfully manipulate racial symbolism to distort real issues of inequality. Symbols evoke feelings and motivations, not necessarily rational thought. Whereas affirmative action, problematic as it is, speaks to the fact that inequality is structured into the social system, the attack on affirmative action presumes that systemic, institutionalized discrimination no longer exists. Racial inequality must then be attributable to inequalities inherent in the population. This is not a new argument: through U.S. history, the parallel paradigms of biological and cultural inequality have rationalized the exploitation of African Americans. Today, assertions of biological inferiority are formulated through “the bell curve,” and cultural inferiority through concepts of “the underclass” and “the culture of poverty.” Make no mistake, the bottom line of the anti-affirmative action argument is that white men continue to hold the vast majority of positions of power because women and minorities are inferior. The “bell curve” along with the campaign around family values tell us that the reason for underrepresentation

is not white privilege, but biological and cultural inferiority.

THUS, NOTIONS OF RACIAL DIFFERENCE ONCE AGAIN CREATE DIVISIONS among people who should have interests in common, and facilitate the management of dissent. Despite the fact that the major beneficiaries of affirmative action have been white women, it is affirmative action's possible benefits for African Americans that seems to be most effective in stimulating anger. The right's contemptible and contemptuous use of race is not the creation of conspiracy theorists; it is a strategy carried out with knowledgeable cynicism. Discussing the affirmative action debate, William Kristol, chief strategist for the Republican Party remarked, "It's a winner for us any way you look at it."

In this controversy, we have a graphic demonstration of what many social theorists have discussed: the ability of the dominant class to define the terms of the debate and thereby control dissent. We are imprisoned in a discussion of affirmative action, a policy which has had some successes but has hardly touched the real structure of power.

At a time when the U.S. has become the world's most stratified industrial country, David Roediger's work, *The Wages of Whiteness*, is instructive. He points to the manner in which recruiting workers to whiteness has historically served to persuade white workers to support policies that are not in their interest. The majority of white men who are not in the top one percent of the population owning 48 percent of society's net wealth, have reason to be angry — but not at black people. Their grievance is deliberately steered toward those who are not responsible for their problem.

We, on the left, need to have the courage and the imagination to move beyond the boundaries constructed by the right. For too many of us, identity politics leads us to deconstruct race, but to downplay racism. Much of identity politics has been about "deconstructing" cultural symbolism and discourse, not about challenging the hierarchy of power that undergirds the structure of race relations.

We need to state clearly that affirmative action does not go far enough. In the absence of structural transformations that definitively deal with all forms of unequal power and discrimination, measures at any limited level, such as affirmative action have a stopgap quality. Affirmative action is a liberal rather than a radical reform, fraught with the contradictions of liberalism. It addresses problems, but in a partial manner that does not adequately speak to poverty, unemployment, and the "savage inequality" of capitalism. For those of us who have a vision of a humane society of equal opportunity, this does not mean that we reject affirmative action, but that we take creative approaches to constructing programs that seek to abolish all forms of privilege. As Gertrude Ezorsky has pointed out in *Racism and Justice. The Case for Affirmative Action*, since women comprise more than 50 per cent of the population, to the extent that affirmative action benefits women and underrepresented minorities, it is a policy that benefits the majority of Americans.

GIVEN OUR THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE WAYS in which race and class are not exclusive but intertwined concepts, there is no contradiction between advocating universalist policies, such as health care and full employment and, at the same time, fighting for desegregation of the workplace and racial justice through

affirmative action measures. It is necessary to support programs that expand opportunity and equality among all people, and simultaneously to struggle to break down the continuing racial boundaries to equal opportunity. This is critical because the struggle against mobile, globalized capital requires integration of the workplace at the national and international level.

It appears that the 1996 presidential campaign, like so many others, will be waged largely on the issue of race. The core social policy debates — criminal justice, welfare, immigration — will be represented as metaphors for race relations. Consider the use of language and symbolism of the California anti-affirmative action initiative, which seeks to “forbid the use of ethnicity or gender as a criterion for either discriminating against, or granting preferential treatment to, any individual or group.”

As the demagogues once again try to shift attention away from the declining life chances of the American worker, it is critical that the left maintain an anti-racist perspective. We must use our skills with greater creativity and tenacity than our opponents of the right, forging links to social movements that truly attempt to abolish all forms of race, gender and class privilege.

Subscribe Now

Enclosed is \$20.00 for a subscription to NEW POLITICS.
Add \$4.00 for all foreign subscriptions (including Canada).
Supporting subscriptions: \$30.00. Institutions: \$30.00. Checks payable to NEW POLITICS in U.S. currency only, drawn on a U.S. bank, or use Postal Money Order. For payment by credit card (VISA, MasterCard, American Express) give number and expiration date.

Name

Address

City State Zip Code

VISA MasterCard AmEx

Expiration Date

NEW POLITICS

P.O. Box 98

Brooklyn, NY 11231

Black Intellectuals in Conflict

Manning Marable

AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND WHITE LIBERAL ACADEMIC CIRCLES ARE STILL buzzing about Adolph Reed's controversial essay in the April 11, 1995, issue of *The Village Voice* on "The Current Crisis of the Black Intellectual." The Northwestern University black political scientist launched a major polemical broadside against some of America's best-known and most publicized black scholars. Although Reed's title echoed the classic critique of an earlier generation of black scholars published in 1967 by Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, Reed's fundamental criticism was aimed against only two individuals both of whom are professors of African-American Studies at Harvard University: Cornel West, the author of *Race Matters* and other works; and Black Studies chairperson and literary scholar Henry Louis Gates. Other black scholars Reed criticized were black feminist bell hooks, a professor of literature at the City University of New York; cultural critic Michael Eric Dyson, professor of communications and African-American Studies at the University of North Carolina; and New York University history professor Robin Kelley.

Reed's basic argument was that these scholars who presented themselves as "authentically black" spokespersons, actually lacked viable constituencies or any genuine accountability within the African-American community. In stark departure from the black intellectual tradition, which was characterized by serious and lively conversations on "such questions as the definition, status, and functions of black literature, the foundations of black identity, (and) topical critiques of ideological programs and tendencies in social affairs," Reed claims that the new breed "exhibit little sense of debate or controversy among themselves." He charges that this group's absence of controversy betrays a lack of critical content and purpose. Reed equates the new intellectuals with Tuskegee Institute founder Booker T. Washington, a conservative black Republican and chief architect of black capitalism a century ago. To Reed, Washington was simply a "purely freelance race spokesman; his status depended on designation by

MANNING MARABLE is the Director of the Institute for Research in African-American Studies at Columbia University and the author of numerous books. His latest book is *Beyond Black and White: Rethinking Race in American Politics and Society* (Verso 1995).

white elites rather than by any black electorate or social movement." Similarly, the politics and statements of these black "public intellectuals . . . exude *pro forma* moralism, not passion," and are supposedly disconnected from the masses of black folk.

IF REED HAD LEFT MATTERS THERE, perhaps there would be the basis for the political engagement or dialogue which, theoretically, he claims to be seeking. But for good measure, Reed found it necessary to add a series of mean-spirited criticisms against those characterized as "the children of Booker T. Washington." Gates was defined as "the voice" of a "black, self-consciously petit bourgeois centrism." West was nothing less than "a freelance race relations consultant and Moral Voice for white elites." Kelley was charged with "spinning narratives that ultimately demean political action by claiming to find it everywhere." And hooks and Dyson were slurred as simply "hustlers, blending bombast, clichés, psychobabble, and lame guilt tripping in service to the 'pay me' principle."

If one did an informal poll among most black intellectuals today, many might agree with part of Reed's analysis. There is a growing sense that a significant number of black scholars speak primarily to white elites, rather than addressing the specific problems of the African-American community. But the two major factors responsible for this are: (1) the growth of class stratification and social fragmentation within black civil society, in which large institutions like the black church, civic associations and civil rights organizations have lost much of their influence; and (2) the decline of the black freedom movement, and more generally, the deterioration of progressive and liberal political coalitions, in which blacks were a significant element. Black intellectuals during the era of racial segregation were forced to maintain contacts with all-black organizations, professionally and socially. With the legal integration of civil society and the assimilation of black students and faculty within formerly all-white academic institutions, the linkages which kept black intellectuals in the orbit of African-American political culture and society were largely ruptured. Relatively few black intellectuals today maintain an authentic, organic relationship with multi-class, black formations which have significant constituencies among working class and poor people.

Political clout among black intellectuals these days is all too often measured by one's ability to leverage policy within powerful white circles, rather than inside social protest formations. For example, probably the most influential social scientist in America today is University of Chicago's sociologist William Julius Wilson. The author of the controversial *The Declining Significance of Race*, Wilson's ties with the Clinton Administration and his criticisms of affirmative action carry much greater weight in public policy circles than any of the intellectuals Reed cites. On the right, the work of conservative scholars like economist Thomas Sowell, the apologist for Reaganism, has been devastating to blacks' collective interests. Sowell, Walter Williams, Alan Keyes, Clarence Thomas, Glen Loury and other black conservatives proudly proclaim their distance and lack of accountability to the African-American community. Reed certainly has the right, and even the responsibility to critique any political tendency within the black community. But to single out black scholars who are to the left-of-center in a manner which is abusive and nearly intolerant in tone comes close, given this context, to confusing our friends with our enemies.

Probably the greatest antagonism to any single liberal intellectual within the African-American community is reserved for Gates, who has been described publicly and privately as something of a "modern Booker T. Washington," at least in the realm of cultural studies and literary criticism for the past five years. Like the "Wizard of Tuskegee," Gates sees himself as something of an entrepreneur; he has extensive influence within foundation circles and inside the white media. Gates broke into the public sphere with a controversial op-ed essay in *The New York Times* which condemned anti-Semitism within the black community. The essay evoked deep anger and outrage among many blacks who felt it pandered to elements within the Jewish community which had become alienated from black issues and interests. In the context of national politics, Gates is unambiguously a liberal, but implicitly he embraces a social philosophy of inclusionist integration, appealing to the most liberal wing of white corporate and political power. Simultaneously, he has a strong grasp of currents within black popular culture, and has the political imagination to build personal and political bridges to leaders and intellectuals who are ideologically to his left. Gates is a thoughtful and gifted writer, who probably has no aspirations to play the role of a popular race leader of the masses.

ALTHOUGH FREQUENTLY ASSOCIATED WITH GATES, West has a very different political history. West first developed a distinct constituency among blacks by working in progressive and black nationalist-oriented religious and political circles 15 years ago. West became associated with the white moderate left in his capacity as nominal leader of the Democratic Socialists of America, following the death of socialist writer Michael Harrington. He also became closely linked with writer Michael Lerner, and the liberal Jewish publication *Tikkun*. Criticism of West within some black circles began several years later, as he spoke out against the sentiments of nihilism and social alienation found within contemporary urban culture. But when he accepted an academic appointment at Harvard in late 1993 in the African-American Studies program directed by "Skip" Gates, West increased the general perception that he had become part of Gates' entourage. After the publication of *Race Matters*, black academicians who had never taken part in a protest action or walked a picket line in their lives, began to attack West's politics.

AS IN THE CASE OF GATES, SOME OF THIS CRITICISM WAS JEALOUSY, pure and simple. Part of it was the distrust West generated among some blacks by his efforts to reach out to liberal whites and Jews with his message of coalition-building and radical democracy. But part of the trouble was that West's more recent work, especially in *Race Matters*, tended to be framed in a language and style which was more at home with traditional liberalism than with the left. Some radicals such as Stephen Steinberg felt that West was prepared to sacrifice the importance of race on the high altar of class. In an essay for *New Politics* (Summer 1994), Steinberg accused West of shifting "the focus of analysis and of blame away from the structures of racial oppression," and of engaging in "tortuous reasoning that subverts the whole logic behind affirmative action."

Reed's analysis captures some of these details, but misses the mark by lumping together scholars with widely divergent interests, styles of communication, and political orientations. For example, bell hooks established her reputation

as a feminist critic and social commentator with the publication of her book *Ain't I a Woman* in 1982. A series of books have followed, increasingly moving toward themes which focus on gender and social relations, cultural behavior and issues of representation within black contemporary life. It is true that the real impact of her books and essays is less evident within the traditional academy than among hundreds of thousands of black women, who find her ideas and commentary inspirational. hooks has never treated class with the sharpness of focus in her work that other feminist scholars, such as Angela Davis, have done. But it seems as though Reed is hostile and impatient with hooks because she doesn't engage in the kind of research or detailed political analysis that he values; he should recognize that political intervention can and often does take a variety of forms. Challenging sexism and forms of patriarchy within the black community, hooks' central concern makes a fundamental political contribution.

Reed's criticisms of Dyson and Kelley seemed especially petty. Dyson has produced a collection of social essays and a book assessing the cultural and social impact of the Malcolm X phenomenon of the 1990s; Kelley has written several books, including an invaluable study of black rural protest from the Great Depression, *Hammer and Hoe*. Both younger scholars are thoughtful and have a special awareness of the centrality of popular cultural forms, such as Hip Hop, to the construction of a political consciousness of resistance and group empowerment. They represent a vanguard of the post-civil rights generation of new scholarship on black identity, cultural and history.

Reed fails to capture this diversity among this group of scholars. But the greatest errors in his analysis were essentially historical and conjunctural. First, Reed's characterization of Washington and the politics of the Tuskegee Machine was grossly inaccurate. Washington was certainly a black Republican, an opponent of labor unions and, publicly, an apologist for Jim Crow segregation but, without question, he had a strong following among a segment of the black community. Washington was actively promoted by white capitalists and conservatives, but he also constructed his own effective constituency by establishing the National Negro Business League. He was deeply interested in Pan-Africanism, encouraged students from Africa to attend Tuskegee and inspired an entire generation of early African nationalists, including the founder of the African National Congress, John Langalibalele Dube. He was an astute politician who fought secretly against segregation, hiring lobbyists to oppose Jim Crow laws. These aspects of Washington's program explain why black nationalists like Marcus Garvey praised and respected him.

Reed is a serious scholar of black political history. He surely understands the profound significance of the black capitalist and accommodationist tradition within black political history, and its intimate connections with conservative black nationalism. In the final analysis, DuBois was right: Washington's accommodationist approach toward white power was profoundly flawed and, at times even criminal, in that it gave legitimacy to the lynching and disfranchisement of black people. However, that doesn't make him an "Uncle Tom." Washington's primary role was to articulate the interests of the entrepreneurial, conservative wing of the emerging black middle class to the representatives of corporate and political power in the white world.

THE NEW BLACK PUBLIC INTELLECTUALS, A CENTURY LATER, are engaged in a totally different political enterprise. They are not building educational institutions like Tuskegee Institute, or political machines which negotiate for influence within the white establishment. They utilize the power of words to impact the contours of political culture and the public discourse. Unlike Washington, their commitment is to theoretical and cultural engagement, analyzing the meaning of race, gender and class issues in the context of a post-civil rights reality of unrelenting attacks against affirmative action, welfare and multicultural education. To be sure, some of them are sadly disconnected from the social forces and struggles of working class and poor people's communities. As a result, their political discourse is frequently obtuse, and they lack any intimate or textured awareness of the efforts for empowerment and social change being waged by many working-class African-Americans today. Reed accurately understands this. But by wielding a polemical sledgehammer against West, hooks, et al., Reed ignores a far greater danger to the possibilities for progressive black politics.

Since the early 1990s, the far right has waged an ideological war against the politics of liberal democratic social change. With the declining strength of the organized labor movement, the deterioration of the liberal wing of the Democratic party and the disarray of the civil rights movement, one of the few sectors of growing left-of-center influence in national political culture is the black intelligentsia. The black population overall is significantly to the left of the general society on socioeconomic issues; this permits many progressive, anticorporate capitalist intellectuals like Angela Davis to exercise significant influence.

White conservatives made a strategic decision to delegitimize the liberal-left black intelligentsia several years ago. After Clinton's election to the presidency, for example, conservatives attacked prominent black anthropologist Johnnetta Cole, the president of Spelman College, to deny her possible nomination as Secretary of Education. In 1994, legal scholar Lani Guinier was publicly smeared as the "Quota Queen" by the far right, after being nominated as the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights. Clinton's retreat from Guinier's nomination signaled a victory for conservatives which led directly to today's assault on affirmative action, minority economic set-asides and an entire range of civil rights initiatives.

In the March 1995 issue of *The New Republic*, Cornel West was viciously attacked in a vitriolic polemic by Leon Wieseltier. Accurately described by Michael Lerner as the "errand boy and hatchet man" for Martin Peretz, *The New Republic's* publisher, Wieseltier denounced West's writings as "almost completely worthless." Reed backhandedly defends Wieseltier's thesis as being "right-for-the-wrong-reasons." This position is not only irresponsible, but directly feeds into the retreat from an anti-racist politics among white liberals and so-called radicals who are among *The Village Voice* readers. To join the chorus of the far right, to deplore and denounce the works of an entire group of black intellectuals espousing progressive ideas, is alien to the best traditions of black scholarship. Many black activists suspect that the real motivation behind Wieseltier was West's principled decision to participate in the National African American Leadership Summit, called by former NAACP national secretary Benjamin Chavis, last June. West strongly defended the political initiatives taken by Chavis to revitalize the NAACP, and vigorously opposed Chavis's ouster. His well-publicized defense for the need to dialogue directly with Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, and his en-

dorsement of the Senatorial campaign of Al Sharpton in New York last fall, may have triggered the polemical attack in *The New Republic*.

GROWING UP IN A MIDWESTERN INDUSTRIAL TOWN IN THE 1960s, I witnessed hundreds of petty quarrels between representatives of our small black community, which were animated by jealousy and a desire for influence within the white elite. Among ourselves, we used to complain that middle class Negroes frequently responded to each other's successes like "crabs in a barrel" — pulling each other down. Reed identifies himself with the radical left, but all too often seems to behave in the same manner. In many ways, his sharply confrontation style is reminiscent of other voices of independent black radicalism, such as William Monroe Trotter. Reed is often unfairly dismissed, like Trotter, as something of a loner, so ideologically "left" that his criticism carries little weight among most black activists. His scathing book on the 1984 presidential campaign of the Rainbow Coalition was so hostile to Jesse Jackson that most blacks concluded erroneously that Reed was a "black conservative" like Sowell, Loury and Thomas. But the supposed virtue of being further to the left than anyone else may mean that one is really outside the real experiences of one's people.

Reed himself apparently has few connections with real social forces, with the present-day struggles of women and men who are attempting to halt the tide of political reaction against black folk by the Republican right. For if he did, Reed would not so easily be convinced that West, Gates and Company should be the primary objects of his political scorn and contempt. At a time when we need to construct a new left-of-center force as an alternative to mass conservatism, we should engage in a thoughtful, civil dialogue among ourselves — not a public mugging of black intellectuals who share democratic, progressive values.

Editors' Note

We hope that Manning Marable's article will initiate a discussion in the pages of New Politics on the controversy surrounding the role of black intellectuals.

The Scholarship of Confrontation Race and Radicalism in the 1960s

Stephen Steinberg

What we are discovering ... is that the United States — all of it, North as well as South, West as well as East — is a racist society in a sense and to a degree that we have refused so far to admit, much less face.

Charles Silberman, *Crisis in Black and White* (1964)

SCHOLARS ARE CHRONICALLY SLOW TO RESPOND TO SOCIAL CHANGE, especially when it occurs suddenly. It is not just that, like Rodin's sculpture of "The Thinker," the scholar is transfixed, too absorbed in thought to respond to ephemeral events. Scholars, by training, are enjoined from spouting off until they have collected the evidence to substantiate their claims. The obligatory collection of evidence requires time and money. For better or worse, it takes years before the academic wheel is sufficiently greased to turn out a significant body of scholarship, even on a major new development like the civil rights upheaval and, later, the outbreak of ghetto "riots."

Perhaps for this reason, much of the early writing on the intensifying racial conflict came from the movement itself. A score of books were written by movement leaders and activists who suddenly found themselves with a white audience. The first "movement book" was Martin Luther King's *Stride Toward Freedom*, his inspiring account of the Montgomery bus boycott. The genre got a big boost in 1964 with the publication of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, written with the assistance of Alex Haley, which ultimately sold well over a million copies.

The surging demand for books by and about blacks, augmented by rising college admissions among blacks, not only changed the practices of establishment publishers, but was also reflected in a doubling of commercial black publishing houses — from 18 in 1960 to 37 in 1974. The boom was especially pronounced in fiction and autobiography. Not only were these works self-consciously political, but in many instances — James Baldwin, Ralph Ellison, Richard Wright, Lorraine Hansberry, and Julius Lester come first to mind — black writers of fiction found themselves at the center of societal debates concerning race and politics. Race, for so

STEPHEN STEINBERG has written numerous articles on race for *New Politics*, most recently in Volume V, No. 1, Summer 1994.

long a taboo subject, was suddenly at the center of literary and political discourse, and the boundaries between art and politics were more blurred than at any time since the proletarian literature of the Depression.

Unlike academics, journalists do not hesitate to jump into the fray of newsbreaking events. Robert Conot wrote a riveting account of the 1965 Watts riot, entitled *Rivers of Blood, Years of Darkness*. A similar book by John Hersey about the Detroit riot, *The Algiers Motel Incident*, became a best seller. The journalist who had the greatest impact, however, was an editor at *Fortune* magazine, Charles Silberman, whose book *Crisis in Black and White* appeared on the *New York Times* Best Seller List for ten weeks in 1964.

SILBERMAN BEGAN HIS BOOK WITH RICHARD WRIGHT'S 1945 COMMENT that "American whites and blacks both possess deep-seated resistance against 'the Negro problem' being presented, even verbally, in all of its hideous fullness, in all of the totality of its meaning." Now, nearly 20 years later America had been forced to confront its racist legacy, and an editor from *Fortune* magazine was the unlikely purveyor of these belated truths to a nation jolted out of its apathy by years of racial strife. Gone, too, was the customary liberal gloss as Silberman declared that "what we are discovering, in short, is that the United States — all of it, North as well as South, West as well as East — is a racist society in a sense and to a degree that we have refused so far to admit, much less face." In substance as well as tone, this was a far cry from Gunnar Myrdal's characterization of racism as an unfortunate contradiction of the American creed. Silberman's repudiation of Myrdal was explicit:

The tragedy of race relations in the United States is that there is no American dilemma. White Americans are not torn and tortured by the conflict between their devotion to the American creed and their actual behavior. They are upset by the current state of race relations, to be sure. But what troubles them is not that justice is being denied, but that their peace is being shattered and their business interrupted.

Nor would moral suasion or melioristic reform suffice in redressing the evils of racism: "Nothing less than a radical reconstruction of American society is required if the Negro is to be able to take his rightful place in American life." By the end of the book Silberman was invoking "the P-word" — preference — and quoted Whitney Young as follows:

If those who make the decisions in this country are really sincere about closing the gaps, they must go further than fine impartiality. We must have, in fact, special consideration if we are to compensate for the scars left by 300 years of deprivation.

Paradigms of racism involve not just theories that purport to explain racial subordination, but at least by implication, prescriptions for what should or should not be done to remedy the problem. Inasmuch as 19th century Social Darwinists held that blacks were inherently inferior and destined by nature to occupy the lower rungs of society, it followed that any attempts to elevate blacks were misguided and futile. For Myrdal, racial subordination was assumed to be rooted in a belief system that was pre-rational, pre-scientific, and pre-democratic. The "cure," therefore, was to marshal all the forces of reason and science to counter

these retrograde beliefs, and to fortify democratic institutions. Silberman's position, clearly reflecting the assumptions of the protest movement, was that the society *as a whole* was racist. The logical extension of this premise was that its racist structures had to be overhauled. To the extent that racial subordination was the result of systemic racism, then extraordinary programs would be needed to compensate for past wrongs and to give blacks the job opportunities they had been so long denied.

In laying the blame for racial subordination on the doorstep of American society, Silberman spoke the simple truth that white America had so long feared, not because this truth was so painful to contemplate, but because it carried with it a moral and political obligation to revamp the entire racial order. It was the anticipation of these changes that *explains* the "deep-seated resistance against 'the Negro problem' being presented, even verbally, in all of its hideous fullness." The great lie of racism, from slavery down to the present, was that racial hierarchy was ordained by God or nature, or was rendered almost immutable by intractable social forces. Here was a radical new theory that shifted the blame onto American society and its major institutions, and that demanded an overhaul of the entire racial order. To repeat, Silberman was only expressing an idea at the heart of the protest movement. Still, the fact that it was embraced and given such lucid and resolute expression by a white editor of *Fortune* — in a book that received plaudits even from Malcolm X — indicates how profound an impact the message of the protest movement had had on white society.

A STEADY FLOW OF BOOKS THROUGHOUT THE 1960S CONFRONTED WHITE SOCIETY with its racism. Kenneth Clark's *Dark Ghetto*, published in 1965, began with a prologue entitled "The Cry of the Ghetto," consisting of poignant statements of Harlem residents, mostly youth. Although Clark dealt squarely with "the tangle of community and personal pathology," he did so within a larger context that fixed ultimate responsibility on white society. As he wrote: "Nothing short of a concerted and massive attack on the social, political, economic, and cultural roots of the pathology is required if anything more than daubing or displacement of the symptoms is to be achieved." Clark also attacked the fashionable social deprivation theories as "merely substituting notions of environmental immutability and fatalism for earlier notions of biologically determined educational unmodifiability," thus absolving schools for their record of failure with respect to black children. Finally, he ended with a trenchant attack on white liberals for acquiescing to the racial status quo, and for failing to combat racism even in spheres where liberals are powerful, such as labor unions, colleges, and politics.

The liberal faith in schools as a panacea for racial inequity also came under challenge by Jonathan Kozol's *Death at an Early Age*, which was recipient of the National Book Award in 1967. Kozol provided a grim picture of the experiences of black children in the Boston public schools. Like Clark, Kozol made it painfully evident that schools in the North, as well as the South, were riddled with racism. Far from being the solution, the schools were part of the problem.

In 1968 two black psychiatrists, William Grier and Price Cobbs, wrote *Black Rage*. Published with a foreword by U.S. Senator Fred R. Harris, the book probed one of the most taboo topics in the field of race relations: what Franz Fanon called "the rage of the oppressed." At last, it would appear, white America was willing to confront the rage of its victims, as suggested by the fact that *Black*

Rage was a top seller in hard and soft covers.

While social scientists were still puzzling about what was wrong with their models, and designing research projects that would turn up the facts that had apparently eluded prior generations of scholars, another influential book was published, this time based on a collaboration between a political activist and an ivory-tower scholar. *Black Power* was written by Stokely Carmichael, the former chairman of SNCC who was catapulted into the national limelight in 1966 when he issued a call for "Black Power" at a political rally, and Charles Hamilton, a black professor of political science at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. As a young activist, Hamilton had met Carmichael at SNCC workshops and retreats in the early 60s, and after "black power" emerged as an issue in 1966, they agreed to collaborate on a book.

"What is racism?" So began *Black Power*, as the authors signaled their intention to challenge the cardinal element of racial discourse. Carmichael and Hamilton in fact advanced a bold, new conception of racism, one that would have far-reaching implications for theory and politics alike. Their well-crafted formulation is worth quoting at length:

Racism is both overt and covert. It takes two, closely related forms: individual whites acting against individual blacks, and acts by the total white community against the black community. We call these individual racism and institutionalized racism. The first consists of overt acts by individuals, which cause death, injury or the violent destruction of property. This type can be recorded by television cameras; it can frequently be observed in the process of commission. The second type is less overt, far more subtle, less identifiable in terms of *specific* individuals committing the acts. But it is no less destructive of human life. The second type originates in the operation of established and respected forces in the society, and thus receives far less public condemnation than the first type.

To this theoretical statement, Carmichael and Hamilton added a compelling illustration:

When white terrorists bomb a black church and kill five black children, that is an act of individual racism, widely deplored by most segments of the society. But when in that same city — Birmingham, Alabama — five hundred black babies die each year because of the lack of proper food, shelter and medical facilities, and thousands more are destroyed and maimed physically, emotionally and intellectually because of conditions of poverty and discrimination in the black community, that is a function of institutional racism. When a black family moves into a home in a white neighborhood and is stoned, burned or routed out, they are victims of an overt act of individual racism which many people will condemn — at least in words. But it is institutional racism that keeps black people locked in dilapidated slum tenements, subject to the daily prey of exploitative slumlords, merchants, loan sharks and discriminatory real estate agents. The society either pretends it does not know of this latter situation, or is in fact incapable of doing anything meaningful about it.

OF COURSE, THE NOTION THAT RACISM WAS EMBEDDED in major institutions was not altogether new — it was central to the radical analysis of racism and received copious documentation in Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma*. However, Carmichael and Hamilton highlighted the essential difference between intentional and unintentional racism, and encapsulated this important distinction in a succinct term that made its way into the discourse on race, both inside and

outside the academy. "Institutionalized racism" did not deny the obvious — that a great many people harbor racist beliefs and stereotypes that form the basis for racist behavior. But it insisted that racism also includes practices that are not necessarily motivated by racial animus, but that nevertheless reinforce or perpetuate racial inequities.

The concept of institutionalized racism had powerful moral implications since it meant that liberal society could no longer purge itself of responsibility for racism solely by repudiating Southern-style racism. There were also the more subtle and insidious forms that racism assumed in the North, even in characteristically liberal institutions like the university, labor unions, and the Democratic Party. Without quite saying so, Carmichael and Hamilton were also raising the issue of collective guilt for racial oppression, which implicated whites generally — liberals included — for the wrongs visited upon blacks by a racist society. Malcolm X had come to a similar reckoning in his *Autobiography* when he wrote that "notwithstanding those few 'good' white people, it is the *collective* 150 million white people whom the *collective* 22 million black people have to deal with!"

The concept of institutionalized racism had powerful political implications as well. It meant that laws securing the civil rights of blacks and even laws specifically proscribing discrimination did not go far enough. From the point of view of institutionalized racism, the *fact* of black exclusion was *prima facie* evidence of racism. Whether exclusion was directly the result of willful acts of discrimination was, at best, a secondary consideration. The conceptual groundwork was being laid for a new policy initiative: one that would gauge the extent of racism not by intent, but by results. Not until blacks were fully incorporated into all segments of American life, not until the statistical disparities between whites and blacks in wealth, status, and power were wiped out, not until impoverished racial ghettos were eliminated from the American landscape — only then could America erase the stigma of being "a racist society."

The idea that racism could be an attribute of whole societies, and not merely of discrete individuals, got another major boost a year later with the publication of the *The Report of the Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*, better known as the Kerner report. The Commission was appointed by President Johnson to investigate the causes of the "riots" that began in Newark and Detroit in the summer of 1967 and spread like wildfire to scores of cities across the nation. At the time of its formation the Commission was severely criticized as too "moderate." Yet the Report that it produced was a remarkably "radical" document, in many ways comparable to Frazier's report on the 1935 Harlem Riot that was suppressed by Mayor La Guardia. Now, in the context of the 1960s, the Kerner Report was not only published with fanfare, but was first on the *New York Times* paperback best-seller list in 1968 and sold some two million copies.

Unlike the McCone Commission that characterized the Watts riot as an "insensate rage of destruction," a "spasm," and a "formless, quite senseless, all but hopeless violent protest," the Kerner Commission explicitly rejected the notion that the "disorders" stemmed from mindless violence on the part of aberrant ghetto youth. Studies conducted by the Commission found that the typical rioter was somewhat *better* educated than those who did not actively participate in the riot, and that while most of the active participants were young males, they had the sympathy of a broad segment of the ghetto community. In effect, the Commission conceded that the riots constituted a form of *protest*. Even the looting and

burning, according to the Commission, were usually directed “against symbols of white American society — authority and property — rather than against white persons.”

The keynote of the Kerner Report, however, was its declaration that “white racism is essentially responsible for the explosive mixture which has been accumulating in our cities, since the end of World War II.” This was an astonishing and unprecedented declaration. At the time American society was reeling from a seemingly endless chain of riots, replete with daily television coverage of looting, burning, and sniping. Yet a “moderate” presidential commission was placing the ultimate blame on white racism. Furthermore, the Commission made it clear that the problem of racial segregation was far from solved by the passage of landmark civil rights legislation in 1964 and 1965. On the first page of its report, it issued its famous declaration that “our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white — separate and unequal.”

The Kerner Report concluded with 73 pages of policy recommendations. Included were a plethora of reforms in the areas of education, housing, and welfare, but, as with Frazier's 1935 report on the Harlem Riot, the emphasis was on employment. In addition to opening up the existing job structures by strengthening enforcement of anti-discriminatory laws and extending affirmative action, the Commission proposed to create two million new jobs over three years, half of them in the public sector. That the Commission had no illusions that its proposals would be implemented is evident from the concluding paragraph of the report, which quotes Kenneth Clark's testimony before the Commission:

I read that report . . . of the 1919 riot in Chicago, and it is as if I were reading the report of the investigating committee on the Harlem riot of '35, the report of the investigating committee on the Harlem riot of '43, the report of the McCone Commission on the Watts riot.

I must again in candor say to you members of this Commission — it is a kind of Alice in Wonderland — with the same moving picture re-shown over and over again, the same analysis, the same recommendations, and the same inaction.

Clark's cynicism was borne out by events. The report never became the basis for legislative action or other public policy initiatives. Small comfort could be taken from the fact that, unlike Frazier's report on the Harlem riot, it was filed away after, rather than before, publication.

PRIOR TO THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, HISTORIOGRAPHY HAD PRODUCED few major studies of the black experience in America. In his 1935 study of *Black Reconstruction*, W.E.B. Du Bois had good reason to denounce historiography on race as sheer propaganda that sought only to cover up the nation's ignominious past. Indeed, it was not until 1959, with the publication of Stanley Elkins's *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life*, that white historians began to take the question of slavery seriously. By the late 1960s there was a veritable explosion in historical studies of the African-American experience. In 1969 Winthrop Jordan's study of *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* received the Bancroft Prize in history. Over the next eight years, seven additional books dealing with the African-American experience received this prestigious award. As historian Nathan Huggins wrote in 1990, “it was as if historians were bringing to life a people who had been both socially and historically dead.”

The new historiography, furthermore, was infused with the critical spirit of the 1960s. As Eric Foner has commented: "Reconstruction revisionism bore the mark of the modern civil rights movement. In the 1960s the revisionist wave broke over the field, destroying, in rapid succession, every assumption of the traditional viewpoint." Icons fell like bowling pins, as an exciting new canon emerged that accorded blacks their proper place in American history.

Much the same can be said about each of the social science disciplines. In 1935 W.E.B. Du Bois had written that "in propaganda against the Negro since emancipation in this land, we face one of the most stupendous efforts the world ever saw to discredit human beings, an effort involving universities, history, science, social life and religion." Now, in the aftermath of the civil rights revolution, all these fields began to produce a revisionist scholarship that purged itself of its racist underpinnings, and confronted racism "in all its hideous fullness."

Despite the burgeoning canon of scholarly books and articles that reflected a new sensibility and perspective on issues of race and racism, no single study had the scope or achieved the stature of *An American Dilemma*. Perhaps what was missing was a huge subsidy from a foundation to underwrite another comprehensive study of race in America. To be sure, the foundations responded to the racial crisis by pouring money into research on race, but this research was typically disguised as "poverty research," and the subsidies certainly did not go to the Young Turks who would have been disqualified by either their leftist politics or their unabashed identification with the black protest movement.

Nor was it possible any longer to import a foreigner, on the pretext that this would impart "value neutrality" to the study. In the ideologically polarized 60s, there was no neutral ground. As Irving Howe wrote in *Dissent* in the summer of 1963:

The cant of 'moderation' is at an end. It was always a lie, a supreme hypocrisy. It was the foul evasiveness by which our society made verbal concessions to its guilt while doing nothing to help those whom it kept down."

And he continued:

Under these circumstances equality of opportunity (even if we had it!) can at best be a way of avoiding *further* growth in the distance between white and Negro living conditions; but it will not remove that distance itself. For that, the Negro must be given special help, special privileges, if you will — in jobs, in the unions, in the universities. And these forms of help should remain in effect until the Negroes themselves declare the time has come when they are no longer needed.

In his reprobation of "moderation," Howe was reflecting the impact that the politics of confrontation had on white liberals — in forcing them to confront their own contradictions and to take sides. Who could claim neutrality to the bloody battle waged on the streets of Selma when civil rights marchers refused to back down from a phalanx of mounted troopers recklessly swinging their truncheons? Could one pretend to see "both sides" of the issue being battled out on the floor of the 1964 Democratic Convention, when the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party refused to compromise on its right to replace the segregationists who had trampled over Democratic Party rules? With American cities under siege from angry youth, was even a pretense of dispassionate inquiry possible? By the 1960s there were no Swedes who could be summoned to rescue America from its own folly.

IF THERE IS A SINGLE WORK THAT IS REPRESENTATIVE of the new paradigm, it is Robert Blauner's *Racial Oppression in America*. Published in 1972, the book brought together a number of Blauner's provocative essays on issues of race and politics. Obviously, *Racial Oppression in America* does not approach the size or scope of Myrdal's opus. Nor did Blauner enjoy the acclaim showered on Myrdal. By his own account, his book "was well received by minority scholars and by students but not by mainstream sociologists, especially by my own colleagues, whose dismissal of its merit resulted in my being turned down twice for a full professor promotion."

Blauner makes no secret of his disenchantment with establishment sociology. In the preface, he writes: "My own developing framework probably owes more to the social movements of the oppressed than to standard sociology... Besides the writers and scholars whose work I cite within, the most important influence has been the students with whom I have tested and exchanged ideas on race relations in American society." A few pages later, he adds: "Virtually all of the new insights about racism and the experience of the oppressed have been provided by writers whose lives and minds were uncluttered by sociological theory."

Actually, Blauner's political odyssey began well before he wrote *Racial Oppression in America*. In a recent autobiographical essay, he describes his youthful immersion in radical politics, which included a stint in the Communist Party. By the mid-fifties, however, he wanted "to settle down, to be respectable," and embarked on an academic career that led to a position in Berkeley's prestigious Department of Sociology, where he taught a course on social movements and began research on the sociology of death. A year later, however, the monastic ambience of the Berkeley campus was shattered by the Free Speech Movement. The civil rights movement was also reaching an explosive climax, and our fledgling professor resolved that "it was the problems of the living and not of the dead or dying that needed attention."

Blauner pinpoints "the radicalization of my thinking" to the months spanning the summer and fall of 1965. In July he had drafted a paper on blacks in which "I used an ethnic group model in which 'the Negro' was the problem, not American society." Barely five months later he wrote "Whitewash Over Watts," a trenchant critique of the McCone Commission's report on the Watts "riot." Not only had Watts left a deep imprint on his thinking, but in his capacity as a professor of sociology at Berkeley, Blauner had also been recruited to serve as a consultant to the Commission. His suggestion to do a field study of how the residents of Watts felt about the "riot" was initially accepted, but then quashed because, according to Blauner, it threatened the Commission's law-and-order orientation. The McCone Commission's report gave Blauner another jolt. As he describes it:

The commission's report, when it appeared, was even worse than I had feared. The hypocrisy of its carefully modulated concern angered me. My first experience with official power must have chipped away the faith that I still had that established institutions might respond creatively to the racial crisis.

Blauner's political awakening (or re-awakening, to be precise) eventually resulted in *Racial Oppression in America*.

Clearly, Blauner was a consummate "60s radical." Not surprisingly, his book is emblematic of the insurgent thinking on race. In the opening sentence, Blauner

writes that "the present crisis in American life has led to the questioning of long-accepted frameworks." He follows with a personal declaration:

As a sociologist who was attempting to analyze the big news of the 1960s, I found that general sociological theory, as well as the more specific "theories" in the race relations field, was pointing in the wrong direction. These theories not only failed to predict and illuminate new developments — the shift from civil rights to group power strategies, the outbreak of rebellions in the urban ghettos, the growth of militant nationalism and ethnic consciousness — in short, the deepening of racial awareness and conflict in America. The "theories" actually obscured the meaning of these issues, making them more difficult to comprehend. In 1965 I began searching for alternative ways of conceptualizing American racial realities.

In developing his case for "an alternative framework," Blauner identifies four fallacies within traditional sociology:

1) "The view that racial and ethnic groups are neither central nor persistent elements of modern societies."

According to Blauner, the thrust of social theory was to see racial and ethnic identities "as essentially parochial survivals from preindustrial societies and fundamentally opposed to the logic of modernity." Thus, on the one hand, the prevailing sociological framework could not explain the stubborn persistence of racial divisions, except as vestigial elements of pre-modern belief systems that were presumed to be withering away. On the other hand, it did not allow for "the possibility that racial minorities might prefer to build their own cultures and community institutions rather than choose absorption into the mainstream." Contrary to the optimistic scenario projected by liberal social science, the end of the civil rights stage of the protest movement was associated not with greater integration, but with greater polarization.

2) "The idea that race and racial oppression are not independent dynamic forces but are ultimately reducible to other causal determinants, usually economic or psychological."

Here Blauner lashes out at both those on the right and the left who, for different reasons, underestimate the depth and pervasiveness of racial oppression. The right likes to pretend that racism is a thing of the past, and denies its present-day reality. The left, on the other hand, reduces race to class, thus denying its existence as an autonomous force to be reckoned with on its own terms. Thus the irony: albeit for different reasons both the color-blind right and the color-blind left oppose public policies targeted for blacks.

3) "The position that the most important aspects of racism are the attitudes and prejudices of white Americans."

It had been an article of faith for several decades that prejudice was waning and blacks were making steady progress. Thus, as Blauner observes sardonically, "there were still sociologists celebrating the impressive decline in racial prejudice at the very moment that Watts burst into flames." The escalating racial conflict forced social scientists to acknowledge that there was more to racism than racial prejudice, thereby repudiating the psychological reductionism that had pervaded the vast literature on "prejudice." A distinction had to be drawn — to quote Blauner — "between racism as an objective phenomenon, located in the actual existence of domination and hierarchy, and racism's subjective concomitants of prejudice and other motivations and feelings."

4) "The so-called *immigrant analogy*, the assumption ... that there are no

essential long-term differences — in relation to the larger society — between the *third world* or racial minorities and the European ethnic groups.”

Sociologists thought they were being liberal when they held that blacks were only white men in black skin. Their intention, of course, was to reject the racist canards that equated difference with inferiority. However, this also tended to negate what was culturally unique about African Americans. Similarly, when liberal sociologists compared blacks to other immigrants, they thought they were projecting the hopeful scenario that in time blacks would follow in the footsteps of European immigrants on the road to success. However, this idea obscured the ways in which the black experience was fundamentally different from the experience of other ethnic groups. It also obscured the ways in which racist structures prevented blacks from following in the footsteps of immigrants, and the need, therefore, to develop alternative paths of mobility.

IT IS HARDLY SURPRISING, THEN, THAT SOCIOLOGY FAILED TO ANTICIPATE the civil rights movement, much less the ensuing ghetto uprisings. Events had exposed the utter uselessness of the prevailing models within social science to shed light on the forces that were tearing American society apart.

Blauner thus set out to develop an alternative framework beginning with the idea that blacks are not just another “minority.” Unlike immigrants from Europe who came voluntarily in pursuit of a better life, Africans were abducted from their homelands and imported as a source of cheap labor in the South’s evolving plantation system. From these different starting points, the histories of blacks and immigrants proceeded along two altogether different trajectories. In the half-century after slavery, the North imported tens of millions of immigrants to provide labor for its burgeoning industries. Although exploited, these immigrants were at least strategically located near the center of an expanding industrial economy, and in time they or their children moved up the economic and social ladder. Blacks, on the other hand, were categorically excluded from employment in the entire manufacturing sector, and as Blauner points out, were confined to “the most unskilled jobs, the least advanced sectors of the economy, and the most industrially backward region of the country.” This racial division of labor engendered and reinforced vastly different systems of prejudice and control. Immigrants *did* encounter prejudice and discrimination, and their social ascent was not easy, but their troubles paled in comparison to the all-encompassing system of domination and exploitation that was the lot of the average Negro.

These crucial differences between blacks and immigrants received scant attention among the professionals in the field of race relations. The very terms of discourse — “race relations,” “minority,” and “prejudice and discrimination” — were ahistorical abstractions that, if anything, obscured the unique aspects of racial oppression alluded to above. Whether by intent or not, liberal sociology had effectively whitewashed racial oppression! It had glossed over the atrocities of slavery and the caste system by obscuring the fact that the obstacles that blacks confronted differed in kind — not merely in degree — from those encountered by other ethnic groups. To break out of the linguistic straitjacket, new constructs would be needed.

Blauner adopted the language and the model of “colonialism” that had come to be accepted in “the movement.” Beginning in the early 1960s, black intellectuals and activists seized upon the unmistakable parallels between the struggle

against racism in this country with the anticolonial revolts that were raging throughout the Third World. There was this difference, however. In the case of classic colonialism, Europeans used their superior technology and power to conquer vast territories in Africa and Asia, subjugate their people, and plunder their resources. In the American instance, the process had been reversed, and Africans had been forcibly imported to American soil where they, in effect, constituted an *internal colony*. Not only was African labor ruthlessly exploited, but these Africans and their descendants were consigned to live essentially as a conquered people outside the normative order as it applied to whites.

Nor did the colonial analogy apply only to slavery. "Internal colonialism" also seemed to describe the contemporary Northern ghetto which, like European colonies, existed as a world apart, administered by politicians, police, social workers, educators, and others whose primary relationship to the community was one of social control. Property, businesses, and virtually anything of value were owned and controlled by outsiders. If ghettos constituted a kind of colony, then it followed that the so-called "riots" were actually a form of revolt, analogous to uprisings in the Third World. Liberation meant more than securing civil rights. It also meant taking control of one's communities.

No longer were blacks thought of as "white Americans in black skin." No longer were they merely the objects of the prejudice and discrimination that all minorities encounter. No longer was the ghetto "a temporary waystation," like the neighborhoods once occupied by immigrants before they moved to the suburbs. The colonial model swept away all of these premises, and portrayed blacks as a minority of a different kind: a permanent minority, an oppressed people, a "colonized group."

This conception called the entire liberal project into question. By refuting the immigrant analogy, it implied that the traditional remedies — the processes and mechanisms that had worked for immigrants — could not be counted on to deliver blacks from the social and economic margins. As Herbert Gans had concluded in his refutation of the immigrant analogy which was incorporated into the Kerner Commission Report, "new channels of escape" would have to be found.

The colonial analogy also challenged another key liberal assumption — that economic mobility on the part of individual blacks would necessarily result in racial integration. No longer was it certain that blacks could be — or *wanted* to be — integrated into white communities. Would another model have to be found that would allow blacks to be, as Harold Cruse has suggested in the title of his last book, *Plural But Equal*?

NATHAN GLAZER WAS AMONG THE FIRST TO TAKE ISSUE with the colonial analogy, particularly the claim that the immigrant model did not fit blacks. As he wrote in a 1971 essay:

If it is generally believed that there has been a radical break between white immigrant experience and black experience, people will be impelled to adopt new and unprecedented measures to achieve for blacks the measure of status that white immigrant groups reached without such measures. ... On the other hand, if people believe there is a substantial degree of similarity between the experience of white ethnic groups and black experience, arguments for unique and extreme measures to end black deprivation will be undermined."

Glazer's syntax is revealing. He seems to be saying that if one does not approve of the "unique and extreme measures to end black deprivation," then one should not "believe" the argument that immigrant and black experiences are fundamentally different. Because he does not like where it leads, in terms of social policy, Glazer rejects the entire idea of internal colonialism, insisting that the black and immigrants experiences are *not* fundamentally different. Let us closely examine Glazer's counterargument:

1) According to Glazer, all ethnic groups display a degree of self-segregation. At least the evidence is "inconclusive" whether segregation is "voluntary or forced, or if forced, whether it is based on economic or discriminatory factors." Here Glazer, with apparent innocence, strikes a refrain used by segregationists through the ages — that blacks like things the way they are! Or in Glazer's more rarefied terms: "there are the positive attractions of a community of people of common descent and culture, one that plays probably as strong a role among blacks as among white ethnic groups." Never mind that no white ethnic groups, with the exception of the Mormons or the Amish, have ever displayed the degree of "concentration" characteristic of blacks. Never mind that blacks were denied the *choice* that white ethnics have had to live in ethnically homogeneous or ethnically mixed neighborhoods. Never mind that even middle-class blacks have generally been excluded from white communities. Never mind that Jews and other immigrants fled their cozy ethnic neighborhoods as quickly as they could, and generally moved to communities that were far more ethnically diverse. Glazer asks us to believe that the racial ghettos of America are not a product of institutionalized racism, but merely an expression of ethnic cohesion and voluntary self-segregation.

2) Contrary to his own position, Glazer concedes that "the ghettos of the 'older immigrants' (Irish and German) have indeed largely disappeared." But, he argues, blacks arrived in northern cities only recently, long after the great waves of European immigration had subsided. Thus, not enough time has lapsed to allow the process of mobility and assimilation to play itself out. Implicit here is a great leap of faith, hardly validated by events over the past two decades, that racial segregation would gradually decline.

3) Glazer parries Blauner's point that unlike immigrants, blacks have never gained control over their own communities with the following casuistry. It depends, he asserts, *which* immigrants blacks are compared to. Some, like Irish have made great strides in politics; others, like Jews, in business and the professions; others like Japanese, in education. Still others, like Italians and Slavs, have reaped far less success. True, blacks lag behind even Italians and Slavs, but the differences are not so great as to support so radical a notion as "internal colonialism." Thus are racism and the terrible realities of American-style apartheid explained away!

Glazer acknowledges that immigrant groups had more political and economic control over their communities. But, he asserts, this is because they had economic enterprise that was lacking among blacks. Racism, he concedes, may have destroyed black business "in pre-immigrant America," but — beware of the debater's trick — this "cannot be an *exclusive* explanation," since Chinese and Japanese also met "vicious racism," and this did not prevent their entrepreneurial success.

As for politics, Glazer insists that blacks have been no slower at acquiring political power than other immigrants, with the exception of the Irish. To the

extent that blacks lack their fair share of political power, this is because rates of registration and voting are abnormally low. And while gerrymandering is a problem, it "was not invented to keep blacks underrepresented." Again, the conclusion: blacks are not victims of some unusual system of oppression as suggested by the internal colonialism model.

Why then, in 1971, are blacks so mired in problems? Some of Glazer's answer has already been insinuated: blacks lack the political acumen of the Irish, the business enterprise of the Jews, and the ingenuity and perseverance of the Chinese and Japanese. Although Glazer tiptoes through his argument, no doubt fearful that he will be accused of resorting to ethnic and racial stereotypes, the gist of his argument is clear: much of the blame for economic stagnation among blacks has to do with blacks themselves, specifically with cultural deficiencies that prevent them from following in the footsteps of earlier waves of immigrants.

Glazer even takes issue with Gans's contention that, because of a secular decline in blue-collar jobs, blacks migrating to Northern cities encountered a far less favorable structure of opportunity than immigrants had in earlier decades. Unskilled jobs have declined, Glazer writes, but so have the number of people competing for these jobs: "the fact that many jobs for the unskilled are not filled shows that there has not been a substantial decline in the ratio of jobs to applicants." What accounts for the high levels of black unemployment? First, because of social programs, "fewer people are driven to unpleasant and low-paying jobs by the need to feed their families." And second, "Expectations have changed, and fewer blacks or whites today will accept a life at menial labor with no hope for advancement, as their fathers and older brothers did and as European immigrants did."

ALL OF GLAZER'S SOPHISTRY WAS DRIVEN BY A SINGLE PURPOSE: to refute the claim that the black experience has been fundamentally different from that of immigrants, assuming one begins the comparison at the point that blacks arrive in northern cities. But this proviso asks us to disregard two centuries of slavery and another century of Jim Crow, and to pretend that history began in New York City in the 1950s when white liberals worked with black leaders to pass some ineffectual ordinances banning housing discrimination. In another leap of faith, Glazer asks us to construe today's urban ghetto as merely a temporary way-station on the road to some suburban mecca. Only by constructing these preposterous premises, and ignoring massive evidence to the contrary, does Glazer reach his conclusion that "the gap between the experience of the worst off of the white ethnic groups and the blacks is *one of degree rather than kind*."

Since Glazer has essentially defined internal colonialism out of existence, and redefined blacks to be latter-day immigrants, he is sanguine about the future: "It is possible to see the position of blacks in northern cities in ethnic terms, that is, to see them as the last of the major groups, badly off at present, but due to rise in time to larger shares of wealth and power and influence." Without "unique and extreme measures to end black deprivation."

I have devoted considerable space to Glazer's criticism of Blauner for two reasons. First, Glazer was one of the preeminent scholars of race and ethnicity during the years spanning the black protest movement, and as a frequent contributor to *Commentary* and other liberal journals, his influence reached far beyond the academy. Second, Glazer's rejoinder to Blauner serves as an apt ex-

ample of how the old guard responded to the challenge to their cherished assumptions. One can marvel at the mental gymnastics that Glazer employed — his artful hairsplitting, his evasions, his circumlocutions, his waffling, and his devious manipulation of facts — in an effort to parry the compelling arguments advanced by Blauner and others, all the while pretending to be a “friend of the Negro.”

Just as black insurgency produced a scholarship of confrontation, the ensuing white backlash eventually produced “a scholarship of backlash.” Glazer deserves the dubious distinction of being in the vanguard of a liberal retreat from the positions that were advanced in the 60s and early 70s, but he was not alone. In an ironic reversal of the pattern observed for the scholarship of confrontation, the scholarship of backlash began with an older generation of scholars who, like Glazer, anteceded the “radical 60s” and bided their time until they could launch a counterattack and reclaim their earlier preeminence. Gradually, a younger generation of scholars joined the stream, including a new genre of “black conservatives,” and the retreat — at first halting — broke into a full-scale rout. Emboldened by the praise and institutional rewards heaped upon them, these writers stepped up the effort to “get beyond civil rights” and to discredit the core tenets of the scholarship of confrontation. No longer would the focus of attention be on societal structures that engender and maintain glaring racial inequalities. Once again, the focus of blame for the tangle of problems that beset black America would be placed on blacks themselves.

This essay is an adaptation of a chapter in Stephen Steinberg's Turning Back: The Retreat from Racial Justice in American Thought and Policy to be published by Beacon Press in September.

Pages from Labor History

Paul Buhle

TREMORS FROM THE BAL HARBOUR, FLORIDA, WINTER CONVENTION of the AFL-CIO chiefs, Feb.20-23, reverberate throughout the labor movement. Perhaps, as in the case of most earthquakes, they presage nothing particularly dramatic — in the short run. Or, as one hears tiresomely often in California, we just may be approaching the Big One. Organized labor has slipped so far downward and the prospects for recuperation grown so distant that nothing less than dramatic changes can avoid the marginality into which the AFL-CIO has increasingly tended.

We have, then, reached an eminently logical moment for large-scale reconsideration, and not only because of the crisis at hand. The contemporary state of organized labor has never quite so clearly recalled its distant origins, nor put the various questions of internationalism so plainly on the table. A long view of history should help, as much as history ever can.

For the first time since 1894, when Samuel Gompers lost his presidency of the young AFL for a year, it looks as if a president may be compelled to stand down. In the chain-of-command logic which has governed since Gompers, such a thing is almost unimaginable. Unlike the father of business unionism, who was the leading representative of a rising class (albeit rising, often enough, as the craft supervisors of the unskilled workforce), the current dynasty is tottering in every sense. The success of NAFTA and the defeat of the Striker Replacement bill in the last congressional session, followed the crushing Republican triumph of this Congress, exploding the claims of President Lane Kirkland to take care of business through political muscle. Labor Party rumblings, especially noticeable in parts of the Midwest and far West, are further symptoms of widespread and almost desperate disillusion with traditional reliance upon business unionism-as-usual.¹

Officials of the teamsters, coal miners, autoworkers, machinists and government workers now lead a bloc warning Kirkland either to retire or be retired. If democratic elections were a regular part of AFL-CIO procedure, dissidents would reportedly need only an additional 40,000 votes among the 13.3 million AFL-CIO members to carry the day. Hanging onto

PAUL BUHLE's latest works include a picture-book with the collaboration of Edmund Sullivan, *Images of American Radicalism* (Christopher Publishing House) and in collaboration with Edward-Rice-Maximin, a biographical volume, *William Appleman Williams: The Tragedy of Empire* (Routledge).

the machinery, Kirkland — according to a Chicago Tribune reporter “unusually bitter” — remains unwilling to recognize himself as a liability.

A BUSINESSMAN'S SON WHO STEPPED OUT OF THE MERCHANT MARINE with vague labor credentials and went on to write speeches for Harry Truman's famed guns-and-butter presidential campaign of 1948, Kirkland eased his way up the ranks of Cold War labor bureaucracy through political contacts and constant maneuvering. In that sense, the reputed art collector and cigarette-holder-bearing CEO has represented his era just as perfectly as George Meany, the stogie-puffing pork-chopper from the construction trades, personally symbolized the time of purges and political retreat.²

Framed in the Byzantine conflicts of executives, themselves carrying CEO-level salaries and maintaining only the most distant relations with ordinary members, questions of principle are likely to be blurred. Indeed, Kirkland faced down his opponents for the time being with a tart reminder that changing horses mid-stream would be bad public relations (and no doubt also set a bad precedent). But the issues won't go away, and even cautious conservatives seek self-preservation. Leaders with an ounce of progressive spirit know that the time for correction is passing fast.

The usual measurements of falling percentages of the workforce, diminishing political clout, and growing public disapprobation reveal the Kirkland's years (1979-present) to be uniquely depressing for American labor. Numbers and percentages were smaller at earlier times but the promise of organization lay ahead in industrial America. The nostalgia for a better past, the spirit of current defeat and a bleaker future have never been so pervasive.

The defeat has its own internal causes, whatever the change of laws and of post-industrial economics. As Kim Moody has sharply observed, the earlier breakdown of pattern bargaining into round after round of concessions during the 1960s and after, met the growing aggressiveness of corporations with precisely the wrong message.³ Signaling in advance that unions had little inclination to fight for the prerogatives of long-standing members, let alone organize fast-growing sections of the workforce such as women and racial minorities, labor leaders foreclosed in advance the path of solidarity with broad social movements which had made the CIO (and in another age, the IWW and even the AFL) possible. Canadian and Western European unions meanwhile fended off the blows of automation, outsourcing and generalized deindustrialization with a significant degree of success, at least compared to their American counterparts. Counting instead upon influence in the Democratic Party, Kirkland and his allies repeatedly insisted that a more favorable political climate would make union renewal virtually inevitable. The collapse of the Democrats, liberal and conservative alike, left them not a leg to stand on.

EVEN THIS LINE OF CRITICISM, WITH ALL ITS ACUITY, threatens to obscure the deeper mind-set and the particular internationalist perspective in which the inheritors of a vast bureaucratic machinery envisioned themselves anything but colossal failures. Their strategies for the end of the century and beyond had been generations in the making, but took on definitive shape during the Vietnam War. Labor leaders had always been doubtful friends of civil rights: eager to take credit for

legislative gains, they were unwilling to clean their own houses of discriminatory unions, and positively eager to cooperate with the Red Squads and F.B.I. to eliminate the strongest supporters and bravest field-workers of black rights, i.e., those leftists viewed as subversives and potential rivals. But by the later 1960s, top labor officials lined up solidly against a popular social movement equivalent to abolitionism, populism, industrial unionism or any other of the past—the struggle to halt the U.S. war on Vietnam.

They did so in part because they saw slipping away the last chance at a “realignment” of the Democratic Party, a vision of liberals, civil right activists and labor grasping the leadership of the nation. It was a mistake to imagine that social idealism could somehow be combined with a bloody imperial adventure, but a mistake that they could not avoid. According to the world-view of George Meany, the fate of humanity rested upon the predominance of white Western Europe and the United States, within the world scheme. Very much like Henry Kissinger, whom the more hawkish labor leaders greatly admired, the need for military victory in Vietnam was viewed as a matter of steely resolve. Besides, the Cold War’s military spinoffs had long since become a necessary part of the union apparatus, with well-paying jobs linked to congressional power-brokers simultaneously collecting industry’s political contributions and labor’s votes. The anti-war movement raised uncomfortable doubts about the underlying premises.

Popular movements and armed revolts against U.S.-backed regimes in Africa, Asia and Latin America would have been viewed with adamant hostility in any case, irrespective of their political coding. The aim of AFL-CIO international programs had always been to promote a loyal labor component to the junior partners of U.S. foreign policy and business arrangements. Even a cautious anti-colonialism, during the various emerging independence struggles, was intended to replace sinking European powers with rising American influence. Any threats to repatriate U.S. corporate holdings or to jump ship from the U.S. clients list signalled an unendurable interference with what is euphemistically called “free trade unionism,” setting in motion intelligence operations usually involving, and sometimes highlighting, AFL-CIO affiliates and operatives (as in Guyana in 1962, or Chile in 1973).

In the war of words, Meany’s staff endlessly dwelt upon the absence of Western-style labor rights in Communist regimes. But they had themselves indirectly supported (as their affiliates took part in) so many instances of human rights violations that the standard rhetoric offered only the thin smoke screen of congressional hearings. It was good for appropriations — and especially from the early Kennedy years onward, the funds flowed to foreign clients of AFL-CIO selection — but no one took it very seriously.⁴

The election of 1972 decisively shuffled the political cards. With the defeat of Hubert Humphrey, the dream of a popular reform alliance faded definitively. The circle around George Meany opened a new door by reviling George McGovern, a spokesman for everything they hated about the 1960s: peaceniks, feminists, homosexuals and environmentalists. Their ideal candidate, “the Senator from Boeing” Henry Jackson, was more than a Vietnam Hawk and a vulgar weapons-lobbyist for his largest campaign contributors. Amid the ignominious defeat of his nominating drive, he became the symbol of the labor leadership’s hard-right spiritual secession.

A handful of the most prominent AFL-CIO intellectual allies and intelli-

gence-linked political operatives, including Sidney Hook and Max Kampelman, shifted directly into the Nixon camp. Another wing set itself upon the recapture of the Democrats from above. Discomfited by the Watergate atmosphere and the defeat in Vietnam, they looked for a way back in via Jimmy Carter and his labor secretary, Ray Marshall (himself perhaps the last of the classic lib-lab figures ever to occupy that status inasmuch as no future secretary, Republican or Democrat, would believe in the necessity of unions). Even before Carter's 1980 defeat, the new AFL-CIO regime had set in place a bridge with the New Right. The emerging powers of Republican conservatism, like Jesse Helms, felt only contempt for old-fashioned labor causes; but in the wide spectrum of foreign affairs, from Afghanistan to the Middle East to Nicaragua, the Meany staff's successors found an ally and a friend. Neo-conservative operatives, drawing the two sides closer with heavily-financed thinktank events and privileged access to the media, promised to defang the Old Right's anti-Semitism while discrediting feminism and affirmative action by substituting a fresh vision of meritocracy for time-worn New Deal egalitarianism.

THE ELECTION OF RONALD REAGAN BROUGHT ANOTHER NEW ERA to labor. The firing of the PATCO strikers and the 1981 Solidarity March on Washington stirred a memorable response from labor's lower and middle layers. So did the King Memorial March in 1983. But these developments were short-lasting and superficial compared to shifts taking place at the top. From 1980 onward, international spending by the AFL-CIO exceeded its domestic budget and for good reason. When congressional prohibitions of aid to the Contras prompted a shift into privatized diplomacy, the AFL-CIO apparatus leaped into the breach, often in partnership with agencies of Israel's conservative Likud government.

Defeated more and more completely at home, the modern labor movement had seemingly found its new mission, and also its Fifth Column within. The rallying of leftish labor support and labor education community groups during the 1970s-80s underlined the persistence of idealists into new generations. Here, if anywhere, could be found the pure hearts and able minds for organizing the unorganized. But in the view from Washington, the mobilization of the very same milieux in solidarity with Central American revolutionary movements branded the participants no allies at all, but intolerable subversives.

Through intermediaries in Jeane Kirkpatrick's United Nations office, the intelligence services and the new National Endowment for Democracy, labor's foreign policy apparatus raked off unprecedented subsidies for the AFL-CIO's general day-to-day operation.⁵ As Beth Sims detailed in *Workers of the World Undermined*, Freedom House and the AIFLD paid their dues by putting together aid packages and personnel for the Contra Lobby in Congress, fronting the ominous PRODEMCA which Americas Watch described as the "kiss of death for independent organizations inside Nicaragua." Using moneys from Ollie North's illegal projects to fund pro-Contra media projects at home, PRODEMCA arranged tours of Contra base camps for U.S. politicians and academics.

Like so much in the Central American controversy, this was a Vietnam replay, with the returning dignitaries revisiting the State Department's Truth Squads of the middle 60s, sneering at local peaceniks — including the very folks so often seen on labor's picketlines. But, of course, this time the U.S. proxies finally won. Revelations of flagrant human right abuses, and grassroots labor

agitation against some of the most outrageous engagements — such as support for other of Jeane Kirkpatrick's favorite causes like the apartheid South African government's client terrorists in Mozambique and Angola, and Chief Buthelezi's pet labor federation in South Africa — prompted more AFL-CIO secrecy but no change of course.⁶

In retrospect, the growth of the AFL-CIO as an intelligence "asset" might be said to have grown in direct proportion to its collapse and disgrace as an organized labor movement. As several observers have noted, out of 15 industrialized countries, only three others have seen a fall in the percentage of organized workers since 1980, and none so sharply as in the U.S. It had already played its last major card, the organization of professionals such as teachers, during 1965-75. Subsequent, modest growth of other government employees and service workers seemed hardly more than a trickle compared to those lost by way of automation, relocation and decertification.⁷

The memories of unions as something other than job agencies and special interests steadily (if never entirely) faded. A whole new generation, as Nick Salvatore observed, grew up without unions on hand in any significant way.⁸ Unable by now even to imagine the social movement required to bring the new working force of clerical and retail workers, legal and illegal immigrants into union ranks, the great unions of the 1930s lost interest. "Solidarity," the watchword of past success, meant little anyway, in the day of two-tier contracts and diminishing younger members.

FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF KIRKLAND AND HIS SUBORDINATES, this eventuality was surely regretted — although bursts of uncontrolled enthusiasm from below would hardly have been welcomed either — but helped frame the largest if also the most perverse vision of labor leadership in generations. Wherever Communism could be rolled back and anti-imperialism crushed, a vacuum of power would perforce exist in the labor field. With the necessary funds and the support of powerful Americans from Helms to New Democrats, the AFL-CIO would be on hand to take its long-deserved share of the spoils. The sun would never set upon the glory of the Executive Committee. No labor movement from a tiny Pacific atoll to Guatemala City to Gdansk would dare to challenge capital without the approval of the Washington labor headquarters and no one, but no one, would be foolish enough to resist the finality of the basic market social arrangements.

Admittedly, this program had very limited success in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The AFL-CIO's pet organizations had never been much more than fronts for U.S. diplomacy, supporting pro-American businessmen and officials far more energetically than their own members' needs. They made headway mostly through techniques any oldtime observer of labor racketeering would recognize: bribery, threats and eliminating the competition. More important, labor leaders like bankers generally chose not to stake an overall international strategy on unstable regions and Third World peoples, good to neutralize but evidently destined for poverty and anti-Western resentments. As a Swedish labor official once disclosed to me after an Asian tour, the local reps of the Asian American Free Labor Institute (launched in 1968 to function as the AFL-CIO's supporting arm for U.S. policies in Vietnam) have had a strange way, in country after country, of turning out to work for the so-called human rights officials of the regimes whose worse-than-questionable policies they were supposed to be investigating. Scarcely any-

one back home ever learned such details (or cared) about places where villagers opposing dams or population resettlement plans “disappeared” on a regular basis. But no one could fairly expect a membership out of this mess.

Internationalism AFL-CIO style might yet work among certain Europeans, however, given a massive collapse of Communist regimes and an equally massive injection of funds. AFL-CIO strategists regarded the transformation of Polish Solidarity from a workers’ movement to a pro-business political organization as a valuable case in point, even if their own apparatus had been unable to take hold (and their favored political figures unable to restrain a severe decline in the standard of living for ordinary Poles). Since 1989, this strategy has arguably become the AFL-CIO’s foreign policy *raison d’être*. Or at least Lane Kirkland has operated as if it were.

Indeed, some of Kirkland’s bitterest internal critics complain that he is increasingly a stranger to his Washington suites. He spends most of his time in Europe, seeking to create a vast “business unionism” in Russia and Eastern Europe at large. If successful this would at once seal in institutional loyalty to the “American system” of private capital, and ensure an affiliated international membership large and comprehensive enough to pull the dwindling U.S. unions back from the brink. With the European franchise alone, the AFL-CIO would have achieved, in a certain measure, what American mainstream labor leaders have sought for generations: the respect and fear-provoking influence of power-brokers near the center of the future world economy.

Judged more realistically, this is a mad scheme. As the Kennedy Administration’s Alliance for Progress was based upon the phantom of a vast Latin American middle class able to live like U.S. consumers within economies choked with suffering masses, so the Kirkland plan is first of all based upon the false vision of a world able to produce and profit without regard to ecological limits. Secondly, it presumes that the eradication of Communism will prompt business to welcome or at least tolerate unions in the familiar Euro-American tradition, when the last 20 years point toward labor force downsizing and union-busting. Thirdly, it demands a level of stability in Eastern Europe, especially the Soviet Union, nowhere in prospect.

BUT THIS MENTALITY HAS DEEP SOURCES IN THE EXPERIENCES of American labor leadership going far back beyond the days of Meany, his former rivals in the CIO and even Meany’s predecessor, the now-forgotten mediocrity, William Green. In the later decades of the 19th century, as social and labor historians reconstruct the scene, the basic strategy had already been set in place by the shape of class, gender and above all, race relations. Sad to say, some early Marxists had a melancholy role in its formation.

The story can be traced conveniently back to the organization of the First International’s American branches and the rivalries that broke out almost immediately. A conglomerate of forces, the First International represented, from the Marxist standpoint first of all, a German immigrant cohort. A large handful of immigrant union activists, including a young Samuel Gompers, learned their socialist doctrine and imbibed the stern necessity to subordinate everything — including the socialist politics that framed labor’s rise across Europe — to craft union organization.⁹

The International experienced its share of family quarrels nearly everywhere

it found a following. But the unique setting of post-Civil War America found the unionists in coalition with the veterans of various reform movements, from abolitionism and woman's rights to the "spiritualists" seeking their own supernatural versions of utopian socialism. The explosion of the Paris Commune, and the rapid economic downturn which created widespread misery among the urban unemployed (in New York, notably the Irish) added to the volatility of the situation. To oversimplify the story, the leaders of the German immigrant socialists chose to jettison the entire reform movement and to avoid as much as possible the public drama which continually pitted various radicals against New York City's authorities. They did so eliciting Karl Marx's consent along the way.

To be charitable, they did not grasp that the moment for labor in alliance with massive and socialist-connected movements of equal rights of women and minorities was being lost for generations. To be somewhat less charitable, they did not take Radical Reconstruction in the South, black rights and feminism in the North, with any degree of seriousness. Only labor's organization counted.

Confident in his own way of an approaching world proletarian revolution, Marx regarded specific forms of national and racial oppression mainly as impediments to self-conscious activity of the industrial working class itself. Not that he brushed aside human misery. He knew perfectly well that so long as labor remained fixated in its superiority to an oppressed people, it would remain unable and perhaps even unwilling to free itself. But in his correspondence with his American supporters, he clearly treated the largely agrarian, southern workforce black and white as distinctly secondary, women's issues in themselves incidental.¹⁰ He could not imagine a different approach toward socialism, trained by the complex legacy of the world labor market and by the militant republicanism of the various radical, egalitarian movements.

Marx's lieutenants went this view one better. Precisely because they regarded other struggles as mere diversions, they scorned various efforts to press the inclusion of women, blacks, Mexican-Americans or Chinese in the labor and social struggles. "Out of the chaos of radicalism and revolutionary phraseology," as Gompers put it, emerged practical aims entirely hostile to such a revolutionary path. For Gompers' cigarmakers, the straightest path to success lay in white solidarity specifically through banning Chinese-made goods. For the AFL as a whole, limitation and control of the labor market was the necessary means to ensure a better life for its craft union members.

Only for a few moments did this strategy falter. The Knights of Labor and a movement of "revolutionary socialists" (sometimes they called themselves anarchists) posed solidarity once again in the middle 1880s, as they briefly reached a half-million strong. The participation of African Americans, and women (Chinese were still excluded), and the massive participation of Irish-Americans at the bottom of the white workforce, helped make the Knights a broad republican movement which challenged the very concept of wage-labor. Like the Populists a decade later, with their brave bi-racialism and their avowal to overthrow monopoly, the Knights failed. The AFL triumphed over the corpse of radical, multi-racial reformism.

This generalization should not disguise the presence of deeply humanist, even anti-racist voices within the AFL and especially its socialist-inclined sector. The idealism of the German immigrant craftsmen, losing their crafts to changing technology but certain of an egalitarian socialist future, could stand for much; so

could Eugene Debs himself, a product of the Locomotive Firemen's union who outgrew his craft labor origins. But Italian-American IWW activist Joe Ettor, looking back on the 19th century, was by no means entirely mistaken in claiming that after the Knights of Labor, the American working class proper had no labor movement of its own at all.¹¹ The AFL had been a movement of labor aristocrats which a relatively small number of non-aristocrats were permitted to join.

Socialists who fought a backstairs struggle against Gompers during the 1890s and briefly unseated him were invariably described as "anti-union." Some of them (notably the Socialist Labor Party leader, Daniel DeLeon) who attempted to establish alternatives to the AFL also sought to impose upon unionists political conditions more severe than Gompers, who generally tolerated non-rivals. But at their most clear-minded, these critics discerned which way craft labor's leaders tended. At their best, they set a contrary example by embracing the Chinese, the African Americans, the Filipinos and Cubans attacked abroad by U.S. imperial legions, as they pointed toward a new and broader internationalism needed for labor at home.¹²

After the turn of the century, the followers of Eugene Debs often rationalized that Gompers only represented the immature mentality of the American worker, and his kind would pass with the necessary political education that would accompany class struggle. They were, as we know, badly mistaken. The erosion of craft labor's skills and the passing of an old generation hardened the encrusted layers of bureaucracy.

The opportunity for rapid growth of the Federation, during World War I, fixed the modern approach of lock-step support for international objectives on the one hand, and lock-step support for government repression of domestic dissidents on the other. President Woodrow Wilson's Administration, which plundered the environment, took U.S. forces first into Mexico and then Europe (putting aside the various small-scale interventions into the Caribbean and Latin America), asserted altogether the style of democracy which pleased labor leaders: the open door for American markets, and the closed door upon revolutionary alternatives.

DESPITE ALL THE CHALLENGES MOUNTED ALONG THE WAY, the perspectives set by Gompers a century ago endure. Perhaps, as historian William Appleman Williams suggested decades ago, labor leaders simply shared a broad upper (and middle) class national consensus that with sufficient economic expansion, all social problems can be solved or at least satisfactorily postponed for a future generation.¹³ The military Keynesianism with which the nation had left behind the Great Depression seemingly raised no problems beyond sheer waste and possible nuclear war. The utilization of military funds to create job-killing automation, such as containerization in the longshore industry, was hardly noticed or passed off as inevitable. Despite their claims, American unionists have never been much interested in the future beyond the span of their own careers.

For labor leaders, like other once-powerful figures marginalized by recent turns in the world and national economies, the past has finally caught up — with a vengeance. As James O'Connor has observed, the nation-state which in this century has so thoroughly imposed itself upon social classes and civil society in various forms, East and West, North and South, is now in something approaching a terminal crisis. Somewhere in the economic crisis of the 1970s, the various bureaucracies seem to have exhausted their purpose and their appeal. Beyond

that point lay the unknown — and what we have since learned is chilling.

The movement to deregulate economic affairs and hence remove the costs of social welfare (or environmental protection) from the realm of business' obligations has swept the world before it. The sacrifice of the ends to the means, in Eduard Bernstein's famous phrase, or devout loyalty to capitalism's engine of profit and production, has not been rewarded. (Nor, of course, has the effort to substitute the State and its servants for capital or the self-governing of citizens.)¹⁴

Looking back a quarter-century or so to an era of promised reforms East and West, the determination to protect existing institutions at any cost may be seen as fatal equally to the popular forces seeking more direct democratic forms and to the functionaries in power. Simply grasping this historical development helps place any future labor effort, especially now when so little of the previous legitimacy remains. The task of the day, to engage cynical and disillusioned but angry working people in the tasks of rebuilding unions and taking on their employers in alliance with environmentalists, feminists and others, is now the only thing left worth trying.

A fascinating moment unfolds before us along just these lines, simultaneously at the microlevel of bureaucratic maneuvering and at the broader level of potential mass labor revival. Will Kirkland's old Cold War allies with some possibility of personal independence — such as SEIU leader John Sweeny — detach themselves from his failing machine, or will they so fear the alternative that they circle the wagons with the strictly hardcore intelligence assets like Albert Shanker and the bricklayers' John Joyce? Could miners' leader Rich Trumka, with a small enough union to seem unthreatening as a maximum leader, slip through the barriers of rampant mutual jealousies to replace Kirkland or a lameduck interim successor like the colorless Thomas Donohue? Can teamsters' leader Ron Carey, facing a tough re-election campaign, play a major role in all this? And most of all: what chance will the ordinary union member (to say nothing of the unorganized worker) have to join the struggle? Good questions. No answers so far.

Whatever happens in the next year or two, the game is not ended. The appearance of new forms of resistance is certain, and the globalization of struggle has become a distinct imperative as never before. In that circumstance, institutional stability is no longer guaranteed. In a society which in certain key respects more and more resembles its reckless 19th century predecessor, labor could also begin again. Like Knights of Labor leader Terence Powderly, like National Labor Union leader William Sylvis before him, it may even appeal for real solidarity, and curse the wage system as the mark of modern slavery.

NOTES

1. According to insiders, Kirkland outraged erstwhile supporters by being absent from the job, off in Europe, when a Congressional vote or two might have swayed the Striker Replacement bill.

2. Actually, Kirkland might best be seen as a combination of Meany and his longtime aide, former Communist leader Jay Lovestone, who personally effected the permanent role of the intelligence community in labor's inner circles. See Stephen Franklin, "Kirkland feels heat to quit," *Chicago Tribune*, Feb. 26, 1995. See also "Big Unions Have Enough Votes to Force Kirkland to Resign," *The Labor Educator*, IV (Jan.-Feb., 1995). *The Educator*, published by Harry Kelber, is always a useful guide to internal doings of the bureau-

cracy; only *Labor Notes* is more indispensable.

3. See Kim Moody, *An Injury to All: The Decline of American Unionism* (London: Verso, 1988), an argument that runs through the book in various forms.

4. See the useful observations in Beth Sims, *Workers of the World Undermined: American Labor's Role in U.S. Foreign Policy* (Boston: South End Press, 1997); and Daniel Cantor and Juliet Schor, *Tunnel Vision: Labor, the World Economy, and Central America* (Boston: South End, 1987).

5. Beth Sims is especially good on these questions: see *Workers of the World Undermined*, Ch.1-4.

6. Sims, *Workers of the World Undermined*, 49-50.

7. See for example, David Brody, "Breakdown of Labor's Social Contract," *Dissent*, Winter, 1992, 32-41.

8. Nick Salvatore, "The Decline of Labor," *ibid.*, 86-93.

9. The following narrative relies heavily upon a new and extremely important historical study: a dissertation by Timothy Messer-Kruse, "The Yankee International: Marxism and the American Reform Tradition, 1831-1876" University of Wisconsin, 1995. By demystifying the character and continuing radicalism of the Yankee radicals after the Civil War, Messer-Kruse has cleared up scholarly controversies decades old. Mari Jo Buhle, *Women and American Socialism* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1981), Ch. 1, is also useful in this regard.

10. Messer-Kruse points out that the political position of Marx cannot be simply reduced to that of his American lieutenants, who dismissed "bourgeois" reform movements out of hand. He often, if not always, identified "democracy" with the advance of the proletariat. But in encouraging his followers to seek proletarian constituencies in the U.S., he showed little interest in African Americans or women as positive sources of revolutionary possibility. See Messer-Kruse, "The Yankee International," 255-61.

11. Joseph Ettor, in *Il Proletario*, May 3, 1913.

12. Messer-Kruse particularly points to former Yankee Internationalists who formed the Chinese Suffrage Association to resist the racist exclusion of the Chinese, to the former Internationalists in the Knights of Labor who urged universalism, and especially their presence in Knights' District Assembly 49, widely and inaccurately described in various accounts as "anti-unionist." Messer-Kruse, "The Yankee International," 383-85.

13. William A. Williams, *Contours of American History* (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1961), described this phenomenon but his comments on labor are scattered in his works and best drawn together in Paul Buhle and Edward Rice-Maximin, *The Tragedy of Empire: William Appleman Williams*.

14. James O'Connor, "Twentieth Century Limited: Capital, Labor and Bureaucracy in the Age of Nationalism," *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, #5 (Sept., 1994), 4, 14.

The Great Divide: The Enlightenment and its Critics

Stephen Eric Bronner

MAX WEBER ALREADY ENVISIONED THE SPIRIT OF ENLIGHTENMENT “irretrievably fading” and a world in which there would remain only “specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart.”¹ But he was bitter about this development, which places him in marked contrast to much of contemporary opinion. The Enlightenment, of course, always had its critics. Beginning with the Restoration of 1815 and the new philosophical reaction to the French Revolution, however, they were almost exclusively political — if not necessarily cultural — adherents of the right: intelligent conservatives committed to organic notions of development like Edmund Burke, elitists seeking a return to the sword and the robe like Joseph de Maistre, racists intent on viewing world history as a battle between arynes and Jews like Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and apocalyptic prophets of doom like Oswald Spengler.

Interestingly enough, however, a critique of the Enlightenment has now become part of the philosophical and polemical stock in trade of many on the left. It comes in various guises: post-modernists consider the Enlightenment as “essentialist,” radical feminists view it as “male,” advocates of former colonies often disparage it as “Eurocentric” or white. Communitarians condemn its individualism, religious zealots bemoan its skepticism, populists castigate its intellectualism, and traditionalists decry its rejection of experience as the criterion of truth. Dogmatic Marxists dismiss the Enlightenment as “bourgeois,” anarchists are repelled by its emphasis on the state, and ecologists by its unwavering belief in science and technology. Even certain followers of the Frankfurt School still view the Enlightenment as the unwitting source of modern totalitarianism.

LEFT CRITICS OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT FORM A MOTLEY CREW and, perhaps, this reflects the current disarray of progressive forces. But there is something that, ultimately, binds all of them: a basic rejection of what Carlo Rosselli, the great Italian martyr to anti-fascism, called “liberal socialism.”² And this is precisely where the problem emerges. The Enlightenment generated various paralyzing ideas of mechanical materialism and historical teleology. Many of its proponents identified the increase in scientific knowledge with progress per se while, argu-

STEPHEN ERIC BRONNER is a professor of political science at Rutgers University and a member of the New Politics editorial board.

ably, others threw a representational straightjacket over art and literature. Even in the realm of political theory, which is the issue here, its emphasis on abstract universal precepts of "reason" and the egoistic individual along with not just the "right" to property, but the right to employ it without any regard to the public interest, has led to much disillusionment with the legacy of the Enlightenment in general and liberalism in particular. But, while criticisms are easy to make, none of the critics have been able to develop an alternative set of principles with which to inform a genuinely progressive politics. Indeed, there is hardly a single ideal of the left, which does not derive from the Enlightenment.

Political democracy, economic equality, and cultural internationalism are its legacy. Its philosophers informed every subsequent emancipatory movement of those whom Ernst Bloch called "the lowly and the insulted." Perhaps certain anti-Enlightenment philosophers influenced particular thinkers on the left and given Enlightenment ideas were employed by some conservative movement or another. But the world is not quite so "contingent" as the postmodernists would have it. Weber was correct when he spoke about the "elective affinity" existing between particular theories and given forms of practice. Enlightenment philosophy was, in fact, *primarily* embraced by the labor movement and those seeking liberal political reforms while its critics inspired the great movements of right-wing reaction.

Contemporary reactionaries understand all this better than the left — and they are willing to draw the consequences. Stalinism and the failure of the Soviet experiment obviously leads them to call for the liquidation of Marxism *tout court*. But since the events of 1917 were based on the French Revolution, which itself was inspired by "Voltaire's bastards," they now find it necessary to contest the values of 1789 and the great critic of injustice as well. Even this, however, is not enough. For, insofar as these developments were informed by the American and the English Revolutions, it is also necessary to take the next step and transform the meaning of these events by identifying their real importance with *laissez-faire* capitalism and a society based on law and compromise. The result is, in keeping with the practical emergence of a new conservatism, a new ideological attack on the Enlightenment and the political legacy of what R.R. Palmer called the "age of the democratic revolution."

There is no contradiction in neo-conservative theory between the instrumental rationalism of its free-market assumptions, its social darwinism, and its willingness to exploit populist sentiments regarding "family values," "creationism," and various forms of prejudice. Atavism and a rejection of the radical implications generated by the Enlightenment legacy bind these tendencies of neo-conservatism together. If its irrational populism contrasts with the rationalist tenets of liberalism, for example, its employment of classical "liberal" political economy and social darwinism short-circuits the commitment to equality and tolerance. Thus, the conservative project evidences a coherence and sense of purpose sorely lacking on the contemporary left.

Talk about introducing what Richard Rorty has called a "new language" for the left has been going on for more than 25 years. But, especially with the introduction of notions like "ethno-solidarity," the promise loses its radical quality. The real issue is not the *language* anyway. It is rather what the left has to say: what aims it projects, what values it embraces, and whether it can render meaningful judgments on its enemies and itself.

Advocates of Enlightenment values may have to make compromises with movements willing to embrace reactionary assumptions about "experience" or racial particularism or anti-intellectual populism in any number of practical struggles. Religion offers a case in point. Martin Luther King, Desmond Tutu, Jean-Baptiste Aristide, all used religious symbolism and institutions to further the fight for Enlightenment ideals. Theory never mechanically translates into practice and often, in the process, loses its coherence. But this does not make the quest for theoretical coherence any the less important. Quite the contrary. The past shows how important it is to recognize such contingent philosophical or political compromises for what they are rather than as "necessary" steps toward a utopian goal. It is a matter of the left becoming able to criticize its practical and theoretical shortcomings in relation to the ideals it projects. Nevertheless, this presupposes clarity about the cluster of *political* values informing liberalism and socialism.

The fights between "liberals" and "socialists" have, of course, often been bitter. But the three great issues of contention have essentially been overcome. Modern liberals have now generally embraced substantive notions of equality and mitigated their original views concerning the unqualified "private" character of property and the repressive nature of an activist state. For their part, especially with the added impetus of 1989, socialists now recognize more than ever the political value of the liberal inheritance and the dangers inherent in unaccountable forms of planning. Differences surely still exist regarding issues like class and the individual or the role of markets against the need for socialization. Nevertheless, these all pale in the face of what has become the most dramatic conservative offensive since McCarthyism.

A cluster of common ideological concerns underpin both progressive politics and the socialist project. The excesses created by privatization in the East and the introduction of what is perhaps best termed market populism in the West have drawn sharp political and ideological lines of division in practice. But theory has tended to ignore these developments. It has even become quite fashionable to talk about the obsolescence of "left" and "right."³ This is all the more unfortunate, of course, since such ideas are appearing precisely when the forces for liberal reform — let alone socialist change — are under siege as perhaps never before. And embracing right-wing ideas in order to further a left-wing project won't help either. Now, more than ever, political theory must distinguish left from right. Nevertheless, this is possible only by making reference to the core values deriving from what spawned the division between left and right in the first place: the Enlightenment.

The Liberal Inheritance

THE ENLIGHTENMENT IS USUALLY ASSOCIATED WITH FRANCE and especially its *philosophes* of the 18th century whose great names include Beaumarchais, Diderot, Laplace, Rousseau, and Voltaire. But this is mistaken. It began about a century earlier with figures like Descartes and Spinoza, and first coalesced in England around figures like Francis Bacon and Isaac Newton. The new thinking, however, spread quickly. Its impact was felt in Scotland by David Hume and Adam Smith and in the American colonies by Jefferson, Franklin, and Thomas Paine. It travelled to the Germany of Lessing and Mendelssohn, Kant and Hegel, Schiller

and Goethe. Even Spain, shrouded in the darkness of a feudal absolutism, experienced its effects through the remarkable group of intellectuals centering around the philosopher Olivares and the painter Goya.⁴ Its new values were spread in Latin America by Simon Bolivar and its spirit inspired Toussaint L'Ouverture.

The Enlightenment was, in short, a genuinely international phenomenon with a political and ideological dynamic whose core values derived from the burgeoning liberalism of the 17th century. Liberalism was connected with a revolutionary commitment to republicanism, tolerance, and experimentation. It gave the members of what would become the "third estate" a new sense of their rights and their dignity.⁵ Liberalism insisted on the separation of Church and state. It preoccupied itself, for this reason, with a secular response to the injustices suffered by the outsider and a new notion of ethical, rather than merely material progress. It sought to overcome prejudice and coercion in favor of a rational adjudication of grievances. Indeed, from the first, liberalism initiated the modern concern with constraining the arbitrary exercise of power on which any democratic form of socialism would have to build. Its presuppositions were generated in England by Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. They initially identified the public realm with "political society" or the state and the private realm with the interplay of particular interests and personal property in "civil society." They looked neither to history nor to religious dogma in order to legitimate what soon would become a new political worldview. Instead, they made certain abstract assumptions about human nature, identified them with the rising bourgeoisie, and drew the consequences for politics.

Thomas Hobbes described the hypothetical "state of nature" as a "war of each against all" while John Locke conceived of it as a rather poorly ordered existence of relatively well-intentioned persons concerned with property. The difference in their views of human nature was decisive for the degree of authority they provided the state. Both saw, however, the need for a new political order whose character would become determined by the people themselves under the auspices of a hypothetical social contract. Thus, the state received a new importance in theory around the very time it was becoming the predominant form of political organization in practice.

Capitalism is inconceivable without an "impartial" political form predicated on consent and capable of enforcing contracts in a consistent manner, which logically calls upon the new "state" to divorce itself from civil society. So, for both Hobbes and Locke, the state was conceived as utilitarian insofar as its primary purpose lay in buttressing law through sanctions and regulating the ruthless competition of the market by self-interested if responsible individuals. The concept of *raison d'état*, perhaps best articulated by Machiavelli, was not lacking. Nevertheless, ever more surely, it came into conflict with the new liberal emphasis on the consent of the governed.

Sovereignty gradually became identified with the universal citizenry or "the people." It occurred first with Hobbes whose more authoritarian tendencies render his work less an expression of liberalism than a transition to the new philosophy. He recognized that the monarch was no better or worse than his subjects and that political legitimation could rest neither on God nor blood. Hobbes had no use for revelation or prophecy as the criterion of truth. The state would, for this reason, remain fully sovereign over religious authorities in the public arena.

But Hobbes was content to legitimate the monarch only through a "social contract" in which everyone transferred all their rights to him. Thus, for all his support of absolutism, *Leviathan* was condemned precisely because it militated against the "divine right of kings" as well as the inherent superiority of the aristocrat.

Public now distinguishes itself from private existence. The state stands over and apart from the personal interests defining civil society while law becomes external to the individuals comprising the community. The possibility of impartial arbitration of grievances, in this way, presents itself. Anticipating Max Weber, the sovereign is depersonalized by Hobbes and identified with a "mechanism" or institution. Citizens surrender the right to punish offenses and to define the law as they arbitrarily see fit.⁶ But, in turn, they receive the security necessary in order to go about their business and preserve their lives from the imminent dangers associated with an ongoing condition of war. It was, for Hobbes, a rational exchange predicated on consent.

He saw the citizenry as calculating people who understood their own lives in the horrific state of nature as "nasty, poor, solitary, brutish, and short." It only made sense that they should consider the preservation of life, if not liberty, as their central concern. This meant obedience from the citizenry and the ability to command it by the state. Whether the state proved monarchical, aristocratic, or democratic was not the issue. Resistance could only prove legitimate if a person's life was directly in danger and revolution became valid only if the regime itself could no longer exercise authority to maintain the life of its citizens.

But, if only in the extreme instance, revolution gained legitimacy and the people their power. The first steps had been made. Hobbes, however, quickly tried to retreat. Anything which weakened the exercise of power became anathema to him and he opposed the ability of individuals to make claims against the state, the "division" of sovereignty or the separation of powers, the subjection of the sovereign to civil laws, and even the "absolute" right of private individuals to their property.⁷ Hobbes clearly wished to establish an identity between the sovereign and the source of sovereignty or, putting it in somewhat different terms, the representative of the people and the individuals of the community. Nevertheless, the self-interest of the individual understood in terms of self-preservation created the basis for undercutting this absolute identity just as the willingness of Hobbes to contest "experience" and tradition" opened the way for a new commitment to political experimentation.

PRESERVING THIS TENSION BETWEEN IDENTITY AND DIFFERENCE called for a new commitment to democratic experimentation. The question for the new liberalism of John Locke would now become how to maintain it in the face of traditional institutions, prejudice, and the power of vested interests without falling into the absolutism of Hobbes. The answer would come by an immanent criticism of the framework employed to justify the leviathan in the first place based on the recognition that the arbitrary power of the monarch ultimately undercuts the very security its citizens require.

The social contract was predicated on the idea that individuals have a rational stake in preserving order. The mistake Hobbes made, according to Locke, was in identifying this stake with self-preservation rather than property; thus, for example, *lèse majesté* serves as a constant and, in principle, unnecessary threat

to the freedom of each. Locke believed that, so long as citizenship was based on property, rational individuals would have no interest in creating disorder so long as they were left in peace to go about their business. Such is the assumption on which he would base his view that the state should engage in only the most important tasks and essentially leave “civil society” to run its course. It is not necessary for individuals to transfer *all* their rights to the sovereign. They should retain their right to “life, liberty, and property,” which would later receive a slightly different articulation in *The Declaration of Independence* as the right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

Absolutism was correctly understood by Locke as “inconsistent” with “civil society.”⁸ Its prerequisites were seen as interfering with the instrumental pursuit of private interests and, for this reason, liberal theory could no longer remain content with merely noting that sovereignty resides in the people. It would now have to deal with the accountability of the sovereign, which presupposes the ability of private individuals to make claims against the public authority. Because few sanctions are possible against an all-powerful centralized authority, however, Locke was led to anticipate Montesquieu’s idea of the “separation of powers” and emphasize the role of the legislature as well as the importance of a constitution wherein the various rights and duties of citizens are delineated.

Repression of individual opinion and the right to assembly lose their legitimacy. The liberal rule of law can now contest the arbitrary exercise of power by the state. Thus, Locke could write:

... *Freedom of Men under Government*, is, to have a standing Rule to live by, common to everyone of that Society, and made by the Legislative Power erected in it; A Liberty to follow my own will in all things where the Rule prescribes not; and not to be subject to the inconstant, uncertain, unknown, Arbitrary will of another Man.⁹

Reciprocity becomes the prerequisite for a genuinely liberal order. Each must have equal claims upon the state, the universal becomes the anchor of the particular, and formal identity the condition for the exercise of substantive difference. A universal right to opinion and assembly, in this vein, becomes the presupposition for any particular citizen to press a grievance or experiment with new possibilities in the face of popular prejudices. Atheists and Catholics and women, for very different reasons, had no place in his vision. Here is an example of how liberals did not extend the immanent logic of their own universal principles.

But, for all that, tolerance assumes a value in its own right. This becomes clear in Locke’s justly famous *Letter on Toleration* and not merely because it opposes dogmatism but also because tolerance is the only “prudent” way of dealing with the new pluralism born of markets as well as the ongoing contestation between the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Reformation. Implicit in the liberal idea is that grievances of the weak and exploited demand rational adjudication and, should this not take place, revolution becomes legitimate. Indeed, the formal *principle* of reciprocity calls into question the limitations on its practical exercise.

Universals like the rule of law stand apart from private interests even as they ensure the possibility of pursuing them. A concern for the “common good” is generated along with an ethical imperative seeking to constrain the arbitrary power of the state. Concerns of this sort were part of the ideological, political and historical context in which Jean-Jacques Rousseau forged his idea of the “gen-

eral will" with all its troubling contradictions.

THE "GENERAL WILL," IDEALLY, SHOULD IDENTIFY THE INTERESTS of citizens with those of the community. This occurs, quite obviously, when there is genuine unanimity. But Rousseau was aware of how rarely such unanimity is achieved and that, while respect for majority rule is necessary, the minority can often find itself in the position of representing the common good. The "general will" is a response to this problem even if its description, as the residue sifted from a free and open discussion among private individuals with their own particular wills, is obviously inadequate.

Rousseau demanded complete obedience from the private person, however, once the public decision concerning the "general will" was made. Also, in contrast to Locke, he refused to specify conditions in which individuals could make claims upon the sovereign. But few were as concerned as Rousseau with abolishing the unjustifiable privileges of the rich and the entitled. Implicitly aware of the alienation generated by bureaucratic institutions, including the organs of parliamentarism, he embraced the ideal of direct democracy and "le petit Jean-Jacques" was in turn embraced like virtually no other contemporary philosopher by the people — "the simple souls" — whose concerns for participation he sought to express. The "general will" remains a matter of contention. It is vague as a concept and, worse, it has provided the language for dogmatism in practice. But there is a self-evident sense in which any emancipatory response to authoritarianism must occur in the name of what Jurgen Habermas termed "generalizable interests" while any genuinely democratic ordering must prove capable of legitimating the public expression of minority sentiments. It thus probably best serves the radical democratic spirit of Rousseau's thought and — above all — its emancipatory relevance if the "general will" is understood more as an ethical guide for making public choices with an eye on maximizing the possibilities for participation than as a set of techniques or particular institutions for arriving at decisions. The essential point of Rousseau's enterprise, after all, was the practical project of generating public participation and fostering what Machiavelli originally termed "civic virtue."

Such a concern was, ironically, of particular importance in the less economically and ideologically developed nations of Germany and Russia. There the power of the crown blended most completely with the dogmatism of the church and the prejudices of the populace. It was precisely in the illiberal areas that liberal ethics were of the greatest practical relevance. Such was the context in which Moses Mendelssohn could write:

Hence, one of the state's principal efforts must be to govern men through morals and convictions. Now, there is no other way of improving the convictions, and thereby the morals, of men than through *persuasion*. Laws do not alter convictions; arbitrary punishments and rewards produce no principles, refine no morals. Fear and hope are no criteria of truth. Knowledge, reasoning, and persuasion alone can bring forth principles which, with the help of *authority* and *example* can pass into *morals*.¹⁰

KANT, IN THE SAME VEIN, CALLED FOR AN UNIMPEDED "PUBLIC" USE of reason from any government. Perhaps Kant's concern with what in effect amounts to intellectual freedom from censorship stands at odds with his emphasis on the need to obey all contractual obligations in the hierarchical world of work constituting the "pri-

vate" realm.¹¹ The dichotomy is troubling. But it also generates a profound set of insights. These concern the responsibilities of government and the practical legitimation for revolution left unaddressed by Locke and Rousseau.

Late in life, such issues preoccupied Kant, who claimed any genuinely republican order must institutionally recognize the independence of each as a citizen with formal rights equal to those of all others. Even more importantly, however, such an order cannot force individuals to be happy in the way any single individual or institution conceives of the term; it must allow each to seek his or her "way of happiness" so long as this does not impinge on the ability of others to do the same or the freedom of all under a general law.¹²

Assumptions of this sort essentially identify democracy with the possibility of individuals participating in the public realm and pursuing their private interests as they see fit. Sex, race, and class, will — *in principle* — play no role. Kant's notion concerning the formal equality of all subjects, in fact, makes possible a criticism of any such barriers to the public exercise of reason as surely as recourse to the principles underpinning the liberal rule of law allows for the contestation of any regressive positive laws. Individuals are inherently seen by Kant as "responsible" (*mündig*) and capable of participating in public activities. Even in the most perfect constitutional order, however, the individual must choose to participate and make his or her beliefs known. Volition is the key and, in this sense, "Enlightenment" depends upon the "courage" of an individual to question rather than obey and, according to the famous words "leave behind his self-imposed immaturity."

Kant recognizes that this is far more difficult for any given individual to achieve than for the "public" at large.¹³ Critical thinking is seen as generated within a context and, for Kant, it becomes evident that the *public* right to criticism is the precondition for any genuine exercise of autonomy by the individual and also for maintaining at least the *possibility* of rectifying "errors" or the dogmatic claims of arbitrary power in the future. The need for free public disputation underpins his theory of right and also plays a profound role in his moral philosophy. Kant can, in fact, maintain that:

No age can swear an oath to commit its successors to a condition in which it would be impossible to extend knowledge, correct errors, and generally foster progress in Enlightenment. This would constitute a crime against human nature whose destiny initially consists in such progress."¹⁴

Cutting off the possibility of progress in the name of dogmatism justifies revolution and explains Kant's support for the events of 1789. Progress is created by the "asocial sociability" of people, which is principally fostered in commerce. If this mirrors the emphasis on what Adam Smith termed the "invisible hand" of the market, however, it also foreshadows what Hegel called "the cunning of reason." Not only will societies collapse when they constrain rather than foster the extension of universal freedom as incarnated in the *Weltgeist*, but power must merge with "right" or law in order for the state to adjudicate between the instrumental interests dominating the market and the sentimental forms of attachment to church and family all of which constitute civil society.

There is a precision in the thinking of Kant, however, lacking in his successor. "The owl of Minerva as only spreads its wings at dusk" and, for Hegel as for Hobbes, revolution is justified only *post festum*. For Kant, by way of contrast, the maintenance of an open future becomes the sole criterion for political action in

the present. Action is seen as inherently requiring a speculative judgment rendered in a public forum. Or, putting the matter another way, freedom of expression serves as the precondition for all other freedoms. Thus, it becomes legitimate to interpret Kant in such a way that "the moment to rebel is the moment in which freedom of opinion is abolished."¹⁵

When freedom of opinion or expression is curtailed then correcting errors from the past and raising grievances in the present becomes impossible. Freedom of assembly and worship are also compromised once this basic freedom is violated. It is consequently no accident that these freedoms should have been seen as interconnected by the partisans of the revolutionary bourgeoisie. The struggle for civil liberties took place in the context of the broader struggle for a new "public sphere," which was necessary in order both to constrain the arbitrary exercise of power by authoritarian monarchies and vitalize a burgeoning set of republican institutions during the golden age of liberal theory.

Totalitarian Illusions I: The Enlightenment and Stalinism

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN LIBERALISM AND THE ENLIGHTENMENT is indisputable. Few would probably disagree about their connection with social democracy. But critics of the Enlightenment including postmodernists and "revisionist historians" usually fasten on its connection with Marxism, which is seen as inherently generating Leninism and then Stalinism. The polemical usage of this lineage has increased with the triumph of conservatism, but simply denying it is foolish. Progressives in general and Marxists in particular have an obligation to explain Stalinism, and it is profoundly ahistorical and "anti-Marxist" constantly to invoke what Marx "really" meant and then engage in a war of citations. Insecurity and defeat, however, have led many progressives to embrace conservative arguments intent on using Stalinism to discredit not only the contributions of the Russian Revolution and Marx, but the Enlightenment legacy as well. Such a stance only begs the question: if everything connected with the Enlightenment must fall under attack then what tradition should take its place?

The *novum* does not exist outside time and space. It always stands in a certain relation to the past. Marx and Engels were undoubtedly aware of this. They did not create their historical materialism out of thin air or some mish-mash of theories with mutually exclusive presuppositions. Historical materialism derived from a fusion of the most progressive insights culled from English political economy, French utopianism, and German idealism.¹⁶ That is fairly well known. But less recognized, especially by the critics, is the fact that one or more of these Enlightenment tendencies informed the worldview of virtually all of his major progressive opponents in the labor movement like Louis Blanc or Ferdinand Lassalle and — insofar as the contrary was the case — the result was a reactionary preoccupation with anti-Semitism as with Eugen Dühring, myth as with Georges Sorel, or the arbitrary exercise of power as with Benito Mussolini.

Socialism is a meaningless concept unless it makes reference to the Enlightenment and its liberal heritage. Conservative critics see a totalitarian lineage developing. But they have it backwards. It was the effort to turn socialism *against* the Enlightenment, which led to disaster. This becomes apparent in the sad history of the Soviet Union as well as the misadventures of so many experiments in "national self-determination." The idea of national self-determination, in fact,

offers a case in point. It was intrinsically connected with republicanism and internationalism in the thinking of the revolutionary bourgeoisie.¹⁷ But that changed as surely as the notion of internationalism, which soon enough became the equivalent of Soviet national interest, in the hands of the Communists. They even perversely identified the notion of a republic with "people's republics" in which the very idea of institutional accountability was foreign. Indeed, this should give a clear indication of what will follow even if a somewhat more complicated historical analysis becomes necessary to disentangle the relation between Stalinism, Leninism, Marxism, and the Enlightenment.

Leninism is obviously indebted to the work of Marx. Just as it is mistaken to identify the Marxist notion of revolution with the legacy of 1789, however, so is it wrong to view Leninism as the only possible outcome of Marxism. Social democracy is as legitimate an heir of Marx as Leninism. Many orthodox Marxists and various theoreticians of European social democracy outside France, in fact, also looked with particular admiration at the English Revolution.¹⁸ Indeed, further research might even indicate how those socialists committed to republicanism and civil liberties in the more economically advanced nations looked across the English Channel while those in the less economically developed nations with more authoritarian tendencies embraced the "legend" of 1793.

Lenin viewed his Bolsheviks as "jacobins connected to the proletariat." But this does not justify current attempts to engage in a simplistic condemnation of both by collapsing one back into the other. Jacobinism inspired not only vanguardists like Louis-August Blanqui, but also genuine republican internationalists like Jean Jaures and Leon Blum. Jacobinism is not Leninism. Thus, even so pronounced an anti-Communist as Richard Lowenthal can note that:

... the dictatorial climax of the French Revolution was not, and could not be, a party dictatorship of the Jacobins, because the Jacobin Club never was the kind of disciplined, centralized, and ideologically homogeneous party that could have filled that role.¹⁹

Jacobinism, admittedly, gave fuel to the *idea* of a party dictatorship. But it was precisely in response to the "weaknesses" of Robespierre and his followers that Filip Buonarroti, a survivor of the Babeuf conspiracy, launched "the legend that Robespierre and the Jacobins had themselves set the example for that attempt."²⁰ In fact, of course, the Jacobins had no need of doing so since they consistently held a majority in the Chamber of Deputies. Often forgotten, in this vein, is that democracy never recovered from the Thermidor and the fall of Robespierre. It was suspended in favor of first a new directorate and then Napoleon.

Liberal theory never posed the possibility of counter-revolution or how to deal with it and the Jacobins were the first to experience the consequences. This inadequacy was what Buonarroti initially sought to overcome with his idea of an "educational dictatorship," which was passed over to Blanqui, Peter Tkachev, and — finally — the Bolsheviks. The liberal republican tenets of Robespierre and the Jacobins degenerated in the face of the counter-revolution. But it was different with Babeuf and Buonarroti. They were never liberals even though they were democrats at a time when democracy and socialism had not yet been differentiated. This is decisive since only liberalism can temper the potentially fanatical spirit of democracy or the dynamics which lead revolutions, like Saturn, to devour their children. In any event, however, the point becomes clear. Lenin's "dictatorship of the proletariat" was actually less a product of liberalism, En-

lightenment politics, or even the Jacobins than a response to their perceived failings.

THIS IS NOT THE PLACE TO DEAL WITH MATTERS of historical exigency or whether Stalinism was a necessary outcome of Leninism.²¹ But, for present purposes, it is important to consider that the Bolsheviks in power obviously rejected the progressive political inheritance of the bourgeoisie *tout court*. They quickly became contemptuous of "bourgeois" ethics, placed the state above the law, denied their citizens even the most basic civil liberties, and consistently chose to deal with their opponents by coercion rather than persuasion.

None of this, however, has anything to do with postmodern obsessions concerning the inherently totalitarian impetus deriving from Enlightenment ideas of teleology and determinism or its reliance on "grand narratives" and concepts like the "totality." Communists fell back on such notions when they were convenient in order to "excuse" or justify tactical blunders or authoritarian excesses. They were proudly cynical regarding universalistic claims, relativistic in their ethics and — in the worst sense — inspired by *realpolitik*.

Teleology and determinism, universalistic precepts and "grand narratives," were actually taken seriously not by the authoritarian Communists, but rather by the socialist labor movement whose partisans stood virtually alone in principled support of both liberal democracy and social justice throughout the 20th century. The totalitarian implications of ethical relativism and voluntarism are, in fact, probably stronger than those of teleology and determinism.

Lenin was consistently engaged in a battle with the social democratic partisans of orthodox Marxism, with their determinism and teleological insistence on the "necessity" of passing through a logical progression of historical stages — the "grand narrative" — before the revolution could occur. The first serious criticisms of the Bolshevik Revolution, in fact, were made by orthodox Marxists. Karl Kautsky warned against attempts to realize a socialist revolution in an economically undeveloped nation, and even Gramsci initially viewed the events of 1917 as a "revolution against *Das Kapital*,"²² while Rosa Luxemburg criticized the authoritarian ethos of the Bolsheviks and Leon Blum complained about their "moral incompatibility" with liberal socialists.

Despite its rejection of the liberal inheritance, of course, Leninism genuinely embraced any number of Enlightenment themes. The early years of the Russian Revolution involved a grand experiment with genuine international implications. There was a sense of progress, of hope, and the power of intellect. Leninism opposed the church, the aristocracy, and the other remnants of Russian feudalism with an ideology comprised of "science," the "people," and industrialism. The connection between Lenin and the Enlightenment is, for this reason, somewhat complicated. But that is not the case with Stalin.

There were, of course, many who embraced outworn teleological notions in which the end justifies the means or foolishly sought to identify the Stalin regime with a "dictatorship of reason."²³ But there is no need to rehearse once again his litany of ideological crimes. Suffice it to say: whatever polemical use Stalin might have made of the Enlightenment heritage, especially in Europe during the Popular Front of the 1930s, Leszek Kolakowski is correct when he writes that:

Marxism under Stalin cannot be defined by any collection of statements, ideas, or

concepts; it was not a question of propositions as such but of the fact that there existed an all-powerful authority competent to declare at any given moment what Marxism was and what it was not. 'Marxism' meant nothing more or less than the current pronouncement of the authority in question, i.e. Stalin himself.²⁴

Leninism was the "wind from the East." It brought the pre-industrial colonial nations, comprising the vast majority of the world population, into the center of the socialist discourse. It was surely a force in fighting imperialist arrogance and racism. Its proponents were committed to modernization and the elimination of poverty, ignorance, and disease. Here, in fact, is where Hegel's "cunning of history" makes itself felt. The failure of the Russian Revolution, after all, ultimately stems from the attempt to create a bourgeois republic without a bourgeoisie in February and the subsequent attempt to produce a proletarian revolution without a proletariat in October. Or, putting it in somewhat different terms, the tragedy of 1917 and later revolutionary experiments in the once colonized territories derive precisely from attempts to create a modern revolution in a pre-modern society by force of will alone.

Totalitarian Illusions II: The Enlightenment and Fascism

DIALECTIC OF ENLIGHTENMENT WAS PERHAPS THE FIRST GREAT CRITICAL ENCOUNTER with the philosophical legacy of modernity from the left.²⁵ Completed in 1944, published in 1947, it is surely the most influential work of the Frankfurt School. The book, written in the context of totalitarianism and war, is a landmark in social theory. It radicalized the theory of alienation and "reification," initially inspired by Marx and developed by Georg Lukacs, and lamented the expulsion of freedom and subjectivity from the historical process through an increasing reliance on instrumental rationality. Its critique of the "culture industry" would profoundly influence an entire discourse. It provided one of the earliest attempts not only to link Marx with Freud, but also with Nietzsche, and called for a surrender of those optimistic assumptions about "civilization" which, in the era of totalitarianism and war, it was no longer possible to sustain. It contested dialectical orthodoxy by claiming that the price demanded by all teleological notions of progress is too high and, above all, placed the resurrection of an increasingly threatened subjectivity at the center of any radical project.

Enlightenment takes on two meanings in the thinking of Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno. It comprises both a historically specific scientific "theory of knowledge," which was developed in Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries in contesting theological dogma, as well as an anthropological struggle with error and superstition.²⁶ The two come together and, in this way, a genuine critique of the one implies a critique of the other. Thus, the radicalism of their undertaking: the critique of the Enlightenment becomes the critique of human history.

Scientific rationality is seen as the philosophical method of Enlightenment insofar as its "objective" or instrumental character can easily undermine the dogmas of religion and myth in the name of normative concerns like freedom and tolerance. But such rationality has its own dynamic and, gradually, its power turns against all non-scientific precepts including those emancipatory values which inspired the scientific project in the first place. Precisely to this extent,

however, its ability to contest repression diminishes and becomes, in keeping with the prediction of David Hume, a "slave of the passions."

Deluded by assumptions of unilinear progress, the sentimentality of humanism,²⁷ intoxicated by scientific rationality, complacent in their utilitarian domination of nature, the proponents of Enlightenment basically engendered precisely what they wished to suppress. Its rationality became identical with the "rationality of domination" and the irrational beliefs it sought to destroy reappeared as its own product. Thus, for Horkheimer and Adorno, fascism — or the weaving of all realms into a seamless web of bureaucratic domination — is seen as an outgrowth of the Enlightenment legacy and "the conditions that prevailed before its coming to power, not in a negative sense, but rather in their positive continuation."²⁸

Myth had originally sought to control nature and now, in the age of fascism, Enlightenment simply made room for myth. Such is the real — if unacknowledged — legacy of the Enlightenment which, according to the authors, extends from Kant over Sade to Nietzsche. For, if Kant undercut the truth-claims of theology and all forms of metaphysics in the name of scientific objectivity, Sade took the next logical step and considered all subjects as instrumental means for *his* personal gratification even as Nietzsche, ruthless in the critical application of his skepticism, would see history as subordinate to the arbitrary preoccupation with furthering the "life instincts" of any given individual.

Commodity production "objectively" sustains this development and, insofar as its form of exchange value transforms qualitative differences into quantitative ones,²⁹ necessarily turns technical rationality against all forms of metaphysics and normative concerns. The exercise of arbitrary power complements a process which subordinates individual wants and desires ever more surely to the mercy of objective market criteria and strips them of the capacity to make anything other than arbitrary or technical judgments. The apogee of this development is seen as lying in anti-Semitism and the gas chambers.³⁰ But the dynamic exists just as surely in the conformist and profit-driven "culture industry," which seeks the "lowest common denominator" for its products, and subverts the very possibility of reflection or revolution. Thus:

. . . humans pay for the increase of their power with alienation from that over which they exercise their power. Enlightenment behaves towards things as a dictator toward men. He knows them in so far as he can manipulate them.³¹

HORKHEIMER AND ADORNO IDENTIFIED "ENLIGHTENMENT" WITH A DEBUNKING of what stands beyond the scientific domination over nature or what Kant called "pure reason." For this reason, however, they ultimately wound up engaging in the very form of dogmatic ahistorical philosophical inquiry that they initially wished to oppose. Their form of argumentation perverts history and obscures what is politically at stake.

Horkheimer and Adorno place the domination of nature at the center of emancipatory philosophical discourse. But they never take into account the actual movements with which the Enlightenment spirit and its critics were connected. They are unable to deal with its legacy for a progressive politics and, insofar as "the whole is false" (Adorno), their critique evidences a deeply indeterminate and abstract quality. Indeed, they never took to heart the insight from

Nietzsche that: "to perceive resemblances everywhere, making everything alike, is a sign of weak eyesight."³²

Their claim that fascism is a continuation of the "Enlightenment," according to either of their definitions, is empirically and normatively wrong. Neither from the standpoint of economic or political history, let alone class interests, does the interpretation offered by Horkheimer and Adorno make sense. Fascism was a self-conscious ideological response to the Revolution of 1848, whose democratic values derived from Lessing and the German Enlightenment,³³ as well as the two great offspring of modernity. The mass base of the Nazis lay in precapitalist classes like the peasantry and the petty-bourgeoisie whose interests were directly threatened by the capitalist production process and its two dominant classes.³⁴ Sections of the bourgeoisie and a great majority of the proletariat, for their part, identified respectively with an impotent set of parties embracing a continental form of liberalism and a social democratic party still formally embracing orthodox Marxism. These were the supporters of the Weimar Republic and the enemies of the Nazis who made war on them in word and deed.

Dialectic of Enlightenment casts real historical conflicts into an anthropological fog. The tale of Odysseus, wherein the destruction of subjectivity becomes the only way to preserve the subject, offers a case in point. Instrumental reason did not bring about fascism or even destroy the ability of individuals to make normative judgments. It was rather the product of a clash between real movements, whose members were quite capable of making diverse judgments concerning both their interests and their values, which resulted in the victory of the Nazis.

The attempt to unify *qualitatively* different phenomena under a single rubric can only produce pseudo-dialectical sophistry and political confusion.³⁵ The decision to broaden the "Enlightenment" to include its greatest and most self-conscious critics — Sade, Schopenhauer, Bergson and Nietzsche³⁶ — offers a case in point. None of these thinkers had the least identification with Enlightenment political theory or the practice associated with it. They were anti-liberal, anti-socialist, anti-democratic and anti-egalitarian, anti-rationalist and anti-historical.

Adorno would later write that "not least among the tasks now confronting thought is that of placing all the reactionary arguments against Western culture in the service of progressive Enlightenment."³⁷ As usual, however, this imperative was left hanging in the abstract. He never thought to consider the contradictions capable of arising from the attempt to merge right-wing ideology with left-wing practice.

The famous analysis of the culture industry suffers from the same exaggeration and lack of determinacy as their critique of instrumental rationality and modern forms of bureaucratic politics. Horkheimer and Adorno were content to highlight the repressive character of mass culture per se. They dismissed the idea that genuine works of art or important sources of information could appear in the mass media. They also ignored the manner in which even works of high culture have learned from the technology generated by attempts to produce popular culture. It was enough for Horkheimer to note that, if the culture industry comes to define the public realm, then the moment of emancipatory resistance will enter the tenuous domain of a private experience constantly threatened by the extension of instrumental rationality.³⁸ Thus, interestingly enough, he was

actually less sanguine about the emancipatory role of aesthetics than either Adorno or Marcuse in their later writings.

Talk about the “integration” of works, however, only begs the question of whether they were really rendered impotent or whether they actually helped change the “hegemonic” system and were only then turned into museum pieces. Questions of this sort, however, are never entertained in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. The “whole” is what counts while attempts to transform it are never radical enough since either revolution or reform must, in some degree, make recourse to instrumental rationality.

But, for this very reason, the repressive conditions this form of critique claims to contest are left intact. Without making reference to institutions and movements, incapable of drawing qualitative distinctions between phenomena, the attempt to preserve subjectivity from the incursions of society turns into little more than an aesthetic exercise in what Thomas Mann initially called a “power-protected inwardness.” Solidarity is treated either as an arbitrary sentiment or a demand for conformity while Enlightenment collapses into the “mass deception” of the culture industry. Critique has a different fate in store: it can now only talk itself into exhaustion.

The Enlightenment Spirit

1968 MARKED THE BEGINNINGS OF A CHANGE in the prevalent understandings of the Enlightenment. Conservatives had previously condemned it for generating a revolutionary rejection of tradition while critical theorists and the ultra-left emphasized the impotence of its ethical ideals relative to the repressive power of its commitment to instrumental rationality. Especially following the death of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, however, the situation changed. The earlier critique of instrumental rationality was retained by significant intellectual elements of the New Left and most notably by the ecology movement. Nevertheless, it became fused with a belief in the fundamentally repressive character of the Enlightenment in terms of both its political worldview and its normative assumptions.

Vietnam had symbolized the connection of liberalism and imperialism and many were led to question the “Eurocentric” character of the Enlightenment. A new sensitivity about the twin cancers of racism and sexism created a new concern about the “white” and “male” prejudices of its representatives as well as the manner in which minorities, women, and outsiders were unrepresented. New social movements began the preoccupation with “identity politics” and the emphasis on local struggles, or what Michel Foucault originally termed “micro-politics,” even as they sought to overcome the organizational legacy of bureaucracy and hierarchy on the left.

Postmodernism reflected all of this and — relying for its theoretical inspiration on political reactionaries like Nietzsche, Bergson, and Heidegger — sought to present its insights in a matter which “would be simultaneously post-Marxist and post-liberal.”³⁹ Its proponents condemned “essentialism” as little more than a dogmatic striving for absolute truth. They castigated rationalism in favor of relativism and the centrality of “experience.” They rejected historical materialism for its “totalistic” — or totalitarian — ambitions and use of “grand narra-

tives." They criticized the use of universal categories for veiling one or another — western, male, or white — "master discourse." They chastized liberalism for fostering illusions about "rights," the equality of citizens, the political centrality of the state, and even cosmopolitanism for undermining any sense of the particular or "lived" identity.

The New Left made genuine contributions and undertook its critique in the name of a populist commitment to democracy.⁴⁰ Many of its earlier advocates like Paul Goodman and Erich Fromm and Christian Bay were influenced by Enlightenment values and even the best postmodern thinkers took the bourgeois heritage seriously. They sought to contest its limitations and empower repressed groups with very different experiences of reality.⁴¹ But the "owl of Minerva" did not really spread its wings in the aftermath of the 1968s. The new philosophical movement of postmodernism was born of defeat. Its popularity grew concurrently with the rising conservative tide of the late 1970s and, especially in the United States, carried over into the present.

Perhaps, for this very reason, a problem presents itself with respect to the relation between theory and practice. For, whether explicitly or implicitly, the advocates of particularism always made reference to the moral obligations of others to support their cause and, in spite of all the talk about the inherently alienating character of the state, sought legislation in order to make their concerns concrete. Postmodern theorists were unconcerned. Illuminating this relationship in keeping with the philosophical idealism of Kant and Hegel or the historical materialism of Marx, after all, would necessarily lead them to contest the unqualified "contingency" of all "significations" and obviously involve them in some form of "grand narrative."

The effects of this situation on practice are becoming increasingly evident. The ideological emphasis on identity and particularism, relativism and various forms of historical reductionism, have fostered fragmentation and political confusion. It is becoming ever more difficult to deny that, whatever the achievements of the last 25 years, the new social movements have lost the moral high ground the left held during the civil rights movement and the early struggles against the Vietnam War.

Some have sought to face such matters directly. Judith Butler accepted the need for a notion of "contingent epistemology" without ontological grounding, for example, while Gayatri Spivak introduced the idea of "strategic essentialism." Neither is sufficient, however, to deal with the real issues at hand. Epistemology never had an ontological foundation in the first place, which was precisely the problem Fichte and Schelling and Hegel had with the "subjective idealism" of Kant, but it offered a way of thinking about what categories are necessary for which particular forms of inquiry and action. The new notion of "contingent epistemology" gives no clue when it is necessary to privilege universalistic against particularistic claims, however, and it is the same with the concept of "strategic essentialism."

Neither thinker considers how the employment of epistemological or essentialist categories necessarily generates the need for "grand narratives" along with "impartial" criteria for discriminating between particular interests and institutions. Nor is either theorist willing to develop the implications of such philosophical compromises for postmodern analysis or its validity. The relativism and emphasis on particular "experience," which originally gave the tendency its philo-

sophical power, are neither denied nor embraced. They are simply left in a strange form of limbo.

Even more important, however, the basic issue *still* remains unresolved. The commitment to those universalistic assumptions underpinning republicanism, socialism, and internationalism is — as Mendelssohn realized — always one of conviction. It is not a tactical or “strategic” matter especially when the advocates of liberal and socialist programs are engaged in challenging an authoritarian regime. The new importance attributed to epistemology and essentialism can also only confuse adherents of those new social movements inspired by various forms of identity politics and particularist ideologies.

The contradiction between theory and practice now exists for postmodernism as surely as it did for the socialist labor movement when Eduard Bernstein chastized its leaders for preaching a revolutionary Marxist theory while engaging in a purely reformist practice. And the response to this current situation must take the same form. It is time to end the equivocations. Let the postmodern critics of Enlightenment values either keep their radically subjectivist form of theory and, in the manner of Nietzsche and Heidegger, transform the notion of praxis to meet their theoretical beliefs or come to grips with reality, recognize the needs of existing forms of progressive political action, and draw the theoretical consequences.

Postmodernism, of course, is not the only popular theory critical of the Enlightenment legacy. There is even a certain overlap with certain left proponents of the quite popular philosophical tendency known as “communitarianism” and thinkers like Richard Rorty or Chantal Mouffe are actually open to identification with either tendency. Communitarianism also rejects the universalism, cosmopolitanism, and emphasis on individual rights associated with the Enlightenment. Its proponents often enjoy referring to Rousseau’s Draft for a Constitution of Poland and the manner in which it cautions Catherine the Great against making dramatic moves, which might contradict the traditions out of which a people organically formed.

Communitarians generally condemn the explosion of claims associated with “rights” as against “duties” for their fragmenting impact upon the national community. Thinkers like Amitai Etzioni also seek to shift government activities to the type of voluntary associations enthusiastically described by Alexis de Tocqueville. If the first concern surely exaggerates the corroding influence of the new social movements on the polity, as against the egoism generated by the new unleashing of market forces, the second idea is even more problematical given the increased time spent on work, the classification of nearly one-third of all workers as members of the “working poor,” the impact of markets on “voluntary associations,” and — finally — the fact that the various and complex programs undertaken by the state cannot simply be transferred into the nebulous sphere of non-institutionalized forces supposedly defined neither by the market nor the state.

Communitarians oppose the rationalism and universalism, the preoccupation with the state and its bureaucratic institutions, which derive from the Enlightenment. They prefer instead to base their political theory on the belief that it is necessary to begin with the customs and traditions carried over from the past. But there is no sense of the terms by which one tradition gains privilege over another and how to judge between them. Also, from this philosophical per-

spective, it is difficult to justify the condemnation of repressive traditions in a culture other than one's own.

Is the United States a "liberal" nation or a racist one? There is surely no definitive answer. Michael Walzer would suggest that "moral sentiment" alone can inform a judgment. The weakness of relying on intuition, however, is obvious. Also, even if a major left communitarian thinker like Charles Taylor should maintain that commitment to liberal values is necessary since liberalism is part of "our" European tradition, it will logically lack relevance for those suffering under theocratic or authoritarian nations devoid of a liberal legacy. Thus, in the name of opposing the abstract rationalism and "Eurocentrism" deriving from the Enlightenment, even the best communitarians will find themselves in a situation where the benefits of liberalism or social democracy can exist only for those nations already in the possession of them.

Nelson Mandela, of course, knew better. The fact of the matter is that the most successful and emancipatory movements of the oppressed were all inspired by a commitment to either the language of rights or universalist principles. These movements championed the power of reasoned dialogue, cultural cosmopolitanism, and what Jurgen Habermas has appropriately termed "constitutional patriotism" or a vision of the state predicated on the rule of law (*Rechtsstaat*). It has traditionally been movements of the right which have employed arguments about the inherent uniqueness of their constituency, privileged "experience" over reasoned dialogue, and identified with the organic community (*Volksstaat*). A basic choice of worldview is still with us and seeking to combine left-wing politics with right-wing assumptions can only lead to moral disillusionment and unprincipled compromise.

Nothing is more false or self-defeating for a progressive than to reduce the Enlightenment to the interests of white, male, bourgeois Europeans. This view, which is embraced by so many on the left, rests on the assumption that the value of an idea is reducible to the particular attributes of its author or the complex of interests dominant when the given work was produced. Such a stance is nothing other than a crude version of the sociology of knowledge, which was never particularly radical in the first place.

THE VALUE OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT SPIRIT LIES PRECISELY in its ability to jut beyond its historical context. Its commitment to tolerance and equality, its skepticism of religion and established tradition, reflect more than the interests of a white, male bourgeoisie on the rise. It projects an invigorated notion of the individual — or the expansion of what Goethe termed the "personality" — and a new respect for work beyond any market incentives. "Labor," wrote Adam Smith, is the "original price of everything." Indeed, "work makes the person," could have been a slogan of the Enlightenment.

Candide is a case in point. An early "educational novel" (*Bildungsroman*), it expresses the excitement of travel and new experiences. It condemns religious intolerance no less than the unwarranted optimism about this being "the best of all possible worlds." Rather than exhibiting a simplistic form of resignation, furthermore, its famous closing actually poses a challenge for the future. Voltaire wrote this work, after all, while building his ideologically progressive and economically successful community, which would serve as a refuge for many victims of religious intolerance, in political exile at Ferney. Indeed, the decision of *Candide*

to "tend his garden" is nothing other than a recognition that the time has come to give up on metaphysical speculation and begin to do some work.

Perhaps the most powerful critique of the Enlightenment, for all that, derives from its emphasis on the domination over nature. Instrumental rationality employed without respect for the intricacies of various eco-systems has created an environmental nightmare. Pollution of the air, withering of the forests, despoilation of the oceans, have profoundly altered any previous optimism connected with technological progress. The ecological movement, for all its problems, has opened the eyes of the world. But still, identifying technology or instrumental rationality with the domination of nature is a mistake. Ecology is not rigidly opposed to Enlightenment notions of science and technology. Coming to terms with the technological degradation of the environment, in fact, can only occur from the standpoint of technology itself. A return to the premodern past is no option. It is a matter of setting new priorities for technological development in the future and invigorating liberal and socialist values with ecological concerns.

Ecology offers new possibilities for linking the efforts of reason with the creation of a safer, better, and more beautiful world. Such a vision is only betrayed by the introduction of half-baked spiritualism, uncritical reliance on intuition, and naive ideas about some "golden age" hidden in the mists of the past. Modernity has had a progressive impact on social interaction and, in this vein, Ulrich Beck is completely correct when he writes that "the needle of Enlightenment is found in the haystack of relationships, not under the searchlight of theory."⁴²

No major representative of the Enlightenment was an advocate of slavery and, in fact, modern racist philosophy begins with the reaction against its principles. It was also not Montesquieu alone in *The Persian Letters* who evidenced a profound interest in the wisdom of non-European peoples. *The Magic Flute*, *Figaro* and *The Barber of Seville* were stinging attacks on the very idea of privilege and paens to the intelligence of everyday people. Rousseau, for all the fetishism surrounding him in the field of contemporary political theory, was similarly — above all — an advocate of "simple souls" against both the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy. Voltaire attacked the arbitrary power of the crown and the church in any number of instances and Beethoven's *Fidelio* has justice for the common man and the vision of equality for women as its themes.

Many Enlightenment figures were, of course, personally anti-Semitic and sexist and "Eurocentric." Holland and England were imperialist nations during the Enlightenment and the United States would commit one atrocity after another against the Indians. Voltaire and most of his friends were even supporters of "enlightened despotism." But to claim that their milieu and concerns were really no different than others is simply to remain stuck in Hegel's night where all cows are black. There is, however, something even more important. Contesting racism or sexism or the curtailment of civil liberties, in fact, always occurs by making reference to the egalitarian and universalist principles projected by the liberal rule of law.

The very idea that universal values somehow oppose the interests of the particular is preposterous. This kind of stance advocated by Jean-Francois Lyotard and Jacques Derrida is inherently abstract and basically reactionary. It substitutes the ontological distinction *between* "identity and difference," which Martin Heidegger initially developed in response to the tradition of Kant and Hegel,⁴³ for the political insight of liberalism that the rights of every individual are an-

chored in the universal and reciprocal assumptions underpinning the rule of law. The preoccupation of postmodernism with ontology and questions of grounding only betrays its definition by the philosophical or theological absolutism it opposes: either there is an absolute ground for knowledge and dogmatism or there is the chaos of relativism.

Political reality, however, militates against this kind of choice. Conviction and tolerance are not mutually exclusive, which becomes apparent in the various non-conformist religious sects whose leaders with Enlightenment values like Roger Williams and William Penn helped introduce modern notions of religious freedom and toleration. Religion is a problem for the enlightenment spirit only insofar as it strays beyond the private sphere and identifies its concerns with those of the state. The issue is always the degree to which the universalist precepts behind the liberal rule of law are institutionally denied since this is the point at which terror and arbitrary power take hold.

Bringing universalist principles to bear on ethical and political matters results far less in a repression of "difference" than its liberation. Philosophical absolutism and ethical relativism are not the only alternatives. Moses Mendelssohn may have been an "assimilationist," who called upon Jews to keep their religion "private," but he also defended his Jewish *conviction* against the provocations of his friend, the powerful pastor and phrenologist, Lavater in public and few were as effective in helping extend the rule of law to Jews. The modern assault on anti-Semitism begins, in fact, with Lessing's *Nathan the Wise*, whose main character is patterned after Mendelssohn, and perhaps it only makes sense that this largely forgotten playwright and advocate of tolerance should also have produced as emancipatory a pair of feminist works as *Minna von Barnhelm* and *Emilia Galotti*. Indeed, just as Lessing and Mendelssohn stressed the primary role of friendship, Kant could view cosmopolitanism as becoming concrete only in a condition of "hospitality" wherein each might feel at home everywhere.

The Enlightenment spirit opposes provincialism, intolerance, and any view seeking to place the "community" above the "state." It prizes individual responsibility and offers a certain ethical orientation, which can only aid a contemporary left in such ideological disarray. The Enlightenment spirit has nothing to do with denying the provisional character of freedom or a commitment to experimentation. Its primary aim is to constantly further the conditions in which the *novum* can glimmer. The honest and genuine striving for truth becomes more important than its possession and nowhere does this receive more eloquent articulation than in the famous words of Lessing: "if God held the truth in his right hand and in his clenched left fist the quest for it, along with all my future errors, and then told me to choose, I should point to the left and humbly say: 'Father give! The pure truth belongs to You alone.'"⁴⁴

NOTES

¹ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* trans. Talcott Parsons (New York, 1958), pg. 182.

² Carlo Rosselli, *Liberal Socialism*, ed. Nadia Urbinati and trans. William McCuaig (Princeton, 1994).

³ Ulrich Beck, *Die Erfindung des Politischen* (Frankfurt, 1993), pgs. 229ff.

- ⁴ Nowhere is the battle between the Enlightenment spirit and reaction more beautifully described than in the attempt to transform painting into a "universal idiom" by the hero of the great biographical novel by Lion Feuchtwanger, *Goya* (Frankfurt, 1977).
- ⁵ Cf. Ernst Bloch, *Natural Law and Human Dignity* trans. Dennis J. Schmidt (Cambridge: MA, 1986).
- ⁶ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* ed. C.B. Macpherson (Penguin Books: New York, 1968), pg. 324.
- ⁷ *ibid.*, 228ff, 363ff.
- ⁸ John Locke, "The Second Treatise: An Essay Concerning the True Original, Extent, and End of Civil Government" in *The Two Treatises of Government* ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1960), pg. 326.
- ⁹ *ibid.*, pg. 284.
- ¹⁰ Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem or on Religious Power and Judaism* trans. Allan Arkush (Hanover, NH: 1983), pg. 43.
- ¹¹ Immanuel Kant, "Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?" in *Werkausgabe* 12 Bde. hrsg. Wilhelm Weischedel (Frankfurt am Main, 1968) XI: 53ff.
- ¹² Kant, "Über den Gemeinspruch: Das Mag in der Theorie Richtig Sein, Taugt aber Nicht für die Praxis" in *Werkausgabe* XI: 145.
- ¹³ Kant, "Was ist Aufklärung?" pg. 54.
- ¹⁴ *ibid.*, pg. 57-8.
- ¹⁵ Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* ed. Ronald Beiner (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1982), pg. 48ff
- ¹⁶ Frederick Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific" in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels *Selected Works* 3 vols. (Moscow, 1970) 3:95ff.
- ¹⁷ Micheline Ishay, *Internationalism and its Betrayal* (Minneapolis, 1995), pgs. 61ff.
- ¹⁸ Karl Kautsky certainly preferred the English Revolution and a classic work on the topic was written by Eduard Bernstein, *Cromwell and Communism: Socialism and Democracy in the Great English Revolution* trans. H.J. Stenning (New York, 1930). Even Rosa Luxemburg could write from her jail cell on 8/13/1917: "I am now reading [Francois] Mignet and [Heinrich] Cunow on the French Revolution. What an inexhaustible drama, which grips and entrances one again and again! Yet, I still find the English Revolution more powerful, splendid and full of imagination, even though it did run its course in such morose forms of Puritanism. I have already read (the history of the English Revolution by [Francois] Guizot three times; still I will take him up many times again in the future" in *The Letters of Rosa Luxemburg* ed. and trans. by Stephen Eric Bronner (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: 1993 ed), pg. 226.
- ¹⁹ Richard Lowenthal, *Model or Ally? The Communist Powers and the Developing Countries* (Oxford, 1977), pp. 52.
- ²⁰ *ibid.*, pg. 54.
- ²¹ Note the discussion in Stephen Eric Bronner, "Leninism and Beyond" in *Socialism Unbound* (New York, 1990), pgs. 76ff.
- ²² Cf. Antonio Gramsci, "The Revolution against 'Capital'" in *Selections from the Political Writings 1919-1920* ed. Quintin Hoare (New York, 1977), pgs. 34ff.
- ²³ Note the appalling defense of Stalinism and the Bukharin trials by Lion Feuchtwanger, *Moscow 1937: Ein Reiserbericht für meine Freunde* (Berlin, 1993).
- ²⁴ Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism* 3 volumes trans. P.S. Falla (New York, 1978) 3:4.
- ²⁵ Cf. Stephen Eric Bronner, *Of Critical Theory and its Theorists* (London, 1994), pgs. 72ff. and 180ff.
- ²⁶ Cf. Max Horkheimer, "Die Aufklärung" in *Gesammelte Werke* (Frankfurt, 1989) 13:571.
- ²⁷ "In the innermost recesses of humanism, as its very soul, there rages a frantic prisoner who, as a Fascist, turns the world into a prison." Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, pg. 89.
- ²⁸ Helmut Dubiel, *Theory and Politics: Studies in the Development of Critical Theory* (Cambridge, MA:, 1985) pg. 71.

²⁹ Horkheimer's view thus comes down to the claim that: "Everything that is not reducible to numbers becomes illusion for the Enlightenment. This answer provides the unity from Parmenides to Russell. It stands on the destruction of the gods and qualitative differences." Predig Vranicki, *Geschichte des Marxismus* 2 Bde. (Frankfurt, 1974), pg. 831; Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, pg. 6ff.

³⁰ "Anti-Semitic behavior is generated in situations where blinded men robbed of their subjectivity are set loose as subjects. For those involved, their actions are murderous and therefore senseless reflexes, as behaviorists note — without providing an interpretation. Anti-Semitism is a deeply imprinted schema, a ritual of civilization; the pogroms are the true ritual murders. They demonstrate the impotence of sense, significance, and ultimately of truth — which might hold them within bounds . . . Action becomes an autonomous end in itself and disguises its own purposelessness." Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* trans. John Cumming (New York, 1972), pgs. 171-2.

³¹ *ibid.*, pg. 9; also, pg. 87.

³² Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, pg. 74.

³³ Note the classic study of 1893 by Franz Mehring, *Die Lessing-Legende* (Berlin, 1963).

³⁴ The mass base of fascism was located in *pre-capitalist* classes like the petty bourgeoisie and peasantry whose anger was directed by the Nazis against the liberal bourgeoisie, whose Democratic Party was vanishing, and a proletariat predominantly identified with social democracy. Cf. Ernst Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism* trans. Leila Vennewitz (New York, 1965); also, the philosophical argument, concerning the role of "non-synchronous contradictions" in analyzing fascism, by Ernst Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* (Frankfurt, 1973), pgs. 45ff.

³⁵ ". . . liberal theory is true as an idea. It contains the image of a society in which irrational anger no longer exists and seeks for outlets. But since the liberal theory assumes that unity among men is already in principle established, it serves as an apologia for existing circumstances." Horkheimer and Adorno, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, pg. 169.

³⁶ Nietzsche will later be termed by Horkheimer "the most radical enlightenment figure in all of philosophy." And in the general indeterminate sense of the term "enlightenment," of course, that is arguable; in terms of the values and political ideas deriving from the specific movement of 1650-1830, however, it is obviously nonsense. Here, the unfortunate consequences of using one term in two ways becomes apparent. Cf. Horkheimer, "Die Aufklärung," pg. 574.

³⁷ Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, pg. 192

³⁸ "Mass culture in its different branches," Horkheimer could write to Leo Lowenthal, "reflects the fact that the human being is cheated out of his own entity which Bergson so justly called "durée." Cited in Lowenthal, *Critical Theory and Frankfurt School Theorists*, pgs. 203-4; also cf. Horkheimer, "Art and Mass Culture," pg., 274-8.

³⁹ Carl Boggs, *Intellectuals and the Crisis of Modernity* (Albany, 1993), pg. 5-6.

⁴⁰ Cf. Stephen Eric Bronner, *Moments of Decision Political History and the Crises of Radicalism* (New York, 1992), pgs. 101ff.

⁴¹ Michel Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" in *The Foucault Reader* ed. Paul Rabinow (New York, 1984), pgs. 32-33. Such is also the obvious aim of his famous "genealogical" or historical studies like *Discipline and Punish*, *Madness and Civilization*, and *The Birth of the Clinic*.

⁴² Ulrich Beck, *Ecological Enlightenment: Essays on the Politics of the Risk Society* trans. Mark A. Ritter (Atlantic Highlands, 1994), pg. 56.

⁴³ Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference* trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York, 1969).

⁴⁴ Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, "Eine Duplik" in *Theologische und Philosophische Schriften IV* (Hildesheim, 1970), pg. 59.

The Intellectual As Outsider

Grant Farred

THERE IS AN OLD TRADITION IN ENGLISH CRICKET, one that should have been rendered anachronistic decades ago but was still observed as recently as the 1970's. It is the annual game between the Players and the Gentlemen, a cricket match in which the best Professionals opposed the finest Amateurs at Lords, the sport's international headquarters. The amateurs were cricketers who hailed from the English ruling classes and, after collecting their Oxbridge degrees and their cricket colors, played the game purely for enjoyment. Unlike the professionals, working class men who depended on the game for their livelihood, the amateurs received no remuneration. The gentlemen, however, received their cricketing perks in other ways. They accrued cultural and political authority by being appointed captains of their county teams and the national team was invariably selected by former amateurs. Needless to say, England was skippered by an amateur. (Of course, at the end of a sports career the gentlemen had a respectable profession to take up while the player's options were reduced to staying in the game in another capacity — as coach or groundsman — or reintegrating himself into working class life.) Amateurism, the opportunity to play cricket simply out of a love and passion for the game, is not a purer form of participation but the result of the gentlemen's historical privilege. As a result, the amateur is strategically situated in and a beneficiary of the machinations of cricket's power structures.

A conception of amateurism as an impure status is instructive for a reading of Edward Said's latest book, *Representations of the Intellectual*,* because this work turns so much on an understanding of the intellectual as amateur. *Representations of the Intellectual*, a treatise on the responsibility of the intellectual in our times, marks the publication of Said's 1993 Reith Lectures. Composed of six essays, *Representations of the Intellectual* maps the role of the contemporary thinker through the contours of nationalism, exile, the professional/amateur split, and the ways in which intellectuals can, as Said puts it, "speak truth to power" — a phrase which also serves as the title of the second to last essay. The intellectual's capacity to unrelentingly oppose structures of power, amateurism, and exile are the motifs which recur throughout the essays. In *Representations of the Intellectual* Said employs these motifs, which will constitute the focus of this essay, as the rhetorical means by which he attempts to redefine the function of the intellectual in our times.

Inaugurated with Bertrand Russell's address in 1948, the Reith Lectures is an annual event in which the radio division of the British Broadcasting Corporation invites a noted figure to present a series of talks on intellectual matters.

*Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*. New York, Pantheon Books, 1994. Pp. xix, 121; \$20.00 (cloth).

GRANT FARRED is currently a fellow at the Center for Afroamerican and African Studies at the University of Michigan.

Said accepted his invitation, but not without some controversy —

almost from the moment that the announcement of the lectures were made by the BBC in late 1992 there was a persistent, albeit relatively small chorus of criticism directed at it for having invited me in the first place. I was accused of being active in the battle for Palestinian rights, and thus disqualified for any sober or respectable platform at all.(x)

Appropriately, then, he takes as the organizing theme of his 1993 lectures an engagement with the “public role of the intellectual as outsider, ‘amateur’, and disturber of the status quo” (x). Said’s positing of the intellectual as a marginal figure is motivated by the intention to rethink the role of the contemporary intellectual. By remapping the amateur as a social type, Said is constructing a model for the kinds of political interventions which intellectuals should be, but are not, making. These interventions would definitely include, in our historical moment, the role of spokesperson for Palestinian or Bosnian rights.

Amateurism, in Said’s terms, is a quality the contemporary intellectual cannot function without in our society. Characterized by a

desire to be moved not by profit or reward but by love and unquenchable interest in the larger picture, in making connections across lines and barriers, in refusing to be tied down to a specialty, in caring for ideas and values despite the restrictions of a profession,(76)

the intellectual as amateur stands in contradistinction to the intellectual as professional. Here is a thinker who is endemically compromised by the condition of working as a professional in

universities that pay salaries, political parties that demand loyalty to a party line, think tanks that while they offer freedom to do research perhaps more subtly compromise judgement and restrain the critical voice (67).

The amateur intellectual, who is not affiliated to any of these institutions, obtains — and maintains — the “critical voice” which the professional intellectual cedes to these powerful social structures. The university, the political party and the think tank cannot purchase the amateur.

HOWEVER, IN OUR POSTMODERN WORLD, WHERE MOST INTELLECTUALS are compelled to be specialists and professionals affiliated with public institutions, be it the university or the multinational corporation (a category which by no means excludes the university), it takes a considerable leap of political and critical faith to envisage a thinker who can stand outside the constraints of financial dependence and ideological commensurability. Yet it is only through this representation, the intellectual committed to the “virtues of outsiderhood,”(107) that Said believes thinkers can perform their critical function in our society. Outsiderhood, a location beyond the “mainstream, unaccommodated, unco-opted, resistant,” engenders in intellectuals a critique of “patriotic nationalism, corporate thinking, and a sense of class, racial or gender privilege.” (52, xiii) While Said never suggests that attacks on these ideologies and privileges cannot be made from other sites, his argument is premised upon the notion that marginality sharpens and intensifies the intellectual’s critical acumen. It is in this regard that Said’s conception of the amateur has its greatest salience and pertinence. Unlike the Gentleman cricketer, the amateur intellectual has no investment in the struc-

tures of power; unlike the Gentleman, the amateur does not wish to benefit in any way from the workings of the power structures in our society. But, like the Gentleman, the amateur has an unusual freedom that is simultaneously a singular responsibility. While the Gentleman cricketer is released, by virtue of class privilege, from the constraints of the game and allowed to experiment with new strokes, field placings, and bowling tactics, amateurs can convert their intellectual capital into pointed critiques. The amateur intellectual has the opportunity to ask difficult questions, to probe the power structures insistently, to speculate ideologically, to map political alternatives, and to imagine a differently — which is to say equitably — structured world. Unencumbered by the promise (or the withholding) of promotion or material rewards, the amateur intellectual can turn outsiderhood into a powerful political base.

The trope of marginality is a prominent one in *Representations of the Intellectual*. Not only is outsiderhood metaphorically and literally presented as the ideal position for the intellectual, but this conception is given historical substance by the figure of the exiled thinker. In one of the pivotal chapters, "Intellectual Exile: Expatriates and Marginals," Said recalls the travails and successes of thinkers such as Adorno, Cavafy, Jonathan Swift and C.L.R. James in order to represent the signal vantage point that marginality affords. (It should be pointed out here that Said's explanation of James's intellectual trajectory is incorrect. The Trinidadian did not come to "England as a cricketer." He came to the metropolis to pursue his ambitions as a creative writer. His journey to England, however, was sponsored by a cricketer — Learie Constantine. While James did play some cricket in England, it was for recreational purposes only. The Trinidadian made his mark on the game as a critic of the sport.¹) Borrowing a phrase from the West Indian novelist George Lamming, Said articulates with a tempered lyricism the experience of exile: the "pleasures of exile, those different arrangements of living and eccentric angles of vision that it can sometimes afford, which enliven the intellectual's vocation, without perhaps alleviating every last anxiety or feeling of bitter solitude." (59) However, despite the unusual though painful benefits that accrue to the marginal(ized) thinker, we cannot forget that without a secure public positioning (which often requires professional accreditation of some sort), both the exiled and the amateur intellectual will find it difficult to speak to a broad public. They will find it hard to champion the cause of the "poor, the disadvantaged, the voiceless, the unrepresented," (113) the primary constituencies to which Said's intellectuals are committed.

Standing as they do on the outside of the socio-political arrangement, we might ask of Said's thinkers: From what public base will the amateur intellectual make interventions in the public sphere? How stable and influential is that base? How effective will those interventions be? How can the amateur intellectual sustain herself materially? Indeed, is it possible to be an amateur intellectual in our times? Apart from the last enquiry, which is affirmatively answered, the questions relating to context are only nominally engaged in *Representations of the Intellectual*. It is therefore not enough to say, as Said does, that "[p]rominent intellectuals always are in symbolic relationship with their time" (43). All intellectuals share, of course, not only a "symbolic" but a real relationship with "their time." Much more pressing is the need to understand how intellectuals function against the backdrop of their time. Intellectuals, after all, live in the world and make history in the world, more often than not under conditions not of their own

choosing. By not investigating, inter alia, the material constraints, political potentialities and restrictions, and cultural opportunities, we are prone to evacuating intellectuals of their historical specificity — the conditions that enable or disable their ability to be “disturbers of the status quo.” The public base they choose to occupy, the size and resources of that location, will invariably — and tellingly — impact the extent of their interventions. Nowhere does the importance of location and moment register more clearly than in the couple of moments *Representations of the Intellectuals* attends to the question of gender.

In his discussions of Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte and Virginia Woolf, three female intellectuals who find themselves in the company of scores of men, Said explains the achievement of a “room of their own”(35) by charting the women’s struggle against patriarchal domination. *Mansfield Park*, in Said’s view a document steeped in the colonial enterprize, was produced by a “Jane Austin who hid her manuscript.” *Villette* bears traces of the “subterranean anger affecting Charlotte Bronte.”(34) What the female novelists share with the amateur intellectual is a commitment to securing a space from which they can write and produce their critiques. Both groups seek rooms of their own situated within the larger social order. Locating the intellectual specifically in no way undermines the significance of intellectual insurgency, regardless of its origins; it simply enables us to view that resistance against a historical background. Any engagement intellectuals make with the dominant order has to take cognizance of its coercive and co-optive capabilities. The amateur has, in a crucial sense, to be a professional of sorts — a professional skilled both in the arts of sly civility (as Homi Bhabha might have it) and confrontation. These two strategies are vital to the amateur in that they will increase the intellectual’s ability to combat and transform the status quo. Moreover, these battles can only be effectively conducted if the amateur recognizes the extent to which he or she is shaped by, and implicated in, the dominant order. Amateurism, then, means not so much to stand outside as to understand why distance from the power structures is definitive for the intellectual: the nearer to the status quo the thinker, the less the room for intellectual mobility, ingenuity and critique; the further removed, the greater the capacity for these possibilities.

SAID’S AMATEUR INTELLECTUAL HAS TO NEGOTIATE A RELATIONSHIP to her or his history that recognizes these historical pressures. Ultimately, however, his goal is to transcend the material conditions. The project of *Representations of the Intellectual* is not to place thinkers outside history, but rather to achieve a transhistorical role for them. Regardless of the context in which they find themselves, intellectuals have to be mindful of their particular responsibility in society. Immersing himself in the spirit of C. Wright Mills (whom he quotes: “If a thinker does not relate himself to the value of truth in political struggle, he cannot possibly cope with the whole of live experience”), Said’s argument is compelling because of its conviction and his determination to occupy nothing less than the moral high ground.

“The central fact for me is,” he maintains,

that the intellectual is an individual endowed with a faculty for representing, embodying, articulating a message, a view, an attitude, philosophy or opinion to, as well as for, a public. And this role has an edge to it, and cannot be played without a sense of someone whose place it is publicly to raise embarrassing questions, to confront

orthodoxy and dogma (rather than produce them) ... (11)

Said's idealism and his belief in the capacity of the intellectual to be a crucial agent of change stands as a manifesto that may very well be incommensurate with the cynical tenor of our times. After all, fewer and fewer people participate in the democratic process and when they do they find themselves confronted with what amounts to Hobson's choice. Since neither of the alternatives is particularly palatable, voters invariably find themselves choosing between "orthodoxies and dogmas." Even in those sites, South Africa, Palestine and Ireland, where leftist intellectuals over the last three decades have courageously asked "embarrassing questions" and advocated "philosophies" of justice, equality, tolerance and respect for humanity, the resolutions to the conflicts — or those in process — foster cynicism rather than replenish our faith in transcendent political principles.

Multinational corporations have, so far to a great extent, determined the agenda for the new South Africa. Despite the historic elections, the recently installed African National Congress government appears to have *de facto*, if not symbolically, designated the needs of the recently enfranchised black population as secondary to the dictates of international capital. What takes precedence in the newly democratic South Africa is Nelson Mandela's government negotiations with the likes of New York-based financial houses such as Morgan Stanley and the IMF not to nationalize the nation's industries. The ANC appears to be more in the service of multinationals than committed to its historically oppressed electorate. This, moreover, in a society where white South Africans have not relinquished their control over the economy. Equally troubling are developments in the Middle East. Here, as the pressure from leftist and Islamic groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah makes patently clear, Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Liberation Organization is acting as though it were little more than a Vichy government. And, we can but speculate what fate will befall Gerry Adams' Sinn Féin and the Irish Republican Army in their forthcoming negotiations with the British government. In this context, Said's lack of cynicism carries a special force. The only feature of Said's text that is more unusual than his optimism are the components of the intellectual model he proposes.

Representations of the Intellectual offers itself as a rare theoretical blend: it offers optimism and political caution in equal measure. The optimism resonates throughout the text while the caution is strategically invoked. Even as intellectuals participate in the everyday processes of their society, they must simultaneously maintain a critical distance from those practices. Liberation, the achievement of a national state or the reconciliation of warring parties does not signal the suspension of the intellectual's interrogative function. Rather, it initiates and requires a different form of political vigilance and inquiry. Said is clear that the intellectual consistently has to guard against co-optation — to refrain from "joining the collective march" (41) — in moments of national or ethnic euphoria because these events can easily "narcotize the critical sense." (41) The virtues of outsiderhood remain paramount.

In *Representations of the Intellectual*, however, outsiderhood is an ambivalent location. On the one hand, it indicates a skeptical remove from the institutions of power; on the other hand, it proposes an organic relationship with the embattled communities in that society. Said's model of outsiderhood or marginal-

ity, derives from the mapping of an unlikely theoretical hybrid: the merging of Antonio Gramsci with Julien Benda. As progenitors of intellectual schools go, the Italian Communist and the French *philosophe* represent diametrically opposed positions. Gramsci's *The Prison Notebooks* is accepted as a handbook for the engaged revolutionary while Benda's *La Trahison des Clercs* (*The Treason of the Intellectuals*) is regarded as an endorsement of the reactionary status quo. In Gramsci's terms, the intellectual must be aligned organically with the oppressed and exploited; for Benda, the intellectual occupies an elevated position far removed from the clamor of everyday experience. If Gramsci's intellectual is understood as a committed activist, then Benda's is the learned, cloistered scholar in search of immortal truths and transcendent values.

Representations of the Intellectual marks the coupling of these divergent models in an unexpectedly successful hybrid. Said's intellectual — and ideological — cross-fertilization proves efficacious because he is able to combine, in unequal measures, Gramsci's capacity for oppositionality with Benda's appetite for "metaphysical passion and disinterested principles of justice." (6). "Representations of the Intellectual," the lead essay in Said's book, provides the theoretical foundations of the work by setting up the dialectic between *The Prison Notebooks* and *The Treason of the Intellectuals*. However, as much as *Representations of the Intellectual* relies on *The Prison Notebooks*' notion of the intellectual as a radical left figure, the text rather glosses Gramsci — he is a relied upon but not an extensively referenced presence. We are, in any case, dealing with a specific reading of "The Formation of Intellectuals," Gramsci's seminal essay on the subject. Said is less concerned with the Italian Communist's claim that "all men (sic) are intellectuals" than he is with Gramsci's distinction between the organic and the traditional intellectual. Developments in the "late twentieth century," Said writes,

when so many new professions — broadcasters, academic professionals, computer analysts, sports and media lawyers, management consultants, policy experts ... have vindicated Gramsci's vision" (8)

of the intellectual as organic to and irreplaceable by several social organs. (In drawing upon the classical Gramscian divide between his two categories of intellectuals, Said is demonstrating the underlying — and unexplored links — between the Italian's traditional thinker and the Frenchman's *clerics*. Historically, of course, Gramsci's traditional intellectual belongs primarily to the social category of the ecclesiastics. For all their ideological differences, therefore, a Gramsci-Benda dialogue about the function of intellectuals is eminently possible.) If Said can be said to pay Gramsci less mind than he does his French counterpart, it is because the Palestinian theorist is interested in reinscribing the role of the late twentieth century intellectual through reclaiming Benda's conception of the *clerics*:

deep in the combative rhetoric of Benda's basically very conservative work is to be found this figure of the intellectual as a being set apart, someone able to speak the truth to power, a crusty, eloquent, fantastically courageous and angry individual for whom no worldly power is too big and imposing to be criticized and pointedly taken to task.(8)

THE OPENING ESSAY'S REPRESENTATION OF THE INTELLECTUAL as "crusty, eloquent, fantastically courageous" and "angry" speaks directly to the idealism and ama-

teurism that Said so cherishes. *Representations of the Intellectual* thrives on Said's rendering of Benda's cleric as a constituency which is not only in a "state of almost permanent opposition to the status quo,"(7) but also a grouping which has so invested its social role as to regard "no worldly power [as] too big and imposing to be criticized." The brave and boldly confrontational amateur throws into sharp relief the insufficiently critical professional. There is a compelling urgency about Said's argument. Unless intellectuals refashion themselves and take seriously their responsibilities ("There has been no major revolution in modern history without intellectuals; conversely there has been no major counterrevolutionary movement without intellectuals."), a historically invaluable space for political intervention will be, if not lost, then drastically reduced. The conversation between Gramsci and Benda which Said facilitates is an effort to provoke a reconsideration of where and how the intellectual locates her/himself.

In a confessional moment, Said explains how he arrived at his Benda-like position. Poignantly, he writes:

I am perfectly prepared to admit that these perhaps too protestant positions of mine are extensions of the essentially impossible and generally losing results of being Palestinian: we lack territorial sovereignty, and have only tiny victories and little enough room to celebrate them in. (108)

This almost bitter reflection from "The Gods That Always Fail," the final essay, reveals a psyche scarred by the history of unremitting political defeat. This contemplation on the consequences of Palestinian failure constitutes an uncharacteristic moment because *Representations of the Intellectual* is a generally optimistic work in which Said liberally references his autobiography — he muses on his life as a permanent exile, he considers his status as a member of the Palestinian National Council, a body which served as the Palestine parliament in exile. While the "too protestant position" represents an autobiographically aberrant moment of political pessimism, the remainder of the essay underscores Said's commitment to the outside. "The Gods That Always Fail" is the narrative of an Iranian intellectual, a friend of Said's, who shifts radically, if eloquently, between polarized ideological camps; the essay remarks on the costs of those several political relocations. As much as he admires this Iranian intellectual, a man who opposed both the Shah and Imam Khomeini, his is a position Said has no intention of emulating. "I am against conversion to and belief in a political god of any sort," Said states plainly, "I consider both as unfitting behavior for the intellectual." (109)

In and of themselves the words "god" and "belief" have sufficient significance, but in the context of *The Representations of the Intellectual* they vibrate with a timbre that is quasi-religious. The connection between these ecclesiastical terms and Said's perception of intellectual work as a vocation (much as he protests that it is a secular profession) convey how morally important and strategically vital the intellectual's functions are to the author of the most recent Reith Lectures. Said may proclaim his dislike for "conversion" and "belief" in "political gods," but *Representations of the Intellectual* is a tract of political faith: the intellectual bears a heavy responsibility for the state of this world, if not for the ones beyond. In Said's model, Benda's clerics are supposed to serve as a check against a too uncritical investment in any political structure. (Gramsci's organic intellectuals, of course, warn against a puritanical remove from the struggles of

marginalized groupings.) Clearly, however, Said's representation of the intellectual has a deeper investment in the vocational than the secular. His commitment to the unrepresented, poor and oppressed, is premised upon a social responsibility that strikes one as being motivated by a deeply moral, rather than simply a party political, charge. The interrogative thrust of Said's amateur, we might recall, emanates from a place that is essentially vocational: the rejection of material rewards. The amateur contemporary intellectual, for Said, takes up social responsibility in the ascetic way that Benda's *clerics* (or Gramsci's traditional intellectual), and not professional politicians, would. Here our sense of the vocational has a key role to play, metaphorically and literally.

The vocational is a world in which rational argument and legitimate opposition holds sway, a place from which justice can be envisaged, and a site that affords all people — regardless of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, and class — respect. Said's project, of course, is to insure commensurability between the vocational and the secular; the end goal is to translate the virtues of the vocational into the secular.² *Representations of the Intellectual* is an important part of that process because it holds the vocational up as a mirror with which secular intellectuals can view themselves, their socio-political functions, and the results of their actions. Much like Gramsci and Benda provide checks and balances for each other, so the secular and the vocational are invoked to keep a watchful eye on one another. *Representations of the Intellectual*, finally, provides significantly more than a set of questions; the work offers a model of the intellectual as amateur, as one unfettered and unattracted by materiality. The intellectual is a man or woman passionately committed to social transformation, regardless of the costs.

This essay is dedicated to the political activism of my brother Glenn Farred and my partner Cynthia Young. Working in very different political contexts, they have both consistently challenged my conception of the role of the intellectual in society.

NOTES

1. Said has a more substantial discussion of James in his book *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1993), see particularly p. 245.

2. See Bruce Robbins's *Secular Vocations: Intellectuals, Professionals, Culture* (New York: Verso, 1993) for his discussion of the intellectual function. The title of Robbins's book, *Secular Vocations*, is interesting in light of the discussion I have raised. Secular vocation strikes me as a hybrid — a resolution of the split — which best describes the way in which Said positions intellectuals.

From Allon Plan to Washington Accords

Zionism and Peace

Gilbert Achcar

Prologue: On the "Jewish and democratic state"

CONTRARY TO THE DOMINANT PERCEPTION TODAY and the most current ideology, democracy and discrimination — religious, racial, ethnic or sexual — are not antithetical notions. The recognition of so-called democratic rights — civil and political — does not predetermine their extension; even the principle of equality of rights does not imply their real universality.¹ Thus the democratic form of the government is independent of the particular selection of the *démos*. And without going back to the slaveowning democracy of Athenian antiquity, one is aware of the fact that, in the matter of human rights, explicit universalism ruled out tacit particularisms² only a long time after the solemn declarations of the 18th century.³

The anteriority of the discriminatory particularisms and, perhaps, the difficulty of justifying them with regard to the democratic spirit which supposedly inspired the drafters of these declarations, have meant that they have most often remained tacit, as parts of a hidden statement. Their abolition, on the other hand, is generally explicit, in the manner of the 15th (1870) and 19th (1920) amendments to the United States Constitu-

¹"We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness," proclaimed the United States Declaration of Independence in 1776. Blacks and Indians were de facto excluded from the ranks of men, by "the white man, the European, the man par excellence." (Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*)

²The universalism/particularism antithesis belongs to the vocabulary of Christian theology. The affinities between the universalist doctrine of the Redemption and that of the rights of the human person are, moreover, to be counted among the contributions of Christianity to political humanism.

³This point was vigorously stressed by Florence Gauthier at the time of the bicentennial of the 1789 revolution. See "Le droit naturel en révolution," in Étienne Balibar et al., *Permanences de la Révolution*, LaBrèche, Paris, 1989.

GILBERT ACHCAR, a Lebanese-born writer, lives presently in France where he teaches sociology and international relations at the University of Paris.

tion which eliminated racial and sexual discriminations so far as the right to vote was concerned, although these discriminations were nowhere mentioned in the original document. In fact, an explicit universalism of democratic rights was imposed on a worldwide scale, in the texts and the dominant ideology, only after the Second World War—in part, as a result of the confrontation with the fascist antitheses. It was consecrated by the International Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948, of which article 2, in particular, proclaimed equality of rights—with a very extensive definition of rights—“without any distinction, particularly of race, of color, of sex, of language, of religion, of political opinion or of any other opinion, of national or social religion, of fortune, of birth or of any other situation.”

Egalitarian universalism carried the day on the level of declared principles, but not always, far from it, in the actualities of state and social practices. The hypocrisy then became manifest, the texts having lost any ambiguity. If the USSR and its satellites, as well as Saudi Arabia and the Union of South Africa, abstained during the vote in 1948, the three great Western democracies seated on the Security Council, although official sponsors of the declaration, would themselves infringe the proclaimed egalitarianism, not only from the point of view of gender relations, but also through racial and ethnic discrimination in the colonies, if not in the metropolis.

DAVID BEN-GURION WAS, THEN, IN GOOD COMPANY when he proclaimed, in the Israeli Declaration of Independence of May 14, 1948, that the new state “will assure the most complete social and political equality to all its inhabitants without distinction of religion, race or sex.” Nonetheless, the contradiction in this precise case figures in the very text, the falseness of the proclaimed egalitarianism being only more patent. The entire Declaration of Independence was placed under the sign of the “Jewish state,” the central objective of the world Zionist movement. It was not simply the State of Israel which was proclaimed, but “a Jewish state in the land of Israel which will bear the name of the State of Israel,” and which “will be open to Jewish immigration and to Jews coming from all the countries of their dispersion.”

The contradiction between proclaimed egalitarianism and implicit discrimination had become inherent in the Zionist project of colonization when it targeted a territory already inhabited by a non-Jewish population.⁴

It was necessary from that point that the “colonists” of the *Jewish Company* conceived by Theodor Herzl⁵ establish their state through the expulsion of the

⁴“Wanting to create a purely Jewish, or predominantly Jewish, state in an Arab Palestine in the 20th century could not help but lead to a colonial-type situation and to the development (completely normal sociologically speaking) of a racist state of mind, and in the final analysis to a military confrontation between the two ethnic groups.” (Maxime Rodinson, *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?*, Monad Press, New York, 1973, p.77)

⁵*The Jewish State: An Attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Question*, H. Pordes, London, 1972. The reference to colonists is on p.46.

indigenous inhabitants, before being able to show themselves generous toward their eventual hosts:

And if it should occur that men of other creeds and different nationalities come to live amongst us, we should accord them honourable protection and equality before the law. We have learnt toleration in Europe.⁶

This tension between the profession of democratic faith and the real colonialist project would characterize the thought of Ben-Gurion, disciple of Herzl and realizer of his project. The founder of the state of Israel could thus affirm, in 1937, that "the Arab inhabitants of Palestine should enjoy all civic and political rights, not only as individuals, but as a national group, just like the Jews"; then shortly afterwards make this statement: "Were I an Arab ... I would rebel even more vigorously, bitterly, and desperately against the immigration that will one day turn Palestine and all its Arab residents over to the Jewish rule."⁷

It is well-known that even under the frontiers proposed by the partition plan adopted by the UN in 1947, the "Jewish"⁸ state was, on the demographic level,

⁶Ibid., p.71. "We should there [in Palestine] form a portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilisation as opposed to barbarism." (p.30)

⁷Shabtai Tevet, *Ben Gurion: The Burning Ground*, 1886-1948, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1987, pp.542, 544. Rather than rehabilitating the Zionist far right, one discredits still more its democratic professions of faith in recalling, as does Alain Dieckhoff, that the diverse proclamations of the Irgun [the Zionist Revisionist armed organization] always mentioned, in the manner of the one published in July 1946, that the goal of the political struggle was to found an independent and democratic society where equality of rights would be guaranteed to all whatever their origin and their belief. It even made reference to the drawing up of a constitution based on the United States Declaration of Independence." (*L'invention d'une nation: Israël et la modernité politique*, Gallimard, Paris, 1993, p. 264)

⁸Nearly 55% of the territory of British mandate Palestine was attributed to the "Jewish state, whereas the Jewish residents of this territory only constituted one-third of its total population. Even allowing that all the residents — newly arrived immigrants, like indigenous inhabitants — would have enjoyed equal rights to sovereignty in the territory, the partition plan was manifestly iniquitous. In effect, the UN took up the Zionist thesis of the right of the Diaspora Jews to sovereignty in Palestine. "The authors of this partition saw this demographic relationship in a dynamic perspective: the expected immigration would very quickly allow the constitution of a Jewish majority. Jean-Paul Chagnollaud, "Palestine: l'enjeu démographique," in the *Revue d'études palestiniennes*, Paris, no. 7, printemps 1983, pp.27-29.

The victors of the Second World War, Truman's United States in particular, sought to rid themselves of the troublesome burden of the survivors of the Holocaust by diverting them to Palestine, in concert with the Zionist movement. Recall the vehemence with which the Zionists had previously opposed the Roosevelt plan to admit the refugees to other countries, including the United States (see Morris Ernst, *So Far So Good*, Harper, New York, 1948, and Alan Taylor, *Prelude to Israel*, Philosophical Library, New York, 1959). During the Holocaust, Roosevelt himself failed to come to the aid of the Jews of Europe, as has been shown by David Wyman (*The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945*, Pantheon, New York, 1984). The same author admits, however, although in an apologetic fashion, that the Zionists deliberately chose to privilege their Palestinian project to the detriment of saving the Jews of Europe. (pp.175-177)

This was Ben-Gurion's choice, as his biographer Shabtai Tevet explains: "In spite of the certainty that genocide was being carried out, the JAE [Jewish Agency Executive,

only 55% Jewish. It would have been very much less so within the frontiers which followed the war of 1948 (650,000 Jews to 877,000 Arabs), were it not for the massive exodus of Palestinians (710,000) fleeing the terror and the fighting. The reasons for this exodus have been much discussed.⁹ Jean-Paul Chagnollaud was completely right, however, when he affirmed that in a certain sense, the question hardly has any interest today, for in essence the problem is no longer why they left when one knows perfectly well why they could not return.¹⁰

By an implacable "ratchet effect," the Palestinian refugees were prevented by the new state from recovering their lands and their homes (which were massively destroyed with entire villages being razed), prevented from returning (the notion of *return* is, in their case, unchallengeable) to their age old territory, now "open to Jewish immigration." On the other hand, the "Law of Return" of 1950 accorded Israeli citizenship automatically to all new immigrants, on condition that they were "Jewish," according to a definition which would be inexorably reduced to the most obtuse religious criteria.¹¹ Thus, by a cruel irony of history, the Zionist movement — fleeing a hideous European anti-Semitism which erected religious affiliation as a criterion of "racial" discrimination — had come to establish a state founded on a discrimination based on the same religious criterion, given a more restrictive religious interpretation. And it was by the same inexorable logic that the Zionist "socialists" of Ben-Gurion's party came to make religious instruction compulsory in the schools.¹²

This outcome was entirely prefigured in the very idea of the "state of the

presided by Ben-Gurion] did not deviate appreciably from its routine ... Two facts can be definitively stated: Ben-Gurion did not put the rescue effort above Zionist politics, and he did not regard it as a principal task demanding his personal leadership..." op. cit., p. 848. Teveth attributes this attitude to what he called a "philosophy of the beneficial disaster" (p.850), quoting Ben-Gurion who said: "The harsher the affliction, the greater the strength of Zionism." (ibid.) In this respect, Ben-Gurion was only taking after his inspirer, Theodor Herzl, who stated in the prologue to his book-manifesto: "the present scheme ...includes the employment of an existent propelling force... And what is our propelling force? The misery of the Jews." (op.cit.,p.8)

Recently again, the Zionist movement has been inciting the departure of the Jewish population of the ex-USSR and has sought to channel them toward Israel, contrary to the wish of the great majority of emigrants to go to North America. "Mr. Shamir, the Israeli prime minister, complained that the [US] administration offered them the freedom to choose their country of destination. This free choice, in effect, is unfavorable to Israel. Ninety percent of Soviet Jews prefer to go to the United States. *Le Monde*, Paris, October 4, 1989.

⁹This debate is today dominated by the work of the Israeli historian Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem. 1947-1949*, Cambridge University, Cambridge, 1987.

¹⁰*Op. Cit.*, p.31.

¹¹On the odd debates in Israel on the definition of Jewish identity, see Akiva Orr, *The UnJewish State: The Politics of Jewish Identity in Israel*, Ithaca, London, 1981. See also on this subject: Nathan Weinstock, *Le Sionisme contre Israel*, Maspero, Paris, 1969, pp.310-319.

¹²To the point that the teaching of the Jewish religion is even imposed on Arabs: "At the end of his studies, the Arab high school student knows much more of the history of the Jewish people than that of the Arabs. The Koran is less studied than the *Torah*." (Doris Bensimon et Eglal Errera, *Israéliens: Des Juifs et des Arabes*, Complexe, Bruxelles, 1989, p.443)

Jews" (*Der Judenstaat*), the original title of Herzl's book, which became the "Jewish state" in the principal European translations.¹³ As many have observed, harking back to the original debate between the nationalist and secular state project of Herzl's "political Zionism" and the "cultural Zionism" of Ahad Ha'Am — concerned to establish in Palestine a Jewish spiritual homeland incarnating the highest spiritual values of Judaism, without sully and degrading it through the recourse to arms rendered inevitable by the state project — the mistranslation comes close to the opposite sense. It is justified, however, by the *doctrinal logic of political Zionism, whose nationalism, from the point that it embraced not only the Yiddish nation,*¹⁴ *but all the Jews of the planet became inseparable from the religious reference, the sole common denominator* — not as a system of spiritual values, but in its narrowest discriminatory conception, matched with the traditional obligations and restrictions.

MUCH IRONY HAS BEEN POURED ON THE STRIKING CONTRAST between the reality of the state of Israel and Herzl's determination, proclaimed in his Zionist manifesto, that the clergy (and the army!) should not "interfere in the administration of the state."¹⁵ But the same Herzl, in the same work, betrayed quite clearly the confessional logic of his approach, when he described the organization of the immigration:

Each group will have its rabbi, travelling with his congregation... Local groups will afterwards form voluntarily about their rabbi, and each locality will have its spiritual leader... They will not need to address special meetings for the purpose; an appeal such as this may be uttered in the synagogue. And thus it must be done. *For we feel our historic affinity only through the faith of our fathers, as we have long ago absorbed the languages of different nations to an ineradicable degree.*¹⁶

¹³See the *Note* by Claude Klein in the preface to his new French translation of Herzl's manifesto, *L'État des Juifs*, La Découverte, Paris, 1989, pp.5-12.

¹⁴In fact, there is an identity between the emergence of Yiddish, that is its passage, or its *promotion*, from the status of "jargon" to that of language, and the appearance of Jewish national sentiment," wrote Claude Klein (p.135) in his excellent *Essai sur le sionisme*, published as an appendix to his translation of Herzl (op.cit., pp.117-186).

¹⁵*Op. Cit.*, p.71.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p.54. The phrase that we stress here conceals, and for good reason, the specificity of Yiddish, which was spoken by the overwhelming majority of Jews in central and eastern Europe.

Alain Dieckhoff, in his already cited book, a brilliant work not, however, free from ambiguities and contradictions in his attempt to stress the "political modernity" of Zionism, stumbles in explaining the patent inadequacy of this ideology so far as secularism is concerned. He attributes this inadequacy principally to the persistence, in Zionism, of an "ardent aspiration to community life" (pp.121-122) — a quasi-tautological explanation. The author shows nonetheless how this inadequacy is inherent in the Zionist doctrine of the "Jewish nation," to the "invention" of which his book is devoted *without for all that ever questioning* the postulate. Indeed only the pan-Jewish postulate explains why "the religious criterion was finally the only one which could, in a precise fashion, trace the contours of the Jewish nation, all the other parameters (cultural, subjective...) being too vague or inapplicable." (p.158) And it was the insufficiency of this same criterion to cement a nationalism which impelled Zionism to "invent" a veritable new nation, the *Israeli nation* (which Dieckhoff does not even mention), founded on a new-old language — modern Hebrew —

To the convergence between political Zionism and the most traditionalist religious Zionism¹⁷ was added another equally ineluctable influence. Rereading Herzl's work in 1946, Hannah Arendt stressed the point to which the "state of mind" of the founder of the Zionist movement was close to that of his anti-Semitic environment and inspired by the tradition of German nationalism.¹⁸ This common state of mind in the dominant currents of political Zionism would lead to a convergence on the terrain of armed expansionism, between the "socialist" Zionism of a Ben-Gurion and the "Revisionism" of a Jabotinsky, although the former had not hesitated, at the beginning of the 1930s, to compare the latter to fascism and Hitlerism.¹⁹ The politics of power, the *Machtpolitik*, was built into the very logic of the "Jewish state" project ever since it was decided to establish it in Palestine: it could only be achieved by force, as advocated by the "Revisionists."²⁰

and on the destruction, for the purposes of assimilation, of the original national particularities of the immigrants, the Yiddish language in the first place.

Thus one can understand the paradox of Zionist nationalism, at the same time anti-assimilationist and strongly assimilationist, which considered the French model of national integration "as maladjusted when applied to the detriment [sic] of the Jews (as was the case in France in 1789), but perfectly valid when it permits them to rediscover a collective substratum. (*Ibid.*, p.124) Perhaps one can thus keep in mind the fact that "Zionism also bears a load of protest, indeed of rejection, vis-à-vis republican modernity which, for the Jews, has taken the form of the civic emancipation and integration in the host societies." (p.96)

¹⁷A convergence which, since Herzl, has been reflected by the alliance between the two currents inside the World Zionist Organization.

¹⁸"The Jewish State: Fifty Years After — Where Have Herzl's Politics Led?," in Gary Smith, ed., *Zionism — The Dream and the Reality: a Jewish Critique*, Barnes & Noble, New York, 1974, pp. 67-80.

¹⁹See Shabtai Tevet, *op. cit.*, ch. 26 in particular. The Ben Gurion-Jabotinsky meetings and their 1934 agreement (aborted by the opposition of the Zionist left) were the occasion for the two men to note their "like-mindedness" (Tevet, ch.29, p.482). It was Ben-Gurion's Rafi which, in 1967, imposed the integration of Menachem Begin's Gahal on the government of National Unity. On the convergence between Ben-Gurion and Jabotinsky-Begin, see Mitchell Cohen, *Zion & State: Nation, Class and the Shaping of Modern Israel*. Basil Blackwell, New York, 1987.

²⁰This is eloquently explained by Alain Dieckhoff: "In fact, an essential question is posed: is the construction of a Jewish national homeland compatible with the scrupulous respect of democratic rights? The answer, for Jabotinsky, is, without doubt, negative for an obvious reason. If the British mandatory power was to rigorously apply the democratic (that is, majority rule) norm, political power would automatically be transferred to the Arabs, the largest community, who would use it to halt Jewish immigration and put an end to the consolidation of the socio-political infrastructure of the Yishuv [the Jewish community in Palestine]. The national objective demanded therefore the non-application of the majority postulate... As was his custom, Jabotinsky pronounced, without pointless ornamentation, some hometruths which his left adversaries preferred to pass over in hypocritical silence." *Op. Cit.*, p. 213.

Astonishingly, the same author shortly afterwards takes as good coin the democratic proclamations of the Irgun (see note 7 above): he uses them as an argument to refute the anathemas hurled against this organization by Hannah Arendt, who characterized it as terroristic and chauvinist, similar to fascism and Nazism. Moreover, one of the main ambiguities of Dieckhoff's work is his attempt to absolve Jabotinsky of the accusation of fas-

In 1946, Judah Magnes, a partisan with Martin Buber of peaceful coexistence between Arabs and Jews in a binational Palestine, noted bitterly that the Zionist movement had de facto adopted Jabotinsky's point of view.²¹ Forty years later, Simha Flapan, former leader of Mapam, party of the Zionist far left, attacking the legend woven by the Labor party around the historic figure of Ben-Gurion, wrote about him in his posthumous work:

...where the Arabs were concerned, he espoused the basic principles of Revisionism: the expansion of the borders, the conquest of Arab areas, and the evacuation of the Arab population.²²

On the *Zionist* state, a qualification very much more rigorous than that of the "Jewish" state, one of the most severe verdicts was that expressed, in 1959, by a leader of the American Jewish community, James P. Warburg:

Nothing could be more understandable than the desire of the European Jews, generated by centuries of persecution and fired by the inhuman Nazi atrocities, to escape forever from minority status... But nothing could be more tragic than to witness the creation of a Jewish state in which the non-Jewish minorities are treated as second-class citizens — in which neither a Jew's Christian wife nor their children could be buried in the same cemetery as their father.²³

It is one thing to create a much-needed refuge for the persecuted and oppressed. It is quite another thing to create a new chauvinistic nationalism and a state based in part upon medieval theocratic bigotry and in part upon the Nazi-exploited myth of the existence of a Jewish race.²⁴

And yet! This semi-religious Zionist state, founded on a religious discrimination, is undoubtedly democratic for its inhabitants of Jewish descent. Moreover, the Palestinian Arabs who hold Israeli citizenship, although second class citizens in many respects, also undoubtedly enjoy more political rights than the inhabitants of the Arab states. We return here to our point of departure: there is not at all an antinomy between formal political democracy and the existence of a constitutive discrimination of the *dÉmos*. From whence the *possibility* of a Zionist ideology of the "Jewish and democratic state" as developed by Ben-Gurion in opposition to the Revisionists.

AS TO THE *PLAUSIBILITY* OF THIS IDEOLOGY with regard to the egalitarian universal-

cism (to be distinguished from any comparison to Nazism, which would be excessive certainly in his personal case, although justified for a number of his comrades). The main argument invoked by the author is the proclaimed "liberalism" of the founder of Revisionism, which supposes an antinomy between economic liberalism and Mussolinian fascism (a debateable postulate: see Mitchell Cohen, *op. cit.*, pp.170-174). Moreover, Dieckhoff conceals the real relationship between Jabotinsky and fascist Italy, which he alludes to later in a few lines (*ibid.*, pp.278-279). As to the alleged "contempt" held by Jabotinsky for the cult of the Fuhrer and the Duce (p.244), anybody familiar with the trajectory of the "Rosh Betar" can judge its worth.

²¹"A Solution through Force?," in Gary Smith, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 109-118.

²²*The Birth of Israel: Myths and Realities*, Pantheon, New York, 1987, p.37.

²³An allusion to the case of the burial of Joseph Steinberg, son of a Jewish father and a Christian mother, which made the news in 1958.

²⁴Quoted in Gary Smith, *ibid.*, p.131.

ism proclaimed in 1948, it is precisely conditioned by the existence of an assured Jewish majority inside the *dÉmos* — concealing the fact that it has been constituted by the discriminatory denial to the indigenous inhabitants of an elementary right of return. The maintenance of a minority of non-Jewish citizens inside the Israeli *dÉmos* appears, therefore, as the indispensable token, not to say alibi, of Zionist democracy and its proclaimed universalism — on the express condition that this minority remains very much a minority and cannot put in question the “Jewishness” of the state. Such is the rationale of the opposition of Ben-Gurion and his disciples to the program of the Zionist right, advocating the extension of the frontiers of the “Jewish” state by the pure and simple annexation of the entire territory of mandatory Palestine, if not the two banks of the Jordan — prepared thus to include a great mass of Arabs and to accommodate itself to a political discrimination *intra-muros*, making nonsense of the myth²⁵ of the democratic state. “Labor,” wrote Simha Flapan,

presents Ben-Gurion's ideas and strategies as the other alternative to Likud's concept of a Greater Israel, pointing out that he totally rejected rule over another people and was unconditionally committed to the preservation of the Jewish and democratic character of the state.²⁶

The Mapam leader added this commentary:

Indeed, the concept of a democratic Jewish society might conceivably provide such an alternative were it free from the impulse toward territorial expansionism — for whatever reason: historical, religious, political or strategic. But the fact is that Ben-Gurion built his political philosophy precisely on these two contradictory elements: a democratic Jewish society in the *whole*, or in most, of Palestine.²⁷

Indeed, Ben-Gurion did not hide the fact that he only accepted partition out of tactical concerns, on a provisional basis, and that his objective was “Palestine as a whole.”²⁸ The motivation for his expansionism was the necessary space for the original Zionist project of gathering in Palestine the majority of the world's Jews, a project which he always placed above any other consideration. Thus, the disagreement between Jabotinsky's heirs and those of Ben-Gurion was never about the desirable position of the eastern frontier of the Zionist state: all are agreed that it should pass along the Jordan River and the Dead Sea, if only for “security” reasons.²⁹

²⁵In the sense in which Élise Marienstras describes *Les mythes fondateur de la nation américain* (Éditions Complexe, Bruxelles, 1992). One is aware moreover that the founding myths of the Israeli nation imitate these latter, to the point that one could detect a narcissistic dimension in the mutual admiration between the two nations.

²⁶*Op. cit.*, p.234.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p.236. The emphasis is the author's.

²⁸See Shabtai Teveth, *op.cit.*, ch.34 and 35, as well as p.853. Chaim Weizmann shared the same opinion (see Norman Rose, *Chaim Weizmann: A Biography*, Viking, New York, 1986, pp.320-330): the aim was, he said, “to get a fulcrum on which to place a lever... leaving the problems of expansion and extension to future generations.” (p.323)

²⁹To the argument of necessary space and the references to the Bible, there was added, after 1949, the security or “strategic” motivation which predominated in the eyes of the Israeli political-military establishment, and whose key argument turned on the narrowness of the strip of territory between the Mediterranean and the old Jordanian frontier (the “Green Line”) where the majority of Israelis lived.

The disagreement rather concerned the way of settling the demographic problem in this framework, so as to preserve the “Jewishness” of the state — the concern of the Labor Party being to preserve its democratic reputation, at the same time, a vital question for a state so dependent on foreign aid. It is then highly significant that the first coalition government grouping together the Revisionists (represented by Menachem Begin) and the socialists was formed on the eve of the war of June 1967 and in preparation for it. Then, when the state of Israel was reunited with the rest of the Palestine of the British mandate, the divergences between the two Zionist factions recovered all their sharpness.

The Dilemma of 1967 and the Allon Plan

CONTRARY TO WHAT HAPPENED 19 YEARS BEFORE and for several reasons, among them undoubtedly the desire not to share the unenviable fate of the refugees of 1948, the great majority of the Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza remained in their territory in 1967. The Zionist leaders found themselves confronted with a real dilemma: having attained their objective of shifting the eastern frontier of their state to the Jordan River, they found themselves with a sizeable Palestinian Arab population under their control. In these conditions, the pure and simple annexation of the whole of the newly occupied Palestinian territories became impracticable: by granting Israeli citizenship to their inhabitants, it would imperil the *Jewish* character of the Zionist state; in refusing this citizenship, it would put in question its *democratic* character.³⁰

By any logic, the only solution which would permit both remaining along the bank of the Jordan River and preserving the “Jewish state” as well as its democratic reputation, was to grant to the *areas of Palestinian high population density* (with the exception of East Jerusalem, annexed from the beginning for ideological reasons) the status of *enclaves* within the new frontiers of the state of Israel.³¹

³⁰The concerns of the Ashkenazi Labor establishment have been summed up with an admirable frankness by Saul Friedländer: “Faced with the presence of a vast Arab population inside Israel, one can conceive the reinforcement of Jewish extremist tendencies inspired as much by economic as by religious or national motives, to demand the expulsion of all the Arabs or the application of an “apartheid” regime. If these elements succeeded in imposing themselves, the Jewish state would be cut off from the world and the Jews of the Diaspora themselves. Finally, if it is probable that in contact with a vast Arab population the ‘Oriental’ Jews would tend to integrate themselves more rapidly inside the ‘western’ population to distinguish themselves from the Arabs, it is not entirely excluded that the poorest elements among them would be attracted by the Arab proletariat on both the social and cultural levels. The Arab population could then become an active element in the disintegration of Jewish society.” *Réflexions sur l’avenir d’Israël*, Seuil, Paris, 1969, p.146.

³¹Since this article is devoted to the solution which finally imposed itself, this is not the place to go into the different points of view expressed, in Israel, in the debate on the fate of the territories occupied in 1967. On this subject see, for the immediate post-1967 debate: Éli Lobel, *Les Juifs et la Palestine* (published with Sabri Geries, *Les Arabes en Israël*), Maspero, Paris, 1969, pp.36-54; Peretz Merhav, *La Gauche israélienne*, Anthropos, Paris, 1973, ch. 24 et 25. For a review of the more recent debates, see Louis-Jean Duclos, “La question des frontières orientales d’Israël,” in the *Revue d’Études palestiniennes*, no. 9, automne 1983, pp.17-31.

It was Yigal Allon, a figurehead of the Israeli political-military establishment and of the Labor left, who elaborated this project of settlement which became known as the "Allon Plan."³² He presented it to the government of Levi Eshkol, in which he was Deputy Prime Minister, at the beginning of July 1967. It is useful to cite the author of the plan himself to clarify the key factors:

The territorial solution must respond to three fundamental imperatives:

- a) the historic rights of the people of Israel on the land of Israel;
- b) a state with a preponderant Jewish majority on the national level, which is democratic on the cultural, social and political levels;
- c) defensible frontiers.³³

Consequently, if it is necessary to choose between a de facto binational state with more territory and a Jewish state with less territory, I opt for the second eventuality, on condition that it has defensible frontiers.

This alternative is pitilessly clear.

If we held within Israel all the territories of strong Arab density by granting their inhabitants all civic rights, we would no longer have a Jewish state. If we annexed them in refusing these rights to the inhabitants, we would cease to be a democratic society. But we want at the same time a Jewish state — with an Arab minority enjoying equality of rights — and a democratic society in the full sense of the term.³⁴

In the light of these imperatives, Allon advocated the definitive acquisition by Israel of a frontier strip of roughly 15 kilometres width along the Jordan River, stretching to the West of the Dead Sea to the outskirts of Hebron, as well as the acquisition, in addition to the old city of Jerusalem, of its eastern flank up to the River — so as to reduce the Palestinian territories of the West Bank to two separate enclaves to the north and the south of the "holy city" linked by a narrow corridor.³⁵

This formula, according to Allon,

allows an Arab solution for the population of the West Bank and leaves a sovereign corridor at its disposition between Ramallah, Jericho and the Allenby Bridge.

This defence configuration could resist a modern army. It is meant to protect the country, not only from its direct neighbors, but also from all the region to the east, which extends as far as the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean, *a fortiori* since the countries which compose it are equipping themselves massively with ultramodern offensive weapons. It creates also a *hinterland* destined to protect Jerusalem and its environs from the dangers of guerilla warfare, and gives us the possibility of implan-

Moreover, since this article deals with the Israeli-Palestinian settlement, we have not gone into the debates concerning the non-Palestinian Arab occupied territories.

³²See Yigal Allon, *Israel, la lutte pour l'espoir*, Stock, Paris, 1977. The Allon Plan met with the approval of the United States and, remarkably, François Mitterrand (see the extracts from Yeruham Cohen's book in Hebrew on *The Allon Plan*, reproduced in the appendix to the preceding book, pp.243-247). Allon died in 1978.

³³Yigal Allon, *op. cit.*, p.180. Emphasis by the author.

³⁴*Ibid.*, p.184.

³⁵For a detailed description of the Allon Plan, see Jean-Paul Chagnollaude, *op. cit.*, and Alain Dieckhoff, *Les Espaces d'Israel*, FNSP, Paris, 1989, pp.28-33. The Likud for its part proposed the division of the northern enclave (Samaria) into two sections. This is what Alain Dieckhoff calls a "strategy of segmentation of the territory and of demarcation between human groups." (p.79)

tation in the semi-deserted areas. I add that the territories that we return will be demilitarized, and that in installing ourselves on the flank of the population of the West Bank, we will in any case neutralise its offensive potential.³⁶

As to Gaza, Allon advocated that it should not be returned to Egypt, but rather attached to the West Bank enclaves, as access to the sea "with rights of circulation, but without creating a corridor," while keeping control of the South of the sector so as to control access to the Egyptian Sinai.

Yigal Allon was in no way motivated by some internationalist or pacifist generosity; his entire past as a nationalist combatant attests to it,³⁷ as does his own line of argument, faithful to the Zionist tradition of Ben-Gurion. At the time when he formulated his plan, that is, immediately after the 1967 war, the territories concerned had only just been conquered. The Israeli pacifists, the true "doves," proposed that they should be returned in their quasi-totality in exchange for peace treaties with the Arab states.³⁸ The Allon plan envisaged, on the contrary, a prolonged occupation and a process of annexation by the requisition of lands and the implantation of settlements, so as to physically occupy the territory which he sought to acquire definitively.

Fundamentally, *the Allon Plan was then a plan of colonization and partial annexation*, in the name of "territorial compromise," unlike the complete annexation advocated by the Zionist right. Between this latter and the Labor partisans of the Allon Plan, it was not a matter of hawks and doves, but "rather of hawks and vultures" in the words of the radical internationalist Eli Lobel.³⁹ The Allon Plan was however very much more coherent and realistic than the aims of Likud. Having come to power in 1977, the latter anyway did not dare to carry out its program to the end, but contented itself with the subtleties of a project of extra-territorial Palestinian self-government which never convinced anybody. The

³⁶Yigal Allon, *op.cit.*, p.189.

³⁷Allon was already in 1948 a partisan of the conquest of the whole of Palestine up until the Jordan river, as he himself recalled: "... I say it openly: I disagreed with the way in which the war ended ... I was already convinced that we should go as far as the Judean desert and the Jordan to create the conditions of a stable defence...while finding a solution to the problem of the Arab population." (*op.cit.*, p.37) Yigal Allon had certainly conceived this "solution" well before presenting it to the Israeli cabinet. In 1967, he led the Ahdut Haavodah (Unity of Labor) which laid claim to the whole of Palestine, as well as the Hakibbutz Hameuhad movement which was in the vanguard of the creations of settlements. It is also significant that he was in charge of the Ministry of Absorption of Immigration, from 1967 to 1969.

³⁸See Peretz Merhav, *op. cit.* In the debate which raged inside the Labor party in 1969, Allon's faction, Ahdut Haavodah, allied itself to Rafi, the rightist faction led by Moshe Dayan and Shimon Peres, against the "doves" of the party (Abba Eban, Pinhas Sapir, allied to Mapam).

³⁹*Op. cit.*, p.85. Subsequently, the drift to the right of Israeli society, revealed by the electoral victory of the Likud, would make Allon appear as a "dove." Simha Flapan, former leader of Mapam, could not fall victim to this optical illusion. In his posthumous work, he recalled that "the first settlements in the West Bank were constructed at the instigation of Yigal Allon," and that "it was again Allon who gave his agreement to the attempts of the fundamentalist rabbi Moshe Levinger to establish a Jewish community in the heart of Arab Hebron" (*op. cit.*, p.239 — one of the Hebron settlers carried out the massacre in the Tomb of the Patriarchs/Mosque of Ibrahim in February 1994).

plan of the Labor Party thus imposed itself de facto as the fundamental line of conduct of the Zionist state in the 1967 territories — even under the Likud which, despite having amended it in its fashion, nevertheless strengthened its essential tendencies.⁴⁰

As to the ultimate fate of the Palestinian enclaves, Yigal Allon hardly said anything, for reasons of elementary tactical prudence. To the extent that his plan was precisely a long term one, it was necessary to allow some time for its implementation and for the ultimate emergence of an Arab interlocutor disposed to collaborate with the settlement dictated by Israel,⁴¹ but nonetheless armed with the authority needed to be credible. Since the creation of a Palestinian state, that is an entity enjoying the attributes of political and military sovereignty, had always been categorically rejected by the entire Zionist establishment, the three possibilities envisaged for the enclaves were to reunite them with King Hussein's Jordan, or to federate them with the latter, or again to constitute them as an "autonomous entity."

I will not enter into a debate here on what is known as the "Palestinian entity." I am among those who think that historic circumstances will entail its constitution even if it does not have roots plunged deep into the past.... Do not forget above all that it was in the name of the Palestinian problem that the Arab states unleashed war against us in 1948... and that, without its solution, one cannot hope for a real peace....

The king's idea of [Jordanian-Palestinian] federation does not in principle obstruct the road of direct negotiations with the population of these territories...From our point of view, there is room for negotiations with both.⁴²

This well-perceived importance of the Palestinian factor in any credible settlement would lead successive Israeli governments to search for Palestinian negotiating partners.⁴³ In 1977, Yigal Allon excluded no hypothesis in this regard, including that of dealing with the PLO if the latter were to mend its ways. His words have today acquired a premonitory value:

Certainly, if the PLO ceased to be the PLO, we would cease to consider it as such. Or if

⁴⁰Alain Dieckhoff gives a remarkable analysis of this process of partial annexation and the strategies which underlie it in his already cited work, *Les Espaces d'Israel*. See also Michel Foucher, "L' 'intersection' jordannienne," in *Maghreb-Machrek*, Paris, no. 108, April 1985.

⁴¹"Peace will not come as a result of a 'revolution of hearts' among them [the Arabs], but as the corollary of the balance of forces and a cold political realism. It will be lucidity and the acceptance of reality which will lead them to reconciliation, negotiation and peace." Yigal Allon, *op. cit.*, p.179.

⁴²*Ibid.*, p.257 (from a speech made by Yigal Allon to the Central Committee of the Israeli Labor Party in 1972, reproduced as an appendix to the book).

⁴³Here again it is important not to be taken in by appearances. The stress placed on the distinction between the Palestinian West Bank and the Jordanian kingdom is not in itself indicative of the attitude of a "dove." Initially, it was the right of the Labour Party — Dayan and Peres, in particular — who rejected the idea of returning it to Jordan, whereas the left defended the idea of a territorial continuity between the two banks of the Jordan (see Peretz Merhav, *op. cit.*, ch.24). The Likud, partisans of the annexation of the whole of the West Bank, supported Palestinian "self-government" all the more strongly (purely administrative in the framework of Israeli sovereignty) which it placed at the heart of the Camp David agreement with Sadat's Egypt.

*the tiger transformed itself into a horse, we could mount it. At that moment, we would deserve some headlines in our favor.*⁴⁴

The Washington Accords

THE HEADLINES WERE CERTAINLY THERE ON SEPTEMBER 13, 1993. The media affected total surprise, as if a new miracle had just come to pass in relation to a land which, to be sure, had witnessed many others. Only the discordant voices of some critics of the accords who were well acquainted with the situation, like Edward Said, Noam Chomsky or Meron Benvenisti,⁴⁵ pointed out that the accords signed on the White House lawn amounted to an updated version of the Allon Plan.

What then, did the accords actually say?

It is undeniable that the texts made public, that is the letters, the Declaration of Principles and its four annexes, as well as the Memorandum, fit in perfectly with the broad outline of the plan formulated in 1967. None of the measures in the Washington Accords contradict in any way whatsoever the program undertaken by the Israeli Labor Party in relation to the West Bank and Gaza more than a quarter of a century beforehand. This can easily be seen through examining some key points of these documents (without entering into every aspect of the question, notably the economic ones⁴⁶).

Let us begin by what has been perceived as the most spectacular event, namely the "mutual recognition." Yasser Arafat's letter, addressed to the Israeli Prime Minister, says the following:

"The PLO recognizes the right of the State of Israel to exist in peace and security," and "accepts U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338." The most important of these resolutions, 242 (November 1967), which the State of Israel has accepted from the beginning, had for a long time been rejected by the PLO, because it made no mention of the right of the Palestinians to return and to self-determination and ratified the principle of "secure borders," interpreted by the Israelis as justifying their redrawing of borders and their territorial demands.⁴⁷ In exchange for this concession, the PLO obtained no mention of the right of the Palestinians to self-determination or to return — one finds only, in the accords, the very vague formula of "legitimate rights."

The Arafat letter affirms that

the PLO renounces the use of terrorism and other acts of violence and will assume responsibility over all PLO elements and personnel in order to assure their compliance, prevent violations and discipline violators.

Because it applied only to the personnel of the PLO, this repudiation of violence

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p.204.

⁴⁵See Edward Said, "Comment conjurer le risque d'une perpétuelle soumission à l'État d'Israël," in *Le Monde diplomatique*, Paris, November 1993; Noam Chomsky, "L'accord d'Oslo, vicié au départ," in *Courrier international*, Paris, March 3, 1994; as well as Meron Benvenisti's article in the Israeli daily *Haaretz* of May 19, 1994.

⁴⁶See on this subject the articles by Sara Roy, "La prospérité ou l'affrontement," and Mahmoud Abdel-Fadil, "Une coopération économique déséquilibrée en faveur d'Israël" in *Le Monde diplomatique*, August 1994.

⁴⁷See Louis-Jean Duclos, *op. cit.*, p.21.

and the commitment to repress it in the face of a continuing occupation was not enough for the Israeli government. In a second letter addressed to the Norwegian minister Holst and annexed to the first,

the PLO encourages and calls upon the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to take part in the steps leading to the normalization of life, rejecting violence and terrorism...

Through the first affirmation of his letter to Yitzhak Rabin, Arafat repudiated the fundamental program of the PLO (*the liberation of Palestine*). Logically enough, he concluded that

those articles of the Palestinian Covenant which deny Israel's right to exist and the provisions of the Covenant which are inconsistent with the commitments of this letter are now inoperative and no longer valid.

This amounted to saying, in reality, that the Covenant itself is no longer valid. The tiger had indeed transformed itself into a horse; it could now be mounted. Rabin's letter, for its part, addresses itself to the Norwegian minister and not to Arafat: "in light of the PLO commitments" ... the Government of Israel has decided to recognize the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people..."; without any mention of rights.

The Declaration of Principles aims "to establish a Palestinian Self-Government Authority, the elected Council for the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, for a transitional period not exceeding five years, leading to a permanent settlement based on the Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338" (art. 1). The Palestinian "Self-Government" Authority will exercise its prerogatives in the territories which the Israeli army will choose to withdraw from. *The accords specify that they will be determined according to the principle of the withdrawal from the territories with a strong Arab population density, which is at the heart of the Allon Plan:*

... a redeployment of Israeli military forces in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip will take place... In redeploying its military forces, Israel will be guided by the principle that its military forces should be redeployed outside populated areas. (art. 13)

Of course, East Jerusalem, officially annexed by Israel since 1967, is not involved.⁴⁸ Moreover, not only does the accord not envisage the dismantling of any settlements, but it guarantees to the settlers and other Israelis a veritable "regime of capitulations" by which they will not come under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian authority on its own territory. The latter is responsible for the control of the Palestinians alone, and this by means of its police. It will dispose of no army, its external defense being assured by Israel (sic) whose army can circulate freely in the "Self-Government" territory.⁴⁹

⁴⁸Annexe I (point 1) stipulates nonetheless that "Palestinians of Jerusalem who live there will have the right to participate in the election process" (the elections to the Palestinian "Council"). That is to say that the Arab inhabitants of the old city — who have refused Israeli citizenship — will have, in some way, the status of foreign residents in their own city, holding citizenship in territories where they do not live. So far as the holy places are concerned, recall that Herzl had envisaged "a formula of extraterritoriality coming under international law." (*op. cit.*, p.47)

⁴⁹Nathan Weinstock commented on this type of status in 1969: "The Israeli plans for

In order to guarantee public order and internal security for the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Council will establish a strong police force, while Israel will continue to carry the responsibility for defending against external threats, as well as the responsibility for overall security of Israelis for the purpose of safeguarding their internal security and public order. (art. 8)

The first phase of the application of the accords affects the Gaza Strip and the region of Jericho, and it is stipulated in the Memorandum

that after the Israeli withdrawal, Israel will remain responsible for external security, as well as internal security and the public order of the settlements and of Israelis. The military forces and Israeli civilians can continue to freely use the roads in the Gaza Strip and the region of Jericho.

Thus, *the general framework envisaged by the Washington accords is very much that of the Allon Plan: Israeli withdrawal from the populated Arab zones, except for East Jerusalem, and redeployment in the rest of the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, with the maintenance of the settlements; the constitution of the evacuated enclaves as an autonomous Palestinian entity without full state powers, and without military means other than those necessary for internal repression; Israeli control of access to these enclaves, in particular the crossing points to Egypt and Jordan* (confirmed by the accords signed later in Cairo).

Certainly, these are for the moment interim arrangements, in expectation of a permanent status which is to be defined within five years at the latest. But this, like the interim settlement, will depend on a balance of forces which speaks for itself. One would really have to believe in miracles to imagine that at the end of five years of implementation of the framework envisaged by the Allon Plan — and it was obvious during the negotiations concerning Gaza and Jericho that the Israeli regime had no intention of giving any presents away — the Zionist state, out of sheer charity, would decide to evacuate the rest of Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, to allow the creation of an “independent and sovereign” Palestinian state. This is, nonetheless, what Arafat is promising to anyone prepared to believe him. In reality, if the PLO manages to obtain even the dismantling of some of the settlements judged by the Israeli government to be superfluous from the “strategic” point of view (that is those which fall outside the framework of the Allon plan), it could think itself lucky.

Meron Benvenisti, a well known Israeli specialist on the 1967 territories, states that the PLO negotiators have already admitted two principles: “no Israeli settlement will be evacuated” and “settlement blocs — constituting a continuous expanse — will be under Israeli authority.”⁵⁰ According to Benvenisti,

these settlement blocs which include the majority of the existing settlements, will be

the constitution of a Palestinian entity explicitly envisage that the diminished sovereignty of the Arab state would not cover any essential questions. As the Pretoria government has written in relation to Transkei: ‘so far as defense, foreign affairs and certain judicial questions are concerned, the guardian republic of the new state must remain responsible for the moment’...in other words, it amounts to the creation of an indigenous protectorate under the authority of the dominant nation: a Bantustan’.” (*op. cit.*, p.520)

⁵⁰Article already cited; quotations taken from the monthly bulletin *News From Within*, Alternative Information Center, Jerusalem, June 1994.

hooked up to Israel by far-reaching road networks, along which Israel will possess the authority to perform autonomous security activities.

They will divide the West Bank into “three cantons linked to each other by narrow corridors.” Moreover,

the road network serving these settlement blocs will turn the Palestinian cantons into a puzzle that will not permit the [Palestinian] administration any real authority.

The author concludes that the Palestinians will not be able to contest these principles which they have already admitted. What is more, the peace treaty currently being negotiated between Israel and Jordan envisages agreement on a frontier between the two states running along the Jordan River and the Dead Sea. This treaty could, then, remove all international legitimacy from the demand for Israeli withdrawal from the entire West Bank, which was under Jordanian sovereignty before June 1967. The Palestinian entity being new, its frontiers with the state of Israel remain to be defined, as the Declaration of Principles stipulates.

The Allon Plan is, then, well on the way to getting the sanction it expected: international and Arab recognition of the Israeli *fait accompli* in the West Bank and Gaza; peace in exchange for a “territorial compromise” allowing Israel to exercise direct or semi-direct sovereignty over the whole of British mandate Palestine; the solution — some would say the liquidation — of the Palestinian problem, at little cost, and the preservation of the “Jewish and democratic state,” with yet more favorable newspaper headlines.

“Peace of the Brave” or Capitulation?

NONETHELESS, THE VERY HISTORIC CONTEXT IN WHICH THESE ACCORDS have been concluded gives a specific meaning to the role allotted to Yasser Arafat's PLO, a meaning which was no more than a secondary consideration for Yigal Allon. For the latter, the main argument was demographic, in relation to the composition of the Israeli population. Certainly, it did not escape the clear-sightedness of the Zionist strategist that the very control of the Arab population of the 1967 territories could ultimately pose a problem.⁵¹ But the fact is that until 1987, that is until the outbreak of the Palestinian Intifada, the tensions inside these territories had been maintained at an acceptable level for the Israeli occupier.⁵²

The main problem, during the elaboration of the Allon Plan, was that of the Palestinians in exile, organized by the PLO, as well as the “Arab refusal”⁵³ which remained steadfast in the wake of the “Six Day War.” The Labor Party's program of “territorial compromise” appeared, at best, as a policy of an active waiting game. Time played in favor of Israel and its territorial strategy of requisitions

⁵¹“I understood that it was neither politically nor morally necessary to control the Arabs of this territory. Moreover, even if we wanted to, we could only do it at the point of a bayonet, and that only for a time — we are well placed to know it.” Yigal Allon, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

⁵²See Alain Dieckhoff, *Les espaces d'Israel*, *op. cit.*, pp.195-197.

⁵³Maxime Rodinson, *Israel et le refus arabe: 75 ans d'histoire*, Seuil, Paris, 1968 (published in English under the title *Israel and the Arabs*, Pantheon, New York, 1968.)

and settlements, faced with the impotent Arab demand for the complete restoration of the territories occupied in 1967. When King Hussein crushed the Palestinian armed movement in Jordan, in 1970-71, he became a potentially valuable partner for the Laborite project, having largely proved himself in the matter of control of his subjects. It was then that he formulated his project of the "United Arab Kingdom," involving his recovery of the West Bank as a federated province. However, the Arab context hardly permitted him to enter into a separate peace with the Zionist state on the latter's conditions, the only possibility which Israel had ever offered to its neighbors.

The affair became more complicated when the Jordanian monarch found himself still more isolated following the war of 1973, in which he did not take part. The PLO had succeeded in reconstituting its quasi-state in Lebanon and replaced its initial nationalist maximalism with the program of the independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.⁵⁴ The Rabat summit of Arab heads of state, in 1974, approved this new program of the Palestinian leadership and recognized it as "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people." The Israeli-Arab negotiations (International Conference at Geneva, bilateral military negotiations), which followed the YomKippur/Ramadan war, had raised the perspective of the "negotiated settlement," then became bogged down. The second attempt to crush the PLO degenerated into what became a 15-year war in Lebanon.

Likud's accession to power in Israel, in 1977, ruled out any perspective of a global settlement: it was out of the question that the Zionist right would envisage any kind of compromise on the Golan or the Palestinian territories. Only the Sinai lost its political mystique; moreover, the neutralization of the Egyptian front under U.S. guarantee could strengthen Likud's annexationist ambitions. The defection of Sadat led to a separate peace and the restoration of this vast desert expanse to Egypt, except for the Gaza Strip. The Israeli conditions — demilitarization and alert mechanisms under U.S. control — assured perfect security from this enormous "buffer zone." Likud proceeded to officially annex the Golan, emptied in 1967 of most of its Arab population; demographic considerations prevented them from doing the same in "Judea and Samaria" and Gaza.

The Zionist right nonetheless worked toward annexation: intensification and extension of the settlement process; pressures of every kind for a creeping expulsion of the indigenous inhabitants; project of extra-territorial Palestinian self-government and attempts to set up a network of collaborators to this end; efforts to increase the flow of Jewish immigration to Israel, so as to consolidate the Jewish demographic majority in all of Palestine. However, the invasion of Lebanon, in 1982, discredited Likud and led to worsened relations between Israel and the American godfather. This war had, nonetheless, considerably weakened the PLO, just as the peace with Egypt had opened the road to the Israeli-Arab settlement.

Having left Lebanon, Yasser Arafat had eulogized the policy of Ronald Reagan, reconciled with King Hussein, and quickly fallen out with Syria. After his second

⁵⁴Alain Gresh's book, *OLP, Histoire et stratégies: vers l'État palestinien*, SPAG, Paris, 1983, is devoted to this programmatic evolution. See also Nadine Picoudou, *Le Mouvement national palestinien: genèse et structures*, L'Harmattan, Paris, 1989.

departure from Lebanon by sea (1983), he went to Cairo, thus breaking the official Arab boycott of Egypt. Then, in 1985, he concluded an agreement with the Jordanian monarch for a common participation in negotiations with Israel, leading to dissidence of the PLO left-wing factions. The conditions for a settlement on the Jordanian-Palestinian front seemed to be ripening rapidly on the Arab side.

Having returned to power in the context of a coalition government with the Likud, the Israeli Labor Party, led by Shimon Peres, had made overtures to King Hussein. The latter accentuated his pressure on the PLO to accelerate the process, and believed himself strong enough to go forward without it. At the Arab summit in Baghdad in 1987, the PLO was more marginalized than it had ever been. It was at the end of this same year that the Intifada exploded in Gaza and the West Bank, overturning the basics of the situation. For the first time in 20 years, the Palestinians of the interior became uncontrollable and placed Israel in an extremely embarrassing situation. King Hussein, acknowledging his defeat, officially announced the abandonment of his claim to the West Bank. The PLO found itself once more in a position of strength.

Shimon Peres waged his electoral campaign in 1988 under the slogan of "territorial compromise," with an open invitation to the PLO to negotiate with Israel.⁵⁵ He was however defeated, while the Palestinian leadership, on its side, bent itself to the requirements of negotiations with the United States, being unable to negotiate with an Israeli government dominated by the Likud. The situation once more became bogged down, despite U.S. efforts, when the Gulf crisis blew up. By considerably reinforcing the weight of the United States in regional politics, the 1991 war opened the road to the Peace Conference inaugurated in Madrid, including, for the first time, direct negotiations between the Israeli government and a delegation officially sponsored by the PLO.

For the Likud, led by Yitzhak Shamir, it was just a matter of temporizing so as to obtain the U.S. green light for a loan of ten billion dollars. Israel needed this sum to be able to absorb the million Jewish immigrants expected to arrive as a result of the break-up of the USSR. For Shamir, this heaven-sent immigration would allow the annexation of the 1967 territories without any demographic worries. But the Bush Administration was not stupid. It kept in hand its means of financial pressure, which was a key argument in the victorious electoral campaign of the Israeli Labor Party in 1992, under the leadership of Yitzhak Rabin.

Meanwhile, the traditional forms of struggle of the Intifada were running out of steam, giving way to a Palestinian radicalization marked by the irresistible rise of the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas movement and a multiplication of the violent actions which it advocated. These attempts succeeded in seriously disturbing the Israeli sense of security on both sides of the 1967 border, more than the Intifada had with its stone-throwing. Rabin first tried to repress the Palestinian fundamentalists, by expelling several hundred of them to Lebanon, in December 1992. The operation boomeranged, considerably strengthening Hamas' prestige.

⁵⁵See his article published in *Le Monde*, September 23, 1988: "The PLO must, at the end of the day, choose between two options: the support of Syria... or dialogue with Jordan. Taking account of the divisions inside the PLO, it is only with Jordan that the organization can finalize a policy of negotiation with Israel."

Rabin was convinced, on the other hand, and with good reason, that the Palestinians of the interior, those of the Palestinian delegation at the Peace Conference, placed under the pressure of a population in the process of radicalization, were not disposed to accede to the demands of the Allon Plan and, still less, to commit themselves to repress the fundamentalists' struggle. Only the Palestinian bureaucracy of the PLO in exile would be prepared to meet these conditions, all the more so because it was on the verge of bankruptcy, the Arab oil monarchies having ceased to finance it because of its favorable attitude toward Iraq during the Gulf crisis. This was why Rabin and Peres decided to engage in direct secret negotiations with Yasser Arafat who did not ask for anything more. These negotiations would quickly lead to the Washington accords.

This resumé of the historic context allows us to clarify the specific role allotted to the PLO in the current implementation of the final phase of the Allon Plan. The Intifada, then the expansion of Hamas and its violent struggle in the interior — whereas the armed Palestinian exile organizations had long since ceased to seriously threaten Israeli security — have given a capital importance to a function which, in the course of the first 20 years of Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, seemed relatively minor: *the maintenance of order in these territories and the repression of the armed anti-Zionist struggle*. The bet of the Israeli Labor Party is that Arafat and his men are the best suited to carry out this task.

This explains, in particular, the novel turn made by the Rabin government in relation to what one could call the Zionist law of the “non-return” of the Palestinians in exile. Rather than negotiating with the Palestinians of the interior about what was supposed to be their *self-government*, the Zionist regime has decided the fate of the territories with a small group of leaders based in Tunis, behind the backs of the delegates from the interior. It accepted that a part of the bureaucracy of the PLO, this little state apparatus in exile, could install itself in the West Bank and Gaza to be responsible for the local population. In addition, it agreed that some thousands of exiled Palestinians, soldiers of the units of the very regular Palestine Liberation Army (PLA), would accompany the bureaucracy of the PLO to constitute the backbone of the Palestinian police force.⁵⁶

The least details concerning “the Palestinian authority” are, moreover, subject to the agreement of the Israeli government: “the structure of the Council, the number of its members,” its legislative and executive authority (article 7), as well as “the system of elections” and even “rules and regulations regarding election campaigns” (Annexe I). The meaning of this tight control of the Palestinian electoral procedure was obvious to Elias Sanbar:

Israel, a democratic state for its own citizens, is betting on an authoritarian Palestinian self-government which will muzzle its own opposition and avoid any surprise effect resulting from an always possible change of mind on the part of Palestinian public opinion.⁵⁷

⁵⁶The Palestinian police force will consist of “police officers recruited locally and from abroad (holding Jordanian passports and Palestinian documents issued by Egypt). Those who will participate in the Palestinian police force coming from abroad should be trained as police and police officers.” Annexe II of the Declaration of Principles, point 3c.

⁵⁷L'autogouvernement palestinien: premiers défis, p. 107, in Ghassan Salamé (ed.), *Proche-Orient: les exigences de la paix*, Complexe, Bruxelles, 1994, pp.101-110. See also

If the Rabin government has moreover chosen to begin with “Gaza-Jericho first,” it is obviously so as to test, in the powder keg of Gaza,⁵⁸ bastion of Palestinian radicalism, the real capacity of the PLO to master the situation and repress the anti-Zionist struggle — a struggle which Hamas and its allies have, of course, no intention of ceasing voluntarily. The PLO must prove its repressive capacities in Gaza before being allowed to run other enclaves on the West Bank. If not, as Rabin has unceasingly stated, the accords will be abrogated. Noam Chomsky only expressed the feeling of many observers when he said, alluding to a declaration of the Israeli Prime Minister:

Yitzhak Rabin is obviously right: the Palestinian mercenaries can govern the population without fearing a recourse to the Supreme Court... or the beautiful souls of every kind.⁵⁹

IN THE LIGHT OF THE ZIONIST STRATEGY defined by the Allon Plan and the mission of repressing the anti-Zionist struggle devolved to the PLO, the Israeli-Arab peace takes on a very different appearance to that presented by the dominant idyllic presentation. Rather than a “peace of the brave” and a reconciliation between peoples, it appears as a peace between governments, concluded essentially on the conditions laid down by the Israeli victor — a *Pax Zionista*, one could say. From the point of view of the Arab peoples who have been receptive for several decades to the nationalist discourse, today exploited by the Muslim fundamentalists, this peace has every chance of being perceived as a surrender,⁶⁰ the culmination of America’s crushing of Iraq.

But is it not the case? Is there any possible doubt about the direct link between the Gulf War and the process of settlement of the Israeli-Arab conflict, inaugurated by George Bush at Madrid and sealed by Bill Clinton in Washington? How can one not see in the current arrangements the erection of the “New Arab Order,” announced in the wake of the “New World Order?” The cycle which

the article by Alain Gresh, “Israéliens et Palestiniens sur un terrain miné,” in *Le Monde diplomatique*, January 1994.

⁵⁸The choice of Jericho, a small and relatively peaceful town, is purely symbolic: proximity to the Allenby bridge — the crossing point to Jordan, prefiguring a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation — and also edge of the “sovereign corridor” envisaged by the Allon Plan. (see above)

⁵⁹Article already cited. The same opinion was recently expressed by Amos Perlmutter, who formulated this prediction as the key instrument of the new regime: “Arafat will have to rely heavily on his security services, *Mukhabarat*, the old terrorist machine that has protected him from the Israelis, dissident Palestinians and Arab foes for so long. As a result, the police will have some military functions, while the security services, rather than the political parties, human rights organizations or other institutions, will become the foundation of Arafat’s political power and administrative domination. (“Arafat’s Police State,” in *Foreign Affairs*, New York, July/August 1994, p. 10).

⁶⁰In an article with a revealing title — “An Agreement of Surrender,” in *Haaretz*, May 12, 1994 — Meron Benvenisti writes: “one can clearly recognize that Israeli victory was absolute and Palestinian defeat abject,” adding: “It is also easy to understand the depth of disappointment of those Palestinian leaders from the Territories who considered the Agreement shameful to the point of discrediting their people as a whole.

began in 1947 with the Arab rejection of the award to the “Jewish state” of half the territory of Palestine is concluded today with the Arab recognition of this same state, now in control of the totality of this territory — without any hope of return for the majority of its original inhabitants.

This is what Yigal Allon called “the acceptance of reality.”⁶¹ When this acceptance follows 45 years of rejection of this same reality because of its injustice, it resembles a capitulation. Lucid to the end, Allon knew that this did not amount to a “revolution of hearts.” Such a revolution is not yet on the agenda, and much would be necessary to accomplish it. Israel and the United States will, however, have succeeded in displacing the tension from the confrontation between the Zionist state and its Arab neighbors, toward the internal confrontation in the Arab countries between states and popular movements of contestation. So long as this latter conflict is not definitively resolved, the peace between governments will rest on shaky ground.

Postscript

THIS ARTICLE WAS ORIGINALLY WRITTEN IN FRENCH AND COMPLETED in September 1994. It was published in March 1995 in the French sociological journal *L'Homme et la Société* (no. 114). Since it deals primarily with the historical background to the September 1993 Israeli-Palestinian accords, it retains its value inasmuch as the basic premises of the article have only been confirmed by the unfolding events of the last months. Since last September, the massacre perpetrated by the Palestinian police forces in Gaza, on November 18, against anti-Zionist Palestinian demonstrators, and the subsequent waves of repression launched by the Palestinian Authority against all those Palestinians willing to continue the fight to liberate the Gaza strip from Israeli occupation forces and settlements still in place, show in the most blatant way how Arafat's PLO is acting increasingly as a tool of the Zionist government against the Palestinian people. On the other hand, the ever increasing delay on the part of the Rabin government in implementing the agreement by extending its application to the populated areas of the West Bank — delay that is openly justified by the fact that Arafat's PLO has not proven successful enough in repressing the anti-Zionist Palestinian forces in Gaza — is a further confirmation of the same basic assessment that stems from the overall analysis of this article. The author wishes to thank Bernard Gibbons in London, who has kindly translated the article into English, and Peter Drucker in Amsterdam, who has edited the American version, as well as Tikva Honig-Parnass in Jerusalem and Michael Löwy in Paris, who read the first draft and made their friendly suggestions. However, none of the friends mentioned here bears any responsibility for the views expressed in the article.

⁶¹See note 41, above.

Cuba: The One-Party State Continues

Samuel Farber

IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE COLLAPSE OF COMMUNISM in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, some leftists are willing to take a more critical look at the socio-economic and political system that has prevailed in Cuba for more than 35 years. Among them is Carollee Bengelsdorf, a professor of politics at Hampshire College. Unlike many pro-Castro leftists, who substitute Third Worldist clichés for their scant knowledge of Cuban society and history, Bengelsdorf is intimately acquainted with Cuba. She must also be given credit for affirming the need for democracy as a central element of the necessary transformation of the Cuban polity and society.

But in spite of its virtues, *The Problem of Democracy in Cuba* is a deeply flawed book.* Bengelsdorf's narrative often appears to be a history without subjects making choices and taking decisions. This is particularly true of her treatment of Fidel Castro, the most powerful actor in the Cuban drama. Thus, Bengelsdorf advocates a democratization of Cuban society and at least implicitly recognizes that neither Castro nor the Cuban Communist Party shares her inclinations. Yet, she fails to follow through on her analysis and confront the issue of whether the democratization she recommends is compatible with the continuing rule of Fidel Castro and his Communist Party, or whether it will have to be accomplished in opposition to these forces.

Moreover, she evades the issue of the continuing one-party state suggesting, with little logic but a good deal of equivocation, that this state

in and of itself, does not spell doom for any movement toward democratization, just as the existence of two or more parties in other countries does not guarantee it. Rather, what is critical in this regard is the Party's continuing effort to confiscate the political arena. (p. 171)

Bengelsdorf tiptoes around the question of Castro's leading role, or addresses it with euphemisms and circumlocutions. A case in point is her characterization of Castro's regime as paternalism, which she defines as the practice of treating people as children instead of self-reliant adults

**The Problem of Democracy in Cuba* by Carollee Bengelsdorf. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

SAMUEL FARBER was born and grew up in Cuba. He is the author of *Revolution and Reaction in Cuba 1933-1930* (Wesleyan University Press, 1976) and numerous articles dealing with that country. He teaches political science at Brooklyn College and is a member of the editorial board of *Against the Current*.

capable of making decisions. This approach captures an aspect of Castroism but deflects attention from the major role repression has played in almost four decades of rule. While the right-wing incorrectly claims that Castro does not enjoy any popular support and that his regime rules only on the basis of repression, it is disturbing that Bengelsdorf downplays the role of State Security (*Seguridad del Estado*) and the neighborhood vigilance carried out by the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs), resulting in systematic violations of civil and political liberties.

SIMILARLY, BENGELSDORF ACCEPTS AT FACE VALUE Castro's espousal of the values of national unity as a justification for his suppression of any expression of political opinion potentially threatening his monopoly of power. She also accepts Castro's claim that his approach is based on the views of Cuba's Founding Father, Jose Marti. When Marti — a Freemason with views deeply rooted in 19th century traditions of progressive liberalism and nationalism — spoke about unity he was trying to overcome the petty jealousies of the insurgent caudillos in order to bring about a united *military* campaign against Spanish control of the island. Marti attempted to accomplish this through political means: persuasion, education, and the creation of a united organization to achieve Cuban independence. He did not advocate forceful suppression, imprisonment or the execution of those who resisted his efforts. Furthermore, Marti's views pertaining to "unity" in the struggle against Spain had no relevance to the different issue of the social, political and constitutional arrangements of the Cuban Republic to be established after victory.

For Castro, the word unity has been a euphemism for monolithism and autocratic power. As early as 1954 he wrote to Luis Conte Aguero, then his close friend:

Conditions which are indispensable for the integration of a truly civic moment: ideology, discipline and chieftainship. The three are essential but chieftainship is basic...The apparatus of propaganda and organization must be such and so powerful that it will implacably destroy him who will create tendencies, cliques, or schisms, or will rise against the movement.

Thirty-eight years later, in a lengthy interview with Sandinista leader Tomas Borge, Castro criticized Stalin on a number of grounds including the invasion of Finland and the Stalin-Hitler Pact. But when Borge asked him "What do you believe were Stalin's merits?" the first thing that Castro mentioned was the following: "He [Stalin] established unity in the Soviet Union. He consolidated what Lenin had begun: party unity."

Some leftists have ruled out any analysis that locates Castro and his close associates as part of the Stalinist tradition, on the basis that Castro's political current did not come out of the old pro-Moscow parties in Latin America. However, the history of the left is littered with independent Stalinists unaffiliated with Moscow franchise-holders and while it is necessary to understand the Stalinist tradition in order to understand Fidelista politics, it is not sufficient. The challenge posed by the Fidelista tradition is to establish how and why a wing of the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie and declassed elements discovered, as it became successful beyond even its highest expectations, its strong elective affinity with

Stalinism.

The Stalinist and Fidelista traditions in Cuba fused under the aegis of Castro while maintaining some of the original characteristics of Fidelismo, particularly in the area of political and cultural style. For example, one of the significant but little noticed contributions of Fidelismo to Cuban Communism was the dropping of the old Communist form of address "camarada" (comrade) and its replacement by the much broader political term *companero(a)*, the term historically used in the Cuban student and trade union movements. This is of some significance because, in the Cuban context, the words convey either a sense of inclusion [*companero(a)*] or sectarian exclusion (*camarada*).

Many on the left tend to write about Cuba purely in national and sometimes in Latin American or Third World terms without addressing the strong systemic similarities between Cuban and Asian and East European Communism. In part, this is due to the embarrassment caused by the decay, bureaucratic stodginess and atrocities associated with old-style Communism long before its collapse in the 80s and 90s. No sense can be made of Cuban Communism without understanding Cuban radical nationalism but most forms of radical nationalism in Latin America and elsewhere have not historically evolved into Communism, while a Cuban variety of it did. This alone should suggest that there is something more than radical nationalism involved in Cuba.

Radical Cuban nationalism had nothing to say about how to reorganize and restructure a capitalist society into a "socialist" society. Thus, it was not just the dependence on massive aid from the USSR that pulled Cuba in a particular direction. There were also political and ideological factors. For one, the authoritarian caudillismo of Castro. But also the paucity of alternatives to both capitalism and Communism. Little wonder then that whatever cultural and stylistic distinctiveness Cuban Communism undoubtedly retained, when it came to the historically much more decisive question of political and socio-economic organization, the Cuban government faithfully copied, and with remarkably little originality, the then existing Communist models in Asia and Europe. This produced a structural assimilation of Cuba to European and Asian Communism. After all, even presumably original Guevarist policies had many more similarities than differences with Maoism, Third Period Stalinism and the policies of "War Communism" during the Civil War in Russia.

Bengelsdorf is among those who pay attention only to Cuba's national peculiarities. Thus, in analyzing the Cuban 60s, she insists in finding only "transitory political forms," "avoidance of structure," and "flexibility." (p. 67). Her avoidance of the larger question of Cuba becoming Communist produces an analysis which misses the forest for the trees. What was important about the Cuban 60s were not the differences with Asian and European Communism but the dramatic transformation of what had been originally a democratic and, shortly after the successful overthrow of Batista, a radically reformist and anti-imperialist revolution into a member of the Communist family. By the end of 1960, the trend was fairly clear: the commanding heights of the Cuban economy had been nationalized; the trade unions had come under state control after a thorough purge of the democratically elected leadership; the press and other media had been cleansed of opposition voices; and political opposition, even if loyal, had been effectively placed beyond the pale.

The remainder of the 60s witnessed what was essentially a consolidation and mopping up operation — most of the remaining privately owned land was nationalized as were practically all urban enterprises, even tiny ones. The unified Communist Party was created in 1965 after a four-year gestation period. Finally, after all opposition groups had been eliminated, independent and critical voices within government circles were also silenced (e.g. in 1961, the influential literary supplement of the government newspaper *Revolucion* and in 1968, the so-called micro-faction of old-line Communist Party members, whose members were imprisoned).

Granted, there was a good deal of improvisation on the part of young political leaders and administrators who lacked any previous government experience. But this improvisation took place within well established systemic boundaries developed elsewhere long before the Cuban Revolution. How could these improvisations, or the political differences between Che Guevara and Moscow, as real as they were, compare with the momentous and indeed historic *overall* transformation just described?

While the Cuban 60s constituted the decade of political and economic consolidation, the 70s became the decade of “institutionalization,” that is, the decade of routinization after the tremendous revolutionary upheaval of the 60s. In this period, the Cuban government introduced a significant degree of decentralization primarily to alleviate the considerable administrative inefficiencies generated by the over-centralization of the previous revolutionary decade. Again, it is to Bengelsdorf’s credit that, unlike a number of apologists for the Cuban regime, she distinguishes decentralization from democratization. Still, her analysis of the Cuban 70s is limited by her “national” focus. If we look at the Cuban 60s, 70s and 80s through the lens of comparative Communism, the presumed uniqueness of Cuban developments disappear almost completely. Communist economies in the past have tended to oscillate between statification offensives and pragmatic adaptations to political reality which resulted in the relaxation of state controls. Thus, for example, the Chinese Revolution fluctuated between land distribution in the period immediately after the 1949 victory, to the collectivization offensive in the latter 50s of “The Great Leap Forward,” and back again to a relaxation of state economic controls.

While Bengelsdorf’s analysis is limited and even parochial in its refusal to place Cuba in the context of comparative Communism, the book is extremely ambitious and anything but parochial in its attempt to root the problem of the lack of democracy in Cuba in the thought and practices of Marx and Lenin. There is no doubt that Bengelsdorf is well acquainted with the critical literature on Marxism and Leninism. Unfortunately, her attempt to connect the lack of democracy in Castro’s Cuba with Marx and Lenin can only be carried out by seriously distorting what Lenin and especially Marx stood for, while granting too much credit to Castro’s claim to Marxism and even Leninism.

LET US FIRST TAKE THE ISSUE OF PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY. Bengelsdorf leaves little doubt that she sees the Cuban regime, particularly in the 60s, as encouraging “participatory democracy” since it was only through practicing it, “that the problems of underdevelopment, resource scarcity, and constant external threat could be overcome.” (p. 8). Although Marx did not use this term, a strong case can be made that his conception of democracy was highly participatory as seen in his

praise for the institutions developed by the Paris Commune in 1871. But Marx took it for granted that this participation was to be an advance over the political freedoms already gained in the struggle against feudal rule and royal absolutism, not a denial of those freedoms. Furthermore, participation was intended to enrich and secure the political power acquired by the workers' movement and its allies, not to be an alternative to that power.

While Marx was not confronted with anything like the Fidelista phenomenon, the idea that he would have endorsed participation without independent popular power or without political freedoms is absurd on the face of it. Indeed, a strong case can be made that participation without power or political freedom is a regressive practice that has more in common with political systems such as Gaullism and fascism than with socialism. Finally, we should keep in mind that there exists by now an extensive "tradition" of both capitalist and Communist power-holders utilizing participation to derail the development of power and democracy from below. As the slogan of the 1968 French movement put it so well: "I participate, you participate, they control."

Like so many on the left, Bengelsdorf utilizes the distinction between formal and substantive democracy in a manner detrimental to democracy which she falsely attributes to Marx. The distinction is useful to the extent that it identifies those regimes that pretend to be democratic because they use certain ostensibly democratic formal mechanisms which are nevertheless devoid of significant democratic content. However, *it does not follow that there can be a substantive democracy that is not also formal*. Thus, for example, the Paris Commune established mechanisms for election and recall of delegates. Similarly, the Russian soviets (before they lost their democratic character in mid-1918) established mechanisms for the allocation of representatives and for elections which had to take place at least every three months. The notion that formal democracy can be ignored means nothing less than the very undemocratic idea that the mass of the population can somehow have "democratic" leaders without voting and without protections for minority views. The motivation behind this obfuscation is rather plain; to make it appear that Castro's rule has been substantively, although not formally, democratic despite the Cuban people's total lack of independent political power.

For Marx, even the purest form of democracy signified coercion, i.e., majority rule of a still existing state implementing the decisions of the majority over the obviously dissenting wishes of the minority, and of course with the forceful suppression of any violent resistance to majority rule. Thus, he looked forward to the higher stage of communism where any kind of rule or coercion, even that of the democratically elected workers' government, would altogether disappear. It is quite legitimate to wonder whether the "higher stage of communism" could ever be attained. What is not legitimate is to take comments Marx made about the democratic workers' state (first or lower stage of communism) from the perspective of the higher stage of stateless communism, and make it appear that these comments represent a Marxian defense of authoritarianism.

Thus, Bengelsdorf suggests that Marx and Engels' rejection of the term "free people's state" for the post-revolutionary system signified an endorsement of authoritarianism in the usual, invidious sense of the term. However, what Marx and Engels claimed was that it was nonsense to speak of a "free people's state" since the state by definition implied coercion and could not therefore be free. By calling the post-revolutionary state "authoritarian," Marx and Engels were not

wavering in their commitment to democracy, but were arguing instead that post-revolutionary democracy was not yet as free as stateless communism and was therefore "authoritarian." In decontextualizing Marx and Engels' statements on the state and freedom and calling them authoritarian in the normal, non-democratic sense of the term (p. 21), Bengelsdorf is creating a spurious link between Marx and Castro in order to legitimize Fidel's ideological credentials.

IN REVIEWING THE EXTENSIVE LITERATURE ON MARX, Bengelsdorf finds a number of problem areas in Marx's political thought which deserve serious discussion. Among these are the apparent inconsistencies between Marx's centralizing and decentralizing views of socialism and whether he was correct in thinking that politics as such could eventually disappear into mere administration. But whatever views one may have on these important questions, it cannot be denied that Marx put forward a democratic vision of the socialist revolution, and took it for granted that a variety of views would contend for hegemony within the revolutionary camp. In this context, it is worth noting that as critical as Marx was of the Paris Commune leadership's failure to take decisive actions against the enemy, it did not occur to him to attribute this failure to the diversity of views among the Communards, which is precisely the kind of argument favored by Castro and the Stalinist tradition in general.

To analyze the relevance of Lenin and Leninism (not the same thing) to the politics of the Fidelista leadership would require a more extensive discussion of the relationship of Lenin to Stalinism than would be appropriate here. The interested reader is invited to examine my book, *Before Stalinism* (Verso, 1990) which contains a discussion and materials relevant to the question. Nevertheless, I would like to note some major features of Lenin's politics which seriously call into question Castro's Leninist claims. Lenin was the first among equals in the Bolshevik leadership. It is quite inconceivable that Castro could tolerate — let alone collaborate with — other party leaders of the caliber of a Trotsky or a Bukharin. It is also inconceivable that Castro could tolerate as factionalized a party as the Bolsheviks were before and after the seizure of power. Whatever may have been wrong with Lenin or the Bolshevik Party, the fact remains that until the Civil War, any comparison between the Bolsheviks and other political parties would show that the Bolsheviks had more internal democracy, a clearer ideology and program, and a firmer class commitment.

While investing considerable intellectual effort in discussing Marx and Lenin and their possible impact on Fidelismo, Bengelsdorf pays much less attention to the influence of Stalinism on Cuban events. Yet, I would contend that it is the latter that is really important. While Lenin's "Leninism" had meant different things at different times and therefore constituted an ambiguous legacy, Stalinism presented itself to the world as a finished system for all times and places. Similarly, while Lenin, in the early 20s, had come to justify repression and lack of democracy as a virtue rather than as an unavoidable necessity, the political and economic regime established under Lenin never quite lost its provisional and historically conditioned flavor. By the 30s there was nothing provisional left in Stalin's system which was characterized by such structural features as full nationalization of the means of production, a one-party state and statified unions, the absence of the right to strike or any other civil and political liberties, and an all-embracing secret police to help maintain the regime in power. By this time,

the newly predominant Stalinist system had made the strong claim that it was only those influenced by bourgeois thought who would worry about such insignificant matters as freedom and democracy. For these new recruits to Communism, the history of Marxism previous to Stalin's rule was the caricature provided by Soviet manuals distorting socialist history.

Nowhere was this more evident than in Cuba. By the time Fidel Castro became a student activist at the University of Havana in the mid- and late 40s, the very word and meaning of socialism had become coterminous with the Popular Socialist Party (PSP), Moscow's franchise in Cuba. The once important anarchist movement had disappeared from the scene by the 20s, and the small but at one time influential Cuban Trotskyists had dissolved into the Autentico nationalist-populist camp and had become virtually invisible as a distinct political tendency. Yet, while the Cuban followers of Moscow were by then the only significant tendency espousing socialism, the PSP was organizationally very sectarian and compromised by its betrayals of populist-nationalist causes and by unscrupulous political deals. In one notorious instance, the Cuban Communists exchanged political support for Batista for control of the trade union movement during the years 1938-1944. Thus, the peculiarities of the Cuban PSP left open a niche for an independent non-sectarian Stalinism untainted by the PSP's betrayals, a niche that was eventually filled by Fidelismo after the revolution.

It is difficult to assess the political significance of *The Problem of Democracy in Cuba*. Does it portend a more politically and intellectually respectable stance for non-Communist supporters of the Cuban regime during this era of right-wing political pressures? My hope is that it is part of a perhaps unfinished but genuine democratic-socialist process of reconsideration of the Cuban experience.

Racist and Anti-Semitic Violence in Germany

Hanna Behrend

THE CURRENT OUTRAGES ON FOREIGN NATIONALS, black people, against people of Jewish origin or religion, against Roma and Sinti, gay men and women, handicapped or elderly people or, indeed, against anyone who attempts to protect the victims of such an assault cannot be understood without reference to the history of German neo-Nazism. Only half a century after the defeat of the foul Nazi system, which was responsible for the outbreak of the World War II and the crimes its henchmen committed during that war; which murdered six million men, women and children in the gas chambers of its extermination camps; whose authorities ordered 70,000 mentally ill or disabled people put to death by the medical staff caring for them; whose courts, during the 12 years of the system's existence, condemned at least 27,000 people to death, frequently for negligible offenses, the "womb whence these abominations crawled, proved fertile yet." (Bert Brecht) How did it happen?

When the wartime Allies drifted apart and promoted the division of vanquished Germany into two separate states, they also prepared the ground for the way the two German states would deal with Germany's Nazi past, with the victims of Nazi atrocities on the one hand and with Nazi and war criminals on the other. In their occupation zones, the Western Allies placed men from a conservative social and political background in positions of power whom they rightly held to be undaunted advocates of anti-Communism. Their approach toward Nazism was, at best, equivocal. These new authorities, in turn, appointed lawyers, university professors, teachers, medical practitioners, film and theatrical producers, company directors, etc., most of whom had been involved in the Nazi state apparatus, to serve on de-nazification commissions. Their task was to vet those who had been involved in the Nazi regime who wanted to retain their positions in the public service, in industry and commerce or who were applying for appointments in those areas. The outcome of this campaign, in which, as a rule, former supporters of the regime vetted each other was the almost total preservation of the country's elite who had served under the Nazis. Senior civil servants in the judiciary, the police force, the army, public education and health were re-

HANNA BEHREND, who lives in Berlin, writes on German politics. Her last article in *New Politics* appeared in Volume V, 2, Winter 1995.

tained almost in their entirety.

IN THE HALF CENTURY SINCE MAY 8, 1945, there have been no more than 6,500 trials in the West of Nazi and war criminals, a figure that includes acquittals, exemptions from punishment, releases on probation, etc. This figure incidentally is equal to the current number of investigations by German courts into cases of "perversion of justice" under the GDR system. By contrast, only one Nazi judge, involved in 231 of the total 5,000 death sentences passed by the infamous *Volksgeschichtshof* [People's Court], was ever brought to trial, and he was acquitted in 1968 on the ground that the court acted in accordance with the law. Only four years after the end of the war, an amnesty was granted. In 1960, manslaughter cases involving Nazi criminals came under the statute of limitations after which date such crimes were no longer punishable. Only since 1969 has Nazi genocide been exempted from the statute of limitations, and only since 1979 have Nazi murder cases been so exempted.

Investigations of Nazis and war criminals involved in the genocide of Jews, Roma and Sinti were long delayed, sometimes up to ten to fifteen years. Nazi criminals were also exempted from punishment due to old age or disability, to lack of evidence or failure of witnesses to recall details of the crimes after such long delays. Thus, the manager of the cyclon-B poison gas producing firm, whose profits derived from supplying poison gas to extermination camps, was acquitted, as were the representatives of firms responsible for the ruthless and inhuman exploitation of Nazi prisoners of war, Jews, Roma, Sinti, Poles, Russians, political or religious dissidents; even concentration camps warders guilty of manslaughter or murder were hardly ever convicted, or were given suspended sentences.

In the West, the elite who had served under the Nazis and survived the Allied-instituted Nuremberg Trials thus remained in their positions of power in politics, industry, trade, and culture after an ineffectual attempt at de-nazification. Among the best-known Nazi activists who went on to remarkable post-war careers were Federal German Secretary of State Herr Globke, formerly chief official commentator on the Nazi racist laws, Prime Minister of a Federal State and Deputy chairman of the Christian Democratic Union, Herr Filbinger, naval judge under the Nazis, and radioliasion officer with the Nazi Foreign Office and post-war Federal German Chancellor Kurt Kiesinger. On the less elevated public plane, among the West German university professors whose careers were never jeopardized, there were a departmental head of Himmler's state security, a leading Nazi state and law theoretician, and a medical man responsible for high-altitude flight experiments in which 200 prisoners used as guinea pigs were killed.

However, things changed to some extent when, in the wake of the 1968 student upheavals and inspired by the German new left's brief influence in academia in the 1970s, a broad and thorough discussion took place in West Germany on the responsibility of the German people for the crimes perpetrated under the Nazi regime. A new anti-fascist strand of school and university teachers, lawyers, medical practitioners, clergymen and women, politicians, etc. broke the monopoly of the traditionally conservative elite of the country. School and university reforms were promoted; and other aspects of an anti-fascist left-wing culture emerged. The ideas of the '68 generation of writers, film makers, historians, political scientists, journalists, etc. gained currency in West Germany and helped

to create an image of a new democratic Germany internationally. That led to student exchanges enabling German adolescents to travel widely and meet young people from other parts of the globe thereby acquiring a wider social and intellectual horizon.

This new trend, however, never completely superseded the conservative and right-wing extremist culture which continued unchecked. Neo-Nazi literature, films, music recordings or videos, rarely banned, were still produced and neo-Nazi organizations continued to spread their racist and anti-Semitic messages even though their sympathizers were a numerically insignificant minority. The 1989 collapse of state socialism in the East also diminished the reformist ardor of the '68 generation.

IN THE SOVIET OCCUPATION ZONE IN EAST GERMANY and later in the GDR, prosecution of the Nazis was, from the start, an ambiguous phenomenon. On the one hand, it was an instrument for keeping in power those whom the Soviet Occupation Force had installed as its deputies. On the other hand, since members of this first generation of Communists and Social Democrats placed in power by the Soviet military authorities, as a rule, had been in the anti-fascist resistance movement, spent years in prisons and concentration camps or in exile, they were uncompromisingly anti-fascist. There was the odd former Nazi who had converted to Communism in a Soviet prisoners of war detention camp, but no Nazi or war criminal was able to remain in high office if found out. There was a considerable exodus of senior Nazi officials who fled in good time from the East to the West. Of the 16,572 people detained in East Germany on suspicion of Nazi crimes or returned by the Soviets from their detention camps, almost 13,000 were actually tried by East German judges by 1965. In these trials, which were often conducted in a very arbitrary manner, 118 persons were condemned to death and 231 to life in prison, the remainder to lesser sentences; almost 4,000 persons were released. Nazi and other racist or anti-Semitic literature was banned in the GDR. The almost total replacement of the Nazi elite initiated by the Soviet occupation forces was completed by the GDR authorities who substituted members or sympathizers of the new SED merger party and of the satellite parties absolutely loyal to the SED leadership.

As for the Jewish community, people of Jewish origin were never openly discriminated against because they were Jews. But since the GDR political leadership followed the gyrations of Soviet policy on Zionism and the state of Israel, Jewish and, occasionally, non-Jewish people were persecuted and oppressed for their real or alleged sympathies with Israel or Zionism. In the 1950s, this led to the exodus to the West of a large proportion of the (very few) observant Jews who had survived the holocaust in East Germany or returned there from exile. Officially, GDR anti-Zionism never openly stooped to anti-Semitism, as was the case in other Comecon countries. Though the exercise of religious duties was a guaranteed constitutional right according to the official line, professing Jews were as little tolerated in the SED as were professing Christians. Official propaganda insisted that the GDR was the homestead of anti-fascism, a widely accepted claim despite the hierarchical character of that anti-fascism which privileged Communist resistance fighters above all other anti-fascists and considered mere victims of Nazi oppression of little account. As the authoritarian regime degenerated, the appeal of anti-fascism also declined and became merely ritualistic.

The sham-vigilance of the system, which xenophobically discouraged all unsupervised contacts of GDR citizens with foreign nationals while proclaiming an empty internationalism, kept alive the time-honored distrust and fear of foreigners. Contacts, even with members of the Soviet occupation forces (who had insisted from the very beginning on non-fraternization) were frowned upon; intermarriages were permitted only after a lengthy bureaucratic procedure. In the last decade of the GDR's existence, the widening gap between the drab and repressive reality and the make-believe of official propaganda disgusted more and more people. The younger generation, particularly, either tried to leave the country or began to offer resistance to the system in one way or another. A small minority turned to right-wing extremism and began to terrorize punks and other groups of "subversive" youth. The authorities tried to sweep this phenomenon under the carpet, increasingly unsuccessfully.

THE VELVET REVOLUTION WHICH BROUGHT ABOUT THE COLLAPSE of state socialism was initially powered by the desire for truly democratic socialist reforms. The 1990 *anschluss*-type unification was a result of the dissidents weakness and disorientation, as was the turn to conservative anti-Communism. Former leading dissidents justified wholesale discrimination against GDR scholars, lawyers, teachers, physicians, sports activists, etc. and the indiscriminate devaluation of everything East Germans had produced during the GDR period. Inevitably, this also promoted conservative blindness to Nazi and neo-Nazi crimes.

While ex-GDR judges were brought to trial for their verdicts which had been in keeping with GDR legislation though incompatible with human rights, Nazi and neo-Nazi crimes continued to be dealt with very leniently in united Germany. The latest scandalous acquittal by a Federal German court was the case of ex-Lieutenant Wolfgang Lehnigk-Emden in March 1995, who killed five women and ten children in Southern Italy during the war and was sentenced in absentia to life imprisonment by an Italian court while he led the life of a respected citizen and SPD member in West Germany. In 1992, he was tried by a Federal German court and although Nazi murder is no longer covered by the statute of limitations, the judge found that it could not be established beyond a doubt that Lt. Lehnigk-Emden's offense might not also have been considered punishable under the Nazis, in which case it would be covered under the statute of limitation. Herr Lehnigk-Emden was, therefore, allowed to return to his well-cushioned retirement.

Despite the fact that the two states diverged in the treatment of their common past, unification disclosed a strangely similar escalation of neo-Nazi racist and anti-Semitic activities, among them numerous acts of violence perpetrated in both parts of united Germany. After the Wall was opened by the desperate geriatric rulers of the GDR on November 9, 1989, West German right-wing extremists poured into the GDR, distributed their literature, and canvassed for members practically unhindered by the authorities. Even before unification, on October 3, 1990, the opportunities for extreme right-wing and openly fascist groups in East Germany improved considerably.

After the Wende in Autumn 1989, the East German police and public prosecutors, themselves in the process of being politically vetted for involvement in the Unjust State, were intimidated and no longer challenged these openly fascist groups. GDR anti-fascist constitutional principles and legislation were

ignored. The neo-Nazis were allowed to attack citizens loyal to the GDR constitution, to put up a swastika in the middle of Marx-Engels Forum in East Berlin, and to organize a march on Hitler's birthday on April 20, 1990. The neo-Nazi groups in the East were strengthened by West German neo-Nazi leaders among them some of their own former officers, who had gone to the West or been redeemed by the West Germans from GDR prisons, and were now returning home. The major West German neo-Nazi organizations founded East German subsidiary groups recruiting the already existing potential. They were encouraged by certain conservative and even Social Democratic local authorities who assisted them in acquiring premises for their youth centers, often also financing their activities, while obstructing anti-fascist and other left-wing youth organizations and ruthlessly turning autonomous squatters out of the property they occupied.

But the neo-Nazis failed to cash in on their gains in terms of electoral success; that all went to the conservative parties. The Republican Party, the neo-Nazi NPD and right-wing extremist splinter groups received only around one per cent of the vote in 1990 and even less in the 1994 general elections in East Germany. Only in Berlin's district council elections in 1990, did the Republican Party obtain 9.9 per cent of the West Berlin vote and 5.4 per cent in East Berlin.

Acts of brutal violence, particularly against asylum seekers or former African and Vietnamese contract workers in the GDR, began to escalate after unification in October 1990. One of the first two victims who lost their lives in the East was the Angolan, Amadeu Antonio, who was beaten to death by neo-Nazi skins while three policemen watched without interfering. [See my article in *New Politics* #14, Winter 1993, 82-93] The policemen, incidentally, were never taken to task for this. This murder was preceded by the killing of the Mozambican, Jorge Gomondai, thrown off a city train by skins. He died of his injuries. When neo-Nazis attacked the 2,000-strong funeral march through Dresden with baseball bats, gas pistols etc., the police and the prosecutors again neglected their duties.

The openly neo-fascist organizations staged parades, organized paramilitary training camps in deserted Russian barracks and practicing grounds. They raided left-wing youth clubs, assaulted handicapped and homosexual Germans, Russian soldiers, asylum seekers, set fire to asylum seekers' and other foreigners' homes, desecrated Jewish and Russian military cemeteries and East German anti-fascist memorials. Increasingly, criminal acts were committed which were motivated by anti-Semitism.

THE REPORT BY THE FEDERAL OFFICE FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE CONSTITUTION for 1993 records a total of 41,500 right-wing extremists organized in 77 associations throughout Germany; 5,600 are considered militant. In addition to these, there are the 23,000 members of the Republican Party which, however, lost large numbers of its supporters to the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Christian Social Union (CSU) in their very successful campaign against the REPs in the run-up to the 1994 general elections. In 1993, unhindered by the authorities, 33 right-wing extremist publishing houses and distributors, eight book publishers, 18 publishers of periodicals and seven distributing agencies were able to publish a total 6.5 million copies of 86 publications and 62 periodicals disseminating Nazi nostalgia and racist and anti-Semitic slander. Neo-Nazis publish the addresses and phone numbers of known anti-Nazi activists and encourage their

followers to intimidate, insult and slander or even attack them.

The total number of assaults on foreigners was 1,483 for 1991, according to the Office for the Defense of the Constitution, rising to 2,584 in 1992 and dropping to a still horrific 1,814 in 1993. Fatalities rose from three in 1991 to 17 in 1992; 8 people were killed in 1993. Twenty-five per cent of the assaults were committed in the East and 75 per cent in the West.

According to incomplete records for 1994 compiled by the *Archive für Sozialpolitik* [Archive for Social Policy] and published as a regular feature in the left-wing journal *Konkret*, 22 people of foreign origin were killed in 1994 in racist clashes. There were 61 cases of arson in which neo-Nazis set fire to asylum seekers' hostels, plus 104 cases of arson and other assaults on foreign citizens' homes, shops, restaurants. One hundred and twenty-three exceedingly brutal assaults on foreign people in public or in their homes are described. One involved the beating of a pregnant Vietnamese woman in her home who had to be hospitalized. Thirty-six incidents of desecration of Jewish or Russian military cemeteries and other memorials were reported in the journal's 1994 issues. In addition, there were the assaults on foreigners by police on duty (33 incidents are reported in 1994 some involving entire police crews). The Social-Democratic *blick nach rechts* of August 30, 1994 quotes Amnesty International's 1993 report on Germany according to which there was a "noticeable increase in 1993 of reports on abuses committed by police officers." This trend continued in 1994 and is still continuing. As early as 1991, a total of 646 proceedings for police misbehavior while on duty involving foreign citizens were instituted against members of the Berlin police force. According to an estimate by the Police Officers Union (GdP) some 20 per cent of the force sympathizes with right-wing extremists.

For January 1994, the Federal Office for Criminal Investigation (BKA) recorded a total of 299 onslaughts on foreign citizens; in 138 incidents the identity of suspects was established: 20 were temporarily detained but not a single arrest warrant was issued. The 12 criminals involved in the raid on a hostel for Vietnamese in Halle, where one flat was totally burnt down and the above-mentioned pregnant woman and five children suffered serious injuries, were tried for assault and arson. Their (light) sentences were suspended, characteristic of the merciful manner in which German courts deal with neo-Nazi thugs.

The Federal Office for Criminal Investigation registered a total of 937 criminal offenses motivated by anti-Semitism during the first nine months of 1994, among them one attempted murder in connection with setting a synagogue on fire in (West German) Lubeck. Another case of arson, three cases of causing bodily harm, 42 desecrations of Jewish cemeteries and memorials and 890 other offenses were registered. (*Konkret*, April 1995, 26)

SUMMING UP THE ESCALATION OF TERRORISM IN THEIR BOOK, *Krieg in den Städten*, (War in the cities, Berlin 1992) Klaus Farin and Eberhard Seiden-Pielen wrote: "The new quality of right-wing violence in Germany in the 1990s is demonstrable in the physical terror against defenseless minorities and in the rhetoric of established politicians who act as mouthpieces for the xenophobes in the demagogic debate on the right to asylum." (*blick nach rechts*, September 14, 1992, p.5.) In September 1991, Volker Ruhe, then General Secretary of the CDU and present Federal Minister of Defense, called for a limitation of the constitutional right of political asylum. His party and the Bavarian arch-conservative Christian Social

Union applauded. In June 1992, the FDP (the German Liberals) and the Social Democratic Party proposed legal procedures to speed up asylum applications. The law in question was to provide for summary proceedings, internment camps, and deportation of rejected asylum applicants within six weeks. The conservatives, however, found this bill inadequate and insisted on an amendment to Article 16 of the Constitution. In August 1992, a climax of escalating neo-Nazi violence against asylum applicants arose when hundreds of skins, commanded by West German neo-Nazi leaders, launched a battle lasting several days, attacking the Central Reception Point for Asylum Applicants (ZAST) in Rostock-Lichtenhagen. (See Behrend, "The Stage Is Reset," *New Politics*, #14, Winter 1993, p.88-90) This heralded further outrages during which the police proved unwilling and incapable of ensuring the asylum applicants' safety. These violent acts all ended with the asylum seekers bundled off to some still more isolated spot while the neo-Nazi attackers triumphed. If detained at all, they were given the usual kid-glove treatment reserved by the German authorities for right-wing extremists. This terror was instrumental in bringing the SPD and FDP into line with the conservative policy. By mid-November 1992, an extraordinary SPD-congress reneged on its resolution of August 1992 not to accept a limitation of the right to political asylum. On May 26, 1993 the coalition parties (CDU/CSU and FDP), joined by the SPD, voted for the amendment to Article 16 of the Constitution which eroded the right to political asylum. It became law on July 1, 1993. After that, the media no longer presented right-wing extremism as the "violent vanguard of the overwhelming majority of the German people." (*blick nach rechts*, September 19, 1994 p.5)

The image of the "ugly German" committing neo-Nazi atrocities, had become a liability for German foreign relations. Forthwith, millions of Germans were encouraged by the government, supported by the media, to invite their foreign co-citizens to join them in candle chain marches to protest against the neo-Nazi thugs. The outrageous 1992 figures immediately declined. So did the number of asylum seekers. By and large, refugees from the Balkans, Kurdish victims of Turkish oppression, Sinti and Roma from Romania, discriminated against in their own country in defiance of human rights, and people from other areas who are threatened with extermination, imprisonment and torture are no longer able to remain in Germany but sent back to the allegedly safe countries they come from; foreigners without a valid permit are taken to detention camps where they are kept, often under unacceptable conditions, and then deported.

The escalation of neo-Nazism was boosted not only by the tabloid press but equally by respectable established periodicals, such as *Der Spiegel*, *Stern*, *Focus*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, etc. Particularly from 1990 to 1992, neo-Nazi crimes committed in East Germany were given tremendous publicity and presented as the result of young East Germans' inability to experience life in foreign countries due to the GDR ban on travel to the West. (The Russians, Romanians, Poles, Czechs, Bulgarians they were able to visit and the foreign workers from Vietnam, Angola, Mozambique, Hungary etc. they met daily at work apparently did not count as foreigners.)

The arson against the two Turkish homes at the West German city of Mullen in 1992, in which three Turkish women and girls from a family who had been long established residents of Germany perished, ended the myth of neo-Nazism as an exclusively East German phenomenon. The racist and neo-fascist onslaughts

in the West were described as misdeeds of politically indifferent, unorganized individuals. The murder of five Turkish women in (West German) Solingen in May 1993 was called "a mindless prank" by the tabloid press. The German daily paper *Bild* titled the onslaught "A test of courage under the influence of strong drink." The outrages were also considered "acts of despair committed by unintegrated, socially deprived and disoriented kids," as a protest movement of adolescents directed against "the state," comparable to the civil rights movements in both East and West in the 70s and 80s. This attitude reflected the time-honored equation of "left" and "right-wing" terrorism. It also insinuated that it was up to "the state" to act in accordance with the wishes of the majority of the people and stop the alleged flood of foreign asylum seekers, threatening to "take away the jobs and homes of German citizens," tactics which proved exceedingly effective.

THUS, NAZISM SURVIVED IN BOTH EAST AND WEST GERMANY because racist and chauvinist ideology had not been completely eradicated in either state: in the Western state because it was compatible with the dominant conservative stance, in the Eastern state because it went very well with that system's authoritarianism. It remained a latent trend, submerged in times of relative prosperity in the West and under rigid state surveillance in the East only to surface after the unification euphoria evaporated and new social conflicts emerged. The victorious conservatives tolerated and, indeed, found it useful to encourage the neo-Nazis who proved a useful instrument for exerting pressure on those sections of the political class unwilling to forego certain democratic structures. By occasionally banning one or another neo-Nazi organization, the authorities merely give their members the chance to move their assets and sign on jointly or individually with other neo-fascist organizations. This would be impossible if the Minister of the Interior, Herr Kanther, banned any organization or enterprise proliferating Nazi, racist or anti-Semitic ideas, raided all neo-Nazi organizations in one big swoop confiscating their assets, and bringing them to trial for the illegal possession of arms. If he heavily fined the suppliers of neo-Nazi music records, books, periodicals, T-shirts and insignia, and threatened to bring the producers and distributors to trial for infringements of the Constitution, these enterprises would most certainly decide to forego this type of business.

Neither the coalition or the opposition in parliament has insisted on the police force or the military being vetted for neo-Nazi allegiance. (They and other public servants are repeatedly screened for possible former involvement in the GDR intelligence.)

The delays in the arrival of police called to rescue victims of neo-Nazi attacks, the dragging on of proceedings against the attackers and, finally, the leniency accorded to the neo-Nazi thugs by the judges, all contribute to their awareness of the authorities' lack of consistency and increase their audacity. Verbal professions of anti-neo-Nazi determination on the part of those responsible cannot hide the fact that, while the police may occasionally raid neo-Nazi centers and confiscate weapons, insignia, etc, those who really pull the strings remain untouched. All this recalls the tactical subterfuges by which Nazi and war criminals were spared by the post-war Federal German authorities. It also contrasts sharply with the treatment meted out in the late 60s and early 70s to the members of the left-wing terrorist Red Army Faction (RAF) when the authorities and

the media very effectively joined forces to eliminate them.

AS EVERYWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD, CERTAIN SECTIONS of the German population, some 20 to 25 per cent according to a recent opinion poll, are infected by latent racist prejudices (e.g. against Turks, Greeks, Poles, Italians, Roma and Sinti, black and Jewish people). However, both before and also after the merger, only a small minority, even among adolescents in both states, were involved in acts of militant racism, chauvinism, or anti-Semitism. While on occasion, some people may give vent to their latent prejudices by verbalizing them, massive physical attacks on foreigners, ethnic and religious minorities, the handicapped, the aged, and the helpless, on people with different life styles never were, nor are they now, a spontaneous outbreak of "popular indignation." Such neo-Nazi offenses are the result of organized defiance of human rights aided by government passivity.

Neo-Nazism might lose much of its attraction for that fraction of German youth who tend toward a right-wing, nationalistic, chauvinist or generally violent stance if the more democratic and left-wing youth organizations were given equal opportunities and adequate political and financial support. If instead of banning only the odd neo-Nazi organization, the whole neo-Nazi spectrum was repressed, the influence of these promoters of inhumanity would be seriously impaired. If, instead of pandering to the vilest and most primitive instincts of certain sections of the population the coalition parties stopped tolerating the neo-Nazis and really combatted individuals and organizations disseminating xenophobia, racism and anti-Semitism, the neo-Nazi danger would soon dwindle to the lunatic views held by an insignificant minority.

Unfortunately, powerful sections of the political class and of the lobbies representing vested interests, are not interested in pursuing such a policy. This is true not only for the two conservative parties in Germany, the CDU and CSU, and their coalition partner, the Liberals, it also applies to the other established political parties. The move to the right of the entire German political establishment encourages the dismantling of the welfare state, the roll-back of trade union rights, delaying or debasing any genuine social reform.

Xenophobia and racism have always helped to divert people from acting in their true interest. In a period of shrinking gainful employment and solid mass unemployment, when the quality of life declines as a result both of the escalating pollution of our natural surroundings and the rising poverty of an increasing number of people, those in power, those whose prosperity increases at the expense of the rest of the world are not interested in completely eliminating neo-fascist right-wing extremism. Keeping it as a standby in case of a real threat to the socially privileged is a time-honored German tradition. At present the power of those in control of the country is not jeopardized. There is no coherent national peace movement, the trade union movement is in decline, despite the successes of the PDS in the East, on a national scale the left-wing is atomized, no new political agents of reform are as yet to be seen. There is, therefore, no likelihood that German right-wing extremism will disappear completely. Nor is there, for the foreseeable future, the danger that neo-Nazis will take power.

Symposium ---

THE GERMAN LEFT TODAY

Introduction

PUTTING TOGETHER A SYMPOSIUM OF THIS SORT IS NOT AS EASY as it might appear. Coordinating among a number of busy people across the ocean, all of whom are to a greater or lesser extent engaged in political work, could have created difficulties. Fortunately, all the participants were responsible and knew how to meet a deadline. In the process, however, something about the styles of the three main left political parties in Germany became evident.

The piece on the long-established Social Democratic Party (SPD) written by Iring Fetscher, who is among the deans of European socialist history, arrived last in a well-worn envelope typed on an obviously old-fashioned machine. The elegant article on the Greens co-authored by the leader of the Bundestag delegation from Hesse, Magaretha Wolf, and one of the leading political journalists in Germany, Cora Stephan, was sent to two fax machines and created chaos on both. The analysis of the Party for Democratic Socialism (PDS) by Gregor Gysi, its most charismatic representative and one of the most controversial politicians on the continent, came in right on time.

All joking aside, however, these three articles are remarkably direct in their presentation and offer an exceptional portrait of the political landscape in Germany. It is obviously most useful to begin with the SPD. The party, from its inception during the latter part of the 19th century, was plagued by contradictions between its espousal of radical theory and its moderate forms of political practice. This is still the case. The programmatic commitments of the SPD to peace, the integration of immigrants, equality for women, and environmentalism are laudable. But these concerns have never really been translated into the life or identity of the party. Socialism, if taken seriously at all, is identified with the mixed market. The views of the SPD on NATO and the new standing of Germany in Europe are also fuzzy and not clearly distinguishable from those of Helmut Kohl. The SPD is unconcerned with really standing in opposition to the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) and, precisely for this reason, its members have increasingly found their agenda set for them during a period of conservative upsurge.

There were moments of honesty and even bravery: Willy Brandt cast a long shadow with both his domestic program and his policy of "detente," which is now coming under blistering attack, and Oskar Lafontaine in 1990 was right in criticizing the nationalistic enthusiasm and foolish economic policies spurred by the collapse of the Berlin Wall. But the SPD paid dearly at the polls and, while safely calling for an ill-defined program of job creation in response to the economic mess generated by unification, shifted to the right on a number of issues ranging from crime to constitutional issues of asylum and citizenship. This retreat under the lackluster leadership of Rudolf Scharping led even long-time, if critical, supporters of the SPD like Gunther Grass to leave the party.

Strategic mistakes coupled with an increasingly severe identity crisis led the SPD to snatch defeat from what should have been victory. Germany is in an eco-

nomically depressed condition and that is particularly true in most areas of the East. But caught between the utopian promises of the Chancellor, and the righteous indignation of the PDS, the SPD has not yet made the deep inroads into what should have been a natural constituency in East Germany. It is on the verge of becoming something like the Democratic Party of the United States in a very different institutional setting and the results could prove disastrous. Nevertheless, advocates of the SPD can still claim that it alone has a base among western workers and also — ultimately — offers the only serious alternative to the continued domination of German politics by the Christian Democrats.

But this is small consolation. And, in fact, its rivals have benefited from the timidity of the SPD. This is particularly true of the Greens who first entered the Bundestag in 1983. The Greens, which initially brought together remnants of the New Left with the growing environmental movement, have undergone numerous changes. The party is probably still most identified with the critique of an unqualified commitment to technological progress and with an extra-parliamentary form of organization.

Their anti-institutional style and rather flippant lack of concern with unification, however, led to a devastating defeat in 1990 and brought about a significant set of changes. The Greens transformed themselves into a modern democratic electoral organization committed to the constitutional state. Their radical or “fundamentalist” faction, with its uncompromising call for immediate liquidation of nuclear energy and pacifism, was made increasingly unwelcome and walked out in 1991. The Greens also fused with Eastern dissidents among the professional strata comprising *Bundnis '90*, which played such an important role in the events of 1989, and sought to identify themselves in a new way.

But the appeal of the Greens/Bundnis '90 in the East has been limited. Their organization at the base is obviously inferior to that of the PDS and, while committed to a “mixed market,” their policy remains vague especially with respect to linking environmentalism with economic growth. The ultimate aim of the Greens/Bundnis '90 might involve supplanting the liberal FDP as the swing party in any future coalition and this would mean a new accommodation with the market. Potential voters are no longer seen as deriving from the left, and the willingness of the party to “flirt” with “progressive” elements in the Christian Democratic movement has also raised eyebrows.

But, for all that, something from the past remains. The Greens continue to emphasize the grass-roots. Their genuine commitment to civil liberties, especially on the question of asylum and immigration, has also been quite principled. There remains, in short, an undeniable aura of experimentation and democracy.

Professor Fetscher is correct, however, when he notes that the real left-wing threat to the SPD derives from the PDS. It was formed in 1989 by dissidents *within* the SED, which was the dominant party of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), and prominent among them was Gregor Gysi. They were once considered “reformers,” but now are targets of a genuinely vicious anti-Communism. The problem is that the party itself has become something of a magnet for old-fashioned authoritarians as well as youngsters with a somewhat nostalgic vision of the good old days in the GDR. Nevertheless, Gysi and his followers seem sincere in seeking to break with the Stalinist tradition and develop a new form of democratic socialism.

Civil liberties involve not merely a matter of form, but also of substance. False piety concerning the potential Communist threat to democracy is simply a smokescreen for attacking political rivals. There is no such threat. Germany is now a

functioning democracy quite different from the Weimar Republic. The PDS is one party among others and its ideological rejection of vanguardism probably stems from both conviction and a willingness to deal with reality. The long-term problems with the PDS have little to do with charges of vanguardism and the like. The question is whether the PDS can actually become a national party without surrendering its base in the East among those who have lost their illusions and must pay the price of unification.

The PDS is the party of a ghetto. That is both its strength and its weakness. The party is organized in neighborhoods and it has a unique feeling for the resentments and everyday experiences of its clientele. But, if an integration of that region is really underway, then its future remains uncertain. The national image of the PDS still remains undefined. Its self-understanding as an "anti-capitalist" party also sounds somewhat vague especially given its views on the mixed market.

Is the PDS then simply a "left" version of the SPD? Quite possibly. But that does not necessarily invalidate its *raison d'être*. Commitment by a party to the welfare component of the mixed market is obviously important along with the ability to express some skepticism on matters of foreign policy. The PDS can surely serve as a gadfly and perhaps, should it really come to terms with its past and extend its appeal to the West, even offer a genuine alternative as the SPD and the Greens move toward the center.

But that is an open question. None of the contemporary organizations has the allure or the vision of parties from times past. No contemporary party can any longer identify its politics with a teleological mission or the "true" interests of the working class. Programmatically if not always ideologically, in fact, they probably share even more than their representatives might care to admit. The depth of commitment to feminism or state intervention or pacifism might well differ in degree, but — ultimately — not in kind. The burning question of which party to support might then actually resolve itself less on grand matters of ideology than on tactical concerns ranging from the priority given any particular issue to judgments over which party offers the best chance for undermining conservative politics in any given region. Indeed, if the current discussion can lead to further reflection in these terms, it will assuredly have been worthwhile.

Patrick Flaherty translated all three articles from the German.

Five Years of the PDS

Gregor Gysi

THE POLITICAL IDENTITY, PROGRAM, AND PRACTICE of the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) are closely bound up with the failure of "really-existing socialism," the collapse of the GDR, and its "unification" into the Western Federal Republic. During the dramatic upheaval of Autumn 1989, the Socialist Unity Party (SED) found itself standing amid the debris of a failed social alternative. Not surprisingly, a good many members of the old party came out in favor of its complete dissolution.

The refusal to disband the SED entailed a huge risk. Having emerged from the SED, the PDS would find itself saddled with the entire legacy of the old party and the failed social model associated with it. There could be no doubt that the PDS would be permanently confronted and identified with its past, as well as denounced on account of it. As things turned out, the decision not to dissolve the party proved at first to be a handicap. But within two or three years, this apparent albatross became an advantage.

The other parties underwent a smooth fusion into the existing West German parties. This made it possible for members of the East German Christian Democratic Union (CDU) under the aegis of their West German sister party to disavow their own past collaboration with the old regime. In contrast to the other parties, East German citizens could have a direct hand in determining how much the PDS had cleaned up its act and the extent to which it was capable of doing so. The PDS renewal process was open to public verification and ultimately proved more credible than the evasions of many members of the other parties of the GDR.

A great majority of the members of the one-time 2.3 million strong SED abandoned the party. Some dropped out for the same opportunistic reasons that they earlier joined it. Others flocked to rival parties. Still others saw no future for the SED even if they continued to remain communists or socialists.

At an extraordinary party congress in December 1989, those remaining in the SED made a collective decision not to dissolve the party but embark instead on an experiment. First, to break with the Stalinist bureaucratic system of "really-existing socialism" and its ruling ideology. Second, they would try to turn this rupture into the first step toward the

GREGOR GYSI is a member of the German Parliament and Chairperson of the deputy group of the Party of Democratic Socialism.

renewal of a leftist democratic socialist politics which would find its expression in the new name Party of Democratic Socialism.

German reunification became the unique backdrop to a process of renewal in the PDS which was difficult, often painful, and very complicated. The West German political class was hoping that on the heels of the rout of "really-existing socialism," the SED as the sole responsible political party would disappear from the political landscape along with its successor.

THE WEST GERMAN POLITICAL ESTABLISHMENT DID NOT MISS A TRICK in trying to smear the PDS with Cold War rhetoric, and continually attacked us with all the means at its disposal. The political battle against the PDS and its marginalization was completed through supplanting the ruling East German establishment with West German elites for whom new state institutions were expressly installed.

These authorities controlled the assets of the former East German secret police which had been dissolved after the fall of the Old Regime. All East Germans who had full-time or "unofficial" dealings with the secret police, suffered the same limited job entry into state institutions and the civil service as former top functionaries of the SED. The German situation differs markedly from the course of events in other Eastern European societies undergoing a similar transformation. In those countries where elites could not be simply replaced or swapped, secret state archives have been kept almost entirely closed.

These unique conditions alone gave the renovation of the PDS a specific resonance. In addition, the societies of East and West also differ mentally and socio-psychologically from each other. The PDS remains a mainly East German party and completely foreign to West Germans. To a great extent, West Germans identify the PDS with the old SED. The ruling parties and the media help to reinforce this popular stereotype by enlisting every anti-Communist cliché and posing as the victor lording it over a failed socialist model.

The great majority of East Germans quite rightly hold the SED responsible for the social collapse of the GDR. This has created considerable problems of credibility for the process of renovation, a difficulty that has been compounded by West Germany transferring its entire political cast of characters to East Germany and molding things in its own image. In the face of the apparently successful West German party system, what is the rationale for the continued existence of a party representing a defunct society?

The renovation of the PDS took place within the context of a social climate which marginalized the party and the high expectations of most former East German citizens who were very quickly caught up in the West German form of possessive individualism.

IN RETROSPECT, THE PARTIALLY OVERLAPPING FACTORS which spurred the renovation of the PDS become quite evident. First of all, there was a subjectively honest understanding of the failure of "really-existing socialism." This even extended to a recognition of the thoroughly deserved nature of the miscarriage of an experiment which collapsed from the weight of its own shortcomings with respect to democracy, economic efficiency, ecological transformation, and much more. Also, we should not forget the effect of "New Thinking", Perestroika, and Glasnost during the last years of the Soviet Union under Gorbachev. The prospect of change

in the Soviet Union aroused fresh hope among SED members about the possibilities for a reformable socialism. This was especially important because the impetus for renewal came from the Soviet Union which was perceived as an incontrovertible "guiding force."

For obvious reasons, there was no culture of democratic discussion and struggle in the SED. But there had been many strictly limited discussions of reform conducted within small groups which had not been open to the public. The subsequent renovation of the PDS was based, to a considerable extent, on such discussions undertaken by SED members during a period when the official leadership of the party and state saw no need for reform in the GDR.

Many of the members who stayed in the PDS were seeking shelter and refuge from the furious winds of change to which they were now exposed. They also demanded a steady reorientation of the new party leadership which no longer had anything in common with the Old Guard because the entire SED politburo and the top hierarchy were expelled from the party. There is a psychological explanation for this sort of behavior. Owing to the absence of democracy and democratic structures, many SED members could envisage no other way of doing things than waiting for "marching orders" from a newly incumbent leadership. The renovation was also fueled by the enormous pressure that the new social relations engendered. Not unexpectedly, the then SED/PDS made a complete break with Stalinism at its founding congress and issued a public apology to victims of that system whether they were ordinary citizens of the GDR or party members.

In this context, Stalinism no longer refers to the period of massive repression, the execution of thousands of Communists in the Soviet Union, or the liquidation of Cossacks, religious believers, and many others during the 1930s. Stalinism is used here to describe a bureaucratic centralist system that was based on the exclusion of particularistic social interests and tolerated no real democratic structures and institutions on penalty of death.

Even if such forms of Stalinist terror had not taken place in the GDR and the other "really-existing socialist" societies of Eastern Europe after 1945, all these postwar regimes demonstrate certain continuities. One was the "Marxist-Leninist" ideology of domination and legitimation which proclaimed at its core a monopoly over social development, as well as the divination of the putative "objective logic" of this development. By definition, this official fiction excluded all alternative courses of development. Other basic continuities include a paucity of democracy, no social pluralism, and no alternative parties, or ensuring their meaninglessness if they were allowed to exist.

Also of great practical significance was the break with the theory of the vanguard which flowed inevitably from a monopoly over the determination of social development. This meant, first of all, that the PDS defined itself not as *the* democratic socialist party but as merely one organization among other competing leftist parties.

Second, this decision meant that the PDS would repudiate any strategy which presumed that it possessed a knowledge of the objective logic of social development and derived from this the right to work toward a forcible revolutionary transformation of society by a minority. Socialism is unthinkable without democracy and its social acceptance and legitimacy by a majority. The establishment of greater direct democracy at all social levels creates the essential precondition for socialism. All conceptions of a vanguard claiming an exclusive right to represen-

tation are diametrically opposed to this imperative because, as a consequence, they imply far less democracy.

Third, by discarding the vanguard theory, the PDS encouraged the development of internal party democracy and pluralism. At present in the Federal Republic, there is no other party aside from the PDS with an equivalent number of possibilities for democratic participation. One example is the inclusion of non-members. There are well over 20 different "platforms," interest groups, and working groups. The spectrum includes a women's group, an ecological platform, a communist platform, a social-democratic platform, and an autonomous organized working group of teenagers and young people in their twenties.

Even after five years, we have not finished the process of coming to grips in a critical and self-critical manner with the shortcomings, mistakes, and outright crimes of the old regime. This observation also holds true for an appraisal of the positive aspects of the development of the "really-existing socialist" countries, especially the GDR. This is because the late GDR left behind a rich store of documents, including those recording the unsavory acts of the state security service, which are gradually being made available, first of all, to historians and for academic research. Earlier assessments and opinions are also changing with the passage of time since the demise of the GDR and greater exposure to life in the expanded Federal Republic.

THERE ARE ALSO VISIBLE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PDS and the other comparable successors of the Communist parties, in the manner, as well as the rapidity and depth, of a (self)-critical engagement. In the other East European states, it was first of all former dissidents who, if they had a mind to do so, might demand the opening of state archives and the punishment of one-time top members of the *nomenklatura*. In the case of a United Germany, it was not only the dissidents but also the West German political class which launched a remorseless public campaign against the PDS. These political forces are not primarily interested in a critical and discriminating assessment of the GDR's history. They seek a ruthless settling of accounts which will provide the new foundation for an "anti-totalitarian" consensus against *both* dictatorships, the GDR and National Socialism.

In particular, the conservatives are using the "refurbishing" of the history of the GDR to revise and relativize the history of the Nazi dictatorship. The *singularity* and, therefore, also the incomparable nature of the crimes of the Nazi regime and the Holocaust were relativized by equating fascism with the second German state and its history. At the end of World War II, the new authorities failed to carry out an extensive purge of Nazi rule in the FRG, and the newly-founded West German republic continued to rely upon the old elites of the Nazi era in the economy, the judiciary, and party organizations. Now these old historical defaults are being enlisted to argue that the country should more rigorously "make amends" in the case of the former East German elites. We all know that the dogmatic founders of the GDR also number among the victims of fascism. It is macabre that those who suffered torture and imprisonment at the hands of the Nazis should now be subjected to a more rigorous final judgment in the name of expiating an earlier failure to "root out" the Nazi dictatorship in the FRG.

The case of Hans Modrow who was the last Prime Minister of the GDR offers an example of settling accounts in action. As head of the Dresden SED in the 1980s, Modrow had been considered the East German Gorbachev and lauded in

the West German media as a reformer and bearer of hope. In November 1989, Modrow in his capacity as East German Prime Minister made a major contribution to assuring the peaceful dismantling of the old regime. Following the first elections after reunification in December 1990, Modrow entered the German parliament. Subsequently, legal action was initiated against him alleging election fraud in the GDR. The first proceeding ended with no sentence handed down. Almost immediately, another suit was lodged against Modrow but then, high-echelon pressure was brought to bear to have him punished severely.

While Hans Modrow was being subjected to criminal proceedings, reformers from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union still enjoyed great prestige. Like Modrow, Gorbachev belonged to the old *nomenklatura*. The former Soviet Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, was the Georgian Interior Minister. The present Hungarian Prime Minister, Gyula Horn, took part in the suppression of the Hungarian uprising. But that did not stop the German Federal government from awarding him a prize for his decision to open Hungarian borders for East German refugees during the late Summer of 1989.

The only difference is that Hans Modrow no longer has power of any kind while the other gentlemen in question were still in positions of authority. Moreover, the role that Hans Modrow played in the course of German unification, was now entirely passed over in silence. The former Modrow government can claim credit for German unification having proceeded in such a peaceful fashion.

The PDS has good reason not to embrace equating the GDR and Nazi regimes in the name of the theory of totalitarianism. The party has always tried to criticize and pass judgment on the GDR from a *socialist* standpoint. We criticize East German society, not because it was socialist, but because it was not nearly socialist enough. We criticize the old regime because it was deformed, intellectually rigid, and economically bankrupt. The GDR may have been more equitable in social terms but it was neither emancipatory nor democratic.

THE ENGAGEMENT WITH OUR OWN PAST EXTENDING DEEP DOWN into individual biographies is an inseparable part of the renovation and political potential of the PDS roughly five years after its founding. The internal renewal of the PDS confronts the following challenges. First, we must answer the question of what lessons the party can draw from a failed "really-existing socialism" for a new outline of the socialist project. Second, the SED was a state party in the fullest sense of the term. We must ask if its transformation into an anti-capitalist party of the parliamentary opposition, can be carried out with a majority of PDS members for whom politics in a bourgeois society is completely alien. Third, does the PDS face a future confined to the role of a regionally-based East German party? Do we want to limit ourselves to serving as the representative of specifically East German interests or lay the foundation for a new left-wing project applicable to the entire FRG?

With respect to its programmatic reorientation, the PDS has abandoned a purely bipolar point of view which reduces the world to socialist and capitalist spheres, categorizes societies as bourgeois or socialist, and frames social conflicts solely in terms of the fundamental contradiction between the bourgeoisie and proletariat.

Instead, the PDS has borrowed a page from Gorbachev's "New Thinking" and placed at the center of its analysis the unresolved social and ecological chal-

lenges, as well as the survival of humanity on a global scale. We also borrowed a page from Friedrich Engels who toward the end of his life suggested the possibility of a peaceful democratic transition to socialism in advanced capitalist societies. In this respect, the PDS is positioning itself as a modern democratic and socialist party convinced of the need to transcend social relations dominated by capital. We subscribe to the view that the prevailing social relations hold no solution to the social and ecological problems existing at the level of the nation-state, let alone globally. Quite the contrary, the continued existence of capitalism can only intensify and aggravate these problems.

Overcoming capitalism can only succeed on the basis of social consensus, along a *democratic* path, by means of political persuasion, and not through a "dictatorship of the proletariat." The *conditio sine qua non* of democratic socialism has become democracy in its representative form which urgently needs to be complemented by forms of direct democratic participation in all social spheres, including the economy.

The PDS has also arrived at new but by no means exhaustive conclusions on the question of property relations and discussions on plan versus market. In the Marxist-Leninist worldview, the whole debate was boiled down to settling problems of power and property by revolutionary means. However, instead of the expected sweeping qualitative transformation, there only emerged new relations of power and property with another set of owners at the head. The most important thing is not a turnover in the owners of power and property but changes in the content of power and property.

Whoever wants a truly positive transformation of state and society, must *decentralize* and *democratize* power and property in such a way that it will yield a mix of privately organized economic ventures alongside cooperative and state forms of property. Spheres from which the market should be unconditionally excluded would be health, culture, education, communications, and housing as a human right.

The PDS conceives of itself as an anti-capitalist and opposition party operating across the entire FRG. We will vigorously contest the debate around the question of what international role a unified Germany should play. The PDS will also deal with the question of what direction should be taken by a society confronted by rising mass unemployment, conservative deregulation and privatization, a social drift to the right, and mounting xenophobia and intolerance.

Since its founding, the PDS has favored a self-limiting foreign policy which encompasses a ban on arms exports, opposition to foreign military intervention within the framework of the UN and NATO, and a rejection of the return of Germany to its prewar role as an imperially assertive great power on the world stage.

Domestically, the PDS espouses more democracy and a liberal sensibility, greater social justice for an increasingly fragmented society in which the rich are becoming ever richer and the poor ever poorer. Whoever destroys the core relations of a society and disowns the consensus of postwar West German society, is also putting the axe to its civilizing achievements. The PDS has worked out these basic positions and demands together with a small part of the West German left which joined the party and took up its offer to draft a new leftist social project.

West Germany has imposed its entire system of jurisprudence, administration, social welfare, production, and finance on the former GDR. In the dogged struggle for the self-assertion of the PDS in a new society, the attitude of the

party toward the consequences and effects of the "annexation" of East Germany will be decisive and have major relevance for the direction of its political activity.

The PDS has benefited from the campaign promises of the conservatives who assured the East Germans that they would have "booming regions" (Chancellor Helmut Kohl) within a few years. The bottom line after five years of German unity, however, is quite different. The establishment of identical living standards in East and West Germany is still decades away. The transformation of the industrial and agricultural structures of the GDR into competitive, modern, and market-organized enterprises has not yet started. Most productive capacity was irrevocably destroyed without sufficient new modern structures emerging to replace it.

Beyond that, the terms of unification have also put the East Germans at a disadvantage against the West Germans in another way. Their economic sphere has been reduced to a mere production appendage and extended workbench of West German firms. The West German State Trust Authority in charge of privatization and the liquidation of East German enterprises has organized the proceedings in such a way that their industrial assets have been redistributed overwhelmingly in favor of West German owners.

This policy especially impacted upon East German citizens who were employed in state institutions: hospitals, cultural and educational institutions, kindergartens right up to and including state administration, the judicial system, and scientific institutions. Another liquidation authority controlled the files of the former East German security police and used them to single out those citizens who were deemed "close to the state" under the old regime. Whether they were members of the SED or in the service of the state police, these people were fired from their jobs in state institutions. Almost the entire network of scientific and research personnel in the GDR was wiped out.

Finally those pensioners formally employed in state institutions were stripped of a portion of their income through the introduction of punitive legislation on pensions. Expectations have been repeatedly dashed. East Germans are placed at a disadvantage in economic, social, cultural, and socio-psychological terms. The PDS has been the only party to make a campaign issue of the many areas of discrimination and is now perceived as the representative of specifically East German interests. Through its efforts in this regard, the party has won acceptance.

It also helps that the PDS with its approximately 123,000 members (including roughly 2400 members in West Germany) has become far and away the strongest rank-and-file party in East Germany and now maintains a presence in all cities, districts, and municipalities.

AFTER FIVE YEARS, THE PDS HAS ESTABLISHED ITSELF as an East German regional party. In the territory of the former GDR, the party holds an average 20 percent of the seats in all provincial parliaments and has become the third strongest political force after the conservative Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats. In the October 16, 1994 elections the PDS managed to capture a nation-wide 4.4 percent of the seats in the Federal parliament despite a massive anti-PDS electoral campaign conducted by all other parties, including the Greens.

As a result, the PDS has succeeded in making a political breakthrough in West Germany, and for the first time since World War II, a party to the left of the Social Democrats and the Greens exists again. Equally evident is the fact that

the PDS is still far from becoming a party of the left with a national following. In West Germany, the party could only muster roughly one percent of the vote in the elections to the Federal parliament. These results represent a tripling of PDS support since 1990 but the party continues to be only a marginal political force.

Whether the party will succeed in winning greater public acceptance in West Germany remains an open question. Many citizens of the FRG still harbor great resentment against the PDS which they identify with the old SED. The West German media nurtures this stereotype by failing to take cognizance of the renovation process described above or deliberately refusing to pay any attention to it.

Part of the reason for the electoral success of the PDS in the former GDR must be attributed to its offer to open its candidate lists for federal and regional parliaments to leftist democratic personalities of integrity. These individuals who come from the spheres of education, culture, the churches, the trade unions, the women's movement, and other social movements need not be party members. This strategy enables the party to enhance its social appeal while giving the people invited to stand as candidates a chance to speak out on their specific concerns in representative bodies and present their views to the public.

This experiment has succeeded in making a contribution to the national political culture by shattering the former rigid party system and allowing the public to see that the renovation process in the PDS is irreversible. Among others, Stefan Heym and Gerhard Zwerenz have played a crucial part in bringing about this breakthrough. One is from the East and the other from the West but both authors have an anti-fascist past and were later subject to persecution and surveillance in the former GDR.

Despite all the predictions to the contrary and the massive attacks by all other parties, including the Social Democrats and the Greens, the PDS has managed to hold its own. The PDS is no longer just a product of the process of transformation. The organization has now become a part of the overall party system. The PDS faces two challenges. First, will it be able to make a political breakthrough in West Germany? Second, the PDS has raised expectations among East German voters as a result of its electoral successes and it must make good on its promises. One of these expectations is for the PDS to help bring down the conservative governments in the East German provinces. With the aid of the Social Democrats or the Social Democrats and Greens (the Greens are still represented in only one of the five new federal provincial legislatures), this would be the first step in initiating a genuine project of social reform.

In light of the electoral success of the PDS, many Social Democrats as well as Greens are abandoning their previously strident strategy of marginalizing the party. They now acknowledge that this approach has done more harm than good. Some have even entered into a cooperative relation with the PDS. As a result, the PDS has agreed for the first time to support a Social-Democratic and Green minority government in the Sachsen-Anhalt region, in the form of a toleration-strategy, without itself directly participating in the responsibilities of governing. This alone clearly demonstrates that the PDS now confronts new and intricate challenges.

German Social Democracy Today

Iring Fetscher

BACK IN 1989, ALL COMPETENT OBSERVERS OF WEST GERMAN POLITICS believed that the Social Democrats would soon take over the reins of government from the ruling coalition of Christian Democrats and Liberals. The Christian Democratic Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, barely survived a revolt by reformers demanding his resignation as head of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU). The Gallop Polls were forecasting a very gloomy future for the coalition in Bonn. It appeared that the leadership of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) could afford to wait patiently until the next elections when the chance to form a government would fall effortlessly into its lap. This scenario changed abruptly with the reunification of both German states and the skill with which Helmut Kohl seized upon the opportunity it afforded. The collapse of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) had come as a complete surprise to both the governing party and the opposition which made the Christian Democratic return from the dead even more remarkable.

In the midst of the upheaval, a congress of the SPD was convened in Berlin for the purpose of drawing up the party program. As an "extrapolation" of the 1959 Godesberg program, the new program should have provided the party and its voters with a clear guide to a better future. At Godesberg, the SPD had gone from being a party still bearing the imprint of Marx and Karl Kautsky (and of course Eduard Bernstein), to becoming an organization modeled on the British Labor Party. The party delegate meeting in Berlin were generally convinced that the first priority was to force the SPD to come to grips with the issues of equality for women and a correction of the ecological course of industrial society.

However the impressive language of this overly long document dealing with peace, the integration of immigrant workers, environmental policy, and female equality (including quotas) fell largely on deaf ears beyond the confines of the meeting hall. Politics in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) had become entirely obsessed with the collapse of the Eastern bloc and readying the way for the reunification of both German states. The CDU and the Free Democratic Party (FDP) capitalized on the turmoil to claim that this reunification had been their long sought objec-

IRING FETSCHER, *respected social-democratic elder statesman and theoretician, is the author of numerous books, among them, Karl Marx and Marxism (Herder and Herder, 1970) and, more recently, Utopias, Illusions, Hopes: On Political Culture in Germany (Stuttgart, 1990, in German).*

tive and that the dream of the first postwar generation would finally be realized by Helmut Kohl.

THE FIRST FREELY ELECTED GOVERNMENT OF THE GDR HAD DECIDED in favor of a rapid reunification with the FRG. Against all economic reason, the Kohl government promised the East German population that their currency would be exchanged against the Deutsche Mark at a 1:1 ratio for a large personal account and 1:2 for the rest. In the subsequent Autumn 1990 elections to the legislatures of the new federal provinces, the CDU scored a victory which was scarcely surprising in light of this monetary gift. In the former "Red" Saxony, the Christian Democrats even attained an absolute majority. An open conflict erupted in the ranks of the SPD between those who voiced concern about the nationalist overtones and larger political implications of this Pan-Germanic celebration, and a loud minority supported by the honorary party chairman, Willy Brandt, who added their voices to the CDU in this chorus of chauvinistic rejoicing.

The SPD candidate for Chancellor, Oskar Lafontaine, predicted entirely correctly, as it turned out, that the economic consequences of the monetary exchange would be disastrous for East German firms and that it would cost millions spread out over many years to prevent a catastrophe. For the West German economy, this monetary exchange amounted to a massive Keynesian conjunctural stimulus. The backlog in consumer goods reinforced by massive sales promotion led to a boom in the West German economy which could easily satisfy the desire of East Germans for goods without an expansion of production.

Along with the content of private debt, the credit burden of East German firms had also suddenly been transformed by Kohl's initiative, from a largely negligible bookkeeping device under the old regime, into pressing hard currency obligations. Simultaneously, the traditional "Eastern" market — the Soviet Union, Poland, etc. — also dried up for producers in the new federal regions. As a consequence, most of the technologically backward firms in the former GDR quickly went broke. The "booming regions" predicted by Helmut Kohl never materialized but that did not become clear to the people until well after the elections.

As technically good and persuasive as the Berlin program was, only intellectual minorities could be moved by its appeals. Between 1990 and 1994, the coalition of the CDU and FDP was able to win parliamentary elections if only by the skin of its teeth. But the SPD remained unable to precisely define its policy on the economy, social welfare, and national security. The party increasingly found itself merely reacting to issues raised by the government.

With the aid of these issues, the government sought to mobilize its electoral potential. At the same time, the number of jobless grew to almost four million during this period and reached a high not seen since the global depression of the 1930s. Unemployment, particularly, was a totally new experience for the East Germans. As unproductive and cumbersome as the planned economy of the GDR had been, it still assured every adult a job and granted every young person adequate educational opportunities.

During the elections of 1994, the people of the new regions reacted to this state of affairs by either abstaining or voting for the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), the successor of the former ruling Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED). In some regions, this party got up to 20 percent of the vote, while in the West, it languished far below the minimum five percent required to enter parlia-

ment. The PDS, however, still managed to enter the parliament in 1990 and again in 1994. This was because the five percent quota only applied to the new federal provinces during the first election in a reunited Germany and the PDS won three direct mandates in 1994, which was the legal precondition for a party below the five percent threshold to enter parliament.

With the exception of the Brandenburg region, Social Democracy failed to harness the dissatisfaction of the former East Germans to its political project. The lone exception, Brandenburg, was solely attributable to the popularity of the local party head and Prime Minister, Manfred Stolpe, who had played a prominent role in the GDR as a church attorney. East German voters were not prejudiced against Stolpe by the fact that in his capacity as human rights activist, he had to deal with representatives of the political police (Stasi) and had even been awarded a medal by the East German government.

The Bonn government exploited a number of issues to put the SPD on the defensive:

1. the supposed "overrunning of the country" by asylum seekers who, in fact, have been applying in greater numbers since the opening of the borders.
2. The number of violent crimes, dramatized especially by the gutter press. Drawn up in response to the painful memory of the Nazi era, article 16/2 reads as follows:

No German should be extradited to a foreign country. *Individuals suffering political persecution are entitled to a right of asylum.*

Many Germans survived the 1930s and 1940s only because they were granted refuge abroad, and Turkey was one of the countries which took them in. Keeping alive the memory of the German past, this constitutional article should be regarded as an act of gratitude.

SINCE 1990, THE RIGHT-WING PRESS AND THE EXTREME RIGHT have managed to stir up hysterical public fears about the "country being overrun by foreigners." Politicians from the Christian Social Union (CSU) — the Bavarian sister party of the CDU — and the CDU have also used the same issue and are now exploiting it to the fullest. The SPD left and the Greens were in the front lines of those supporting the preservation of the right of asylum and proposing a more expeditious disposal of asylum applications, if need be. However the former liberal application of the asylum law was rejected by the mayors of cities and towns which had to accept most of the asylum seekers. Among those city officials opposing the right of asylum were also members of the SPD. In view of the unpopularity of the liberal position, the SPD leadership finally yielded and agreed to vote for a change in the constitution which could not have been passed without its assent. The Social Democratic left considered this the "first bite of the apple."

Another point of controversy inflaming popular passions was the exceptional position of an immigrant of "German ethnic origin" who was entitled to instant naturalization on the basis of Article 116 of the Constitution. This constitutional right contrasted starkly with the position of foreign workers and even their children born in this country who could acquire German citizenship only with difficulty. Moreover, many dictatorships obstruct the release of refugees from their original citizenship and thereby make naturalization legally impossible. In such cases, a recognition of the right to *dual-citizenship* would be a fair solution but

this possibility has previously been strictly ruled out by the CDU/CSU.

The CDU/CSU still subscribes to a definition of citizenship based upon "ethnic origin" handed down from the Wilhelminian era and the Nazi period. They persist in these views despite the fact that many leading liberals want to modify immigration laws in favor of a "ius soli" or law of the soil. Under this definition, anybody born in Germany would be entitled to German citizenship. Nobody can deny that "nationality by ethnic origins" appeals directly to a racist popular conception.

Police statistics certainly do not register a steady increase in all categories of crime. However, the *fear of crime* has greatly increased in both parts of Germany. Both the media and the rhetoric of the conservative CDU minister have greatly contributed to this trend. They have generally harped on the fact that foreigners were disproportionately involved in crime. But a closer reading of these crimes (or "misdemeanors") like violating a locally limited residency law, reveals that they could only have been committed by foreigners and others living in precarious circumstances (banned from jobs, those with low welfare payments). As in all countries with a multi-ethnic population, foreigners gain more notoriety if they commit crimes or are accused of doing so. In the case of German criminals, the fact that they come from a particular part of the country is rarely noted. The prevention of crime can be pursued rationally and in a liberal manner or ostentatiously and in a reactionary manner. The second route is more convenient and popular. The Bonn government has been very quick to call for stiffer sentencing but has refused to launch a thorough investigation of the causes of criminality.

Few people realize that imprisonment as a rule does not serve its ostensible purpose of resocialization, that jails instead have become centers of education for future criminals. To some extent, regions with Social Democratic governments have tried to buck the trend but liberalism in this area is not very popular. Accordingly, most Social Democrats have avoided taking a well-defined position on crime.

Nevertheless, some staunch liberals (including Federal Justice Minister Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberg) are swimming against the current. However, they have not been able to do much in the face of the de facto cooperation of the conservative parliamentary majority and the Social Democratic majority at the regional level where 11 of the 16 provinces are headed by Social Democrats. Polls show that people almost always ascribe greater competence, in the area of fighting crime, to the conservative parties (the CDU and CSU) and occasionally also the extreme right. This obviously does not help publicize the counter-productive effect of the death penalty and long prison sentences. Although it can ultimately be boiled down to a primitive desire for revenge, the determination to "punish" wrongdoers continues to grow stronger.

Furthermore, informed criminologists often point to the dreadful example of the U.S. which combines a per capita prison population many times greater than Germany's with a far higher crime rate. The stereotypical response of the conservatives runs as follows: without these severe sentences, including the cautious embrace of the increased application of the death penalty, the crime rate would be far higher. Besides, the U.S. is a country of immigrants and, in no event, should Germany also become one.

Even here, the prevailing ideology flies in the face of reality. In point of fact, Germany is already a land of immigrants and has been one for decades. It will

also remain one in the future if the country is to have enough young able-bodied individuals to keep the old-age pension system afloat. A study by the staff of the weekly magazine *Die Zeit* projected an annual need for 200,000 able-bodied immigrants. All these controversial points were first blown up into issues by the federal government. After fighting a temporary delaying action, the Social Democrats generally caved in to the right.

THE MORE BOTH LARGE "POPULAR PARTIES" HAVE GRAVITATED toward each other ideologically, the greater has become the importance of the most prominent party leaders. Willy Brandt provided the SPD with a charismatic politician at its head for the first time but his tendency to vacillate and a certain lack of tactical skill brought about his premature downfall. Undoubtedly, it would have been far better if the policy of detente with the Soviet Union and the GDR, initiated by Brandt along with Hans Dietrich Genscher, was credited with bringing about the reunification of Germany instead of all the plaudits going to his successors. But just the opposite has occurred.

For many years, reactionary journalists have imputed to the Social Democrats a secret complicity with the SED. An important role in this matter was played by the discussions conducted between the "Basic Value Commission" established by the directorate of the SPD and high-ranking representatives of the SED *nomenklatura* headed by the rector of the SED Academy of Social Sciences. As a result of these discussions, a sort of "code of behavior" was drawn up and agreed upon. The arrangement guaranteed that each side would refrain from harsh attacks on the other and to assure open critical engagement in the media through free access to periodical and non-periodical publications.

The accord between the two parties made it possible to get some unconventional papers published in the official East German press but the SED government and party leadership soon reneged on its commitment to the agreement, to a large extent. Despite their actions, the Code of Behavior provided encouragement to the internal opposition in the SED and the rest of the population of the GDR. It also helped facilitate, if not indeed made possible, the completely bloodless abdication of the regime. It was these steps toward detente, and not the threat-mongers of the Cold War, that opened the way to German reunification. However, the SPD failed to make this connection clear. Even the warning by Oskar Lafontaine against rushing the economic transformation of the former GDR, has not made much of an impression on public opinion.

In the media, but presumably less so among the people, another focus of controversy has been the redefinition of the role of an expanded Germany in Europe and in the world. The SPD left continued to adhere to the principle of a purely defensive military posture and incorporation into the strictly limited defensive mission of NATO, if not the outright dismantling of the organization. Through its "right-wingers," and encouraged by the U.S., the government pushed for a global deployment of German armed forces, but only within the framework of a NATO taking on new tasks or under the aegis of the UN. Even here, there are different positions within the SPD leadership which are not always entirely clear to the voters. The "image" conveyed is that the SPD wants the same thing as the CDU/CSU, only less of it and wants to proceed more cautiously.

As a result of the frequency of elections to the regional and federal legislatures, an election campaign is in progress somewhere in Germany almost all the

time. In these campaigns, individuals compete for voters through commercial advertising, as has been the custom for a long time in the U.S. During the last federal elections, however, the campaign posters of the CDU and the CSU featured only the prettified and tanned image of the party leader or local top candidates.

Television plays a far greater role than election posters, although there are no precise calculations of its effectiveness. This gives members of the government the advantage because they regularly appear in the media as, for example, when they meet with foreign leaders. And while a small party still has the legal right to air its advertising, the CDU/CSU (and to a certain extent also the FDP) enjoy electorally powerful "sponsors" which allow them the limited use of private television networks. The private broadcaster Sat 1 was an advertising medium under the complete control of the CDU, for all practical purposes. In this way, the publicity impact of opposition parties is further diminished.

If this kind of media advertising has any value at all, it is most effective in conveying an affirmative message. However, an opposition party needs to get across substantive critical information. In all fairness, it must criticize and attack the government. The German public has little use for this sort of approach. But if the SPD is attacked by conservative CDU politicians, the party must "respond in kind with the same heavy artillery."

A personalized electoral campaign always gives the government the advantage. If the incumbents are allowed to "dictate" the issues, the opposition will find this strategy relatively difficult to overcome. Almost a year before the elections, the SPD had decided to allow its members to designate the candidate for Prime Minister through a postal ballot. Rudolf Scharping, the head of the government in the small province of Rheinland-Pfalz from which Helmut Kohl also hails, emerged as the winner. His provincial government was composed of an SDP/FDP coalition. Scharping premised his campaign strategy on one central proposition: if the SDP proved itself to be the strongest political force in the elections, after some hesitation, the FDP would switch sides and form a social-liberal coalition in order to remain in the government. Both calculations turned out to be erroneous and Scharping's tactics in the months prior to the election precluded any chance for success.

AGAINST THE PONDEROUS BUT POORLY DEFINED "MONUMENT" that is Helmut Kohl, we should have presented a succinct critical program and an impressive political team. Instead, the SPD began an electoral campaign focused entirely on the personality of its top candidate. After a few weeks, posters were sent into the fray picturing two other popular SPD prime ministers, Gerhard Schroeder and Oskar Lafontaine alongside Rudolf Scharping. The patent absurdity of the Chancellor was taken for granted. To create a counterweight to a sitting head of government, a challenger has to do more than simply declare himself/herself a candidate for Chancellor. All three had either been former candidates for the Chancellorship, like Lafontaine, or had at least sought the office.

The SPD leaders committed another tactical blunder by their behavior during the election of the Federal President. While the office is essentially decorative, the election process represents a "gauge" of the state of affairs within the majority and the tactical skill of party leaders. The election board is the so-called "Federal Assembly" which consists of all the deputies of the federal legislature

and an equal number of representatives from the regions, commensurate with the size of their population.

Along with the CSU, the CDU nominated Roman Herzog, a Bavarian Protestant and former head of the Supreme Court. The FDP put forward Dr. Hildegard Hamm-Bruecher while the SPD nominated Johannes Rau, the popular Prime Minister of the large region of North Rhine-Westphalen. On the first and second ballots, none of the three candidates won an absolute majority. As expected, the FDP withdrew its candidate on the third ballot. For the SPD leadership, the shrewd thing would have been for its own hopeless candidate to stand down and resubmit the nomination of Ms. Hamm-Bruecher. This move would have forced the FDP to throw its support to the SPD or exposed it as a compliant appendage of the CDU/CSU. Instead, Rudolf Sharping stuck with Johannes Rau and subsequently snubbed the FDP candidate in an extremely ill-advised manner.

I have dwelled on this tactical detail because, for the public, it represents the "essence" of party politics. In spite of everything, in its election campaigns, the SPD has always emphasized the main problem — unemployment — especially longterm and youth unemployment in the East. However, a campaign poster with a legend reading perpendicularly "Work-Work-Work" was not persuasive. Such advertising betrays a lack of the imagination. What is needed is to go to the voters with a concrete program for job-creation.

The main problem confronting the SPD today is that it remains a party of blue collar and white collar workers at a time when disillusionment is spreading within that segment of the population. To some extent, their political sympathies are shifting toward the extreme right. Popular support for neo-fascism may have declined during the recent federal elections and voting for the Hessian regional legislature, but that should not be interpreted as an "all-clear signal."

Simultaneously, the SPD is becoming more and more a party of teachers and low-level state workers, as well as, intellectuals who, with some reservations, are committed to a tranquil social democracy. The SPD now finds its constituencies in almost the same social groups as the CDU. Only in conservative Catholic Bavaria has the rural population remained loyal to "its" CSU. Everywhere else, Social Democrats are contesting the same rural votes and, for that reason, shy away from policies inimical to agriculture.

In the "two-thirds society," the contours of the political majority have shifted appreciably. In quite a few large cities, those who have climbed up the social ladder as a result of SPD policies, are now voting either for the CDU or the Greens. In the rural areas however, the old SPD majorities will, perhaps, remain intact longer even though for many years, the reverse was true.

IN THE NEW FEDERAL PROVINCES, THE SPD "LEFT" DOES NOT FACE A THREAT from the Greens who have entered an alliance with indigenous opposition groups from the GDR era and remain weak. The PDS poses the real "danger." Since 1990, it has not entered the government at any level and, consequently, cannot be held responsible for any of the existing grievances. This leaves the PDS in a perfect position to give a loud and propagandistically adept voice to the people's concerns, desires, hopes, and frustrations. The SED successor may have lost 90 percent of its membership since the wall came down but it is still the largest party in the East and commands far greater wealth than its rivals. The SPD has found it difficult to establish a political bridgehead in the East because it has been squeezed

between the CDU and Helmut Kohl continually promising "booming regions," and the PDS attacking poverty while holding the government responsible for it.

Had the leadership of the PDS really wanted to bring down the Kohl-Kinkel government in the 1994 federal elections, it would have refrained from putting forward candidates, and discreetly urged its members to cast their votes for the SPD. The PDS proponents of rejection would probably have responded to this offer in the following way: to their mind, the distinction between Kohl and Scharping did not suffice to induce them to lose the chance, small as it may have been, to put across a public critique and statement of party objectives. I certainly would not accept this explanation. As I explained, not inappositely, during the course of the election campaign in our FRG English-language borrowings: "Low Profile is good. No profile is bad."

In order to leave himself least vulnerable, the SPD candidate for Chancellor conducted an extremely cautious statesman-like campaign. A sarcastic journalist commented that none of this reflected badly on Scharping but asked why one should vote for him. As a result of the vacuous SPD electioneering, the only palpable reason for electing a Social Democrat would be to have another younger and slimmer man from the Palatine region as Chancellor.

The SPD is on its way to becoming a German version of the American Democratic Party without the benefit of a presidential system. The SPD is mired in an unfortunate dilemma: the party is not really in power where it would have the clout to implement a compelling program. But neither is the SPD generally in the opposition where it could recharge itself through self-critical reflection. It still holds the majority in the Federal Council and, thus, is almost compelled to "co-govern."

In Europe, until recently, there existed in all democracies a clearly constituted left and right in the form of liberal, conservative, and socialist parties. For the first time, this party system has collapsed in Italy and nobody can predict whether, or if, it can be resurrected in a renovated form or whether we are experiencing the first example of a "pure Telecracy" or the rule of television. The political situation is different in Germany but I am concerned about the personalization of politics, the commercialization of election campaigns, and the disowning of creative political concepts which are the driving force of a dynamic party.

In light of the decline in the number of SPD members and the activity of party locals, many Social Democrats have taken comfort in the fact that other "large-scale organizations" are suffering from similar problems. The CDU and especially both major churches have undergone dramatic losses of membership. The conventional wisdom is that a process of "individualization" and egoistic hedonism is becoming widespread. Even the Green/Alliance 90 party which emerged only a decade ago as a dynamic new formation, appears to have stagnated.

In order to overcome this political apathy, the Social Democrats have taken the lead by proposing the reintroduction of public polling and balloting (single-issue plebiscites) which is supported by politicians from other parties. The aim of these plebiscites would be to restore to the citizenry the sense that it can have an active voice in determining the course of political events. Conservative spokespeople are resisting this innovation with the historically bogus argument that the plebiscitary element of the Weimar Constitution afforded the Nazi

Party demagogic opportunities that they otherwise would not have had and it was therefore complicit in the demise of the First Republic.

With respect to the reintroduction of compulsory military service and other important constitutional changes, Karl Jaspers for decades called attention to the fact that plebiscites could also be employed as a means of establishing a civil state consciousness. Changes in the Constitution are now necessary following the reunification of the FRG and the GDR. The prospect of constitutional revision creates an opportunity for broad public discussion, but this chance is deliberately being allowed to slip away. Some Social Democrats have come out in favor of this nation-wide discussion but the party leadership is not infusing such proposals with a mass-mobilizing appeal.

Erhard Eppler was a former Minister for Developing Countries and long-time head of the Basic Values Commission of the SPD Directorate. In that capacity, he authored a *Platform for a New Majority* which emphasized a policy of social and ecological reform. Eppler's work was published as a book in 1990 but it was never used by the party leadership as the basis for an electoral platform. Even if the adoption of this platform had not led to an election victory, the SPD would be in a better position today. German citizens would be looking at a clearly defined party. In recent weeks, some "Green politicians" and a number of calculating Christian Democrats have begun exploring the possibility of a "Black-Green" coalition, at least at the provincial level. The presence of a well-defined SPD would lend less credibility to these tactical maneuverings.

The Social Democratic program is progressive, informed, and relevant but it plays almost no role in shaping the consciousness of nation-wide public opinion. Neither party members nor its local representatives have a good enough grasp of the program to inject it cogently into public discourse. Under its present leadership, German Social Democracy leaves the distinct impression that it is counting on the premature fall of a coalition governing with a bare majority. But nobody can or wants to explain how they would make policy in a "Red-Green coalition" at the federal level after elections which have been moved up.

The suspicion is rife that the SPD leadership really has designs on the formation of a Grand Coalition with the Christian Democrats and thus wants to avoid incurring the displeasure of its strongest rival. Even without new elections, this turn of events is thoroughly plausible but no clear political objectives have been advanced to justify it. The desire to co-govern is not sufficient cause for the existence of a political party. We hope that the forces of renewal coming to light from time to time will gain in influence and, above all, define a new profile for the party over the course of the next four years.

Alliance 90/Greens

Margareta Wolf and Cora Stephan

FOR THE POSTWAR FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY (FRG), it was simultaneously a scandal and a sensation that in 1983, for the first time, a new party entered the parliament and positioned itself to the left of the Social Democratic Party (SPD). Founded in 1979, the Greens also differed from a classic party of the left. The Greens emerged from a sort of "historical compromise" between the representatives of the "New Left" (Rudi Dutschke among others) after 1968 and the ecology movement, which had been gaining in strength since the middle of the 1970s. In those days, only a very few representatives of the ecological movement perceived themselves as members of the left. Instead, they tended to think of themselves as conservative in the sense of preserving the best from the past. Neither did the members of the student left subscribe to the concerns of the ecologists. Up until then, the soul of the West German left remained fixated on the infinite advance of the forces of production. They merely tacked on the proviso that this economic potential should finally be put under the control of the "people."

At first, there was no great urgency impelling the Greens to start "poaching" in the electoral preserves of the left. In those early days, conservative political analysts of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) even expressed relief that the Greens were not offering themselves as an electoral alternative to the right. Right-wing intellectuals fully realized that the Greens' values and orientation had a great deal in common with the tenets of a conservative Christian tendency (Christian social doctrine) and could become a potential rival.

NOBODY OUTSIDE THE RANKS OF THE GREENS OR EVEN INSIDE THEM initially believed that a "one-issue party," as many viewed the organization, could survive more than one four-year legislative session. But the truth was that, from its inception, the party represented more than a single issue. It transcended the environmental question and the demand for a way out of the nuclear energy trap. For, above all, the Greens conceived of themselves as an "anti-party party" which the leadership underscored with a number of its own unconventional measures. Deputies of the Green parliamentary fraction had to undergo regular rotation, with each individual giving way after two years in office to a so-called "substitute"

MARGARETA WOLF has been the Federal parliamentary deputy of the Alliance/Greens since 1994 and the party spokesperson on economic policy.

CORA STEPHAN is a political scientist and a freelance writer who has written numerous books on political and historical matters.

who would then serve the rest of the term. Deputies also had to turn over the bulk of their legislative salary to the party. Through this measure, we sought to counteract the phenomenon of the "professional politician" and also remove the possibility of anyone pursuing politics as a financially rewarding career.

To reinforce this self-styled conception of the Greens as an "anti-party party," internal political debates were conducted in public. This institutionalized mechanism of an "open party" was rescinded for the first time at the opening of the last legislative session in October 1994 following the re-entry of the Greens into the Federal parliament. Before then, however, the party felt itself to be the "pillar of the movement" — a genuine leftist self-definition — which led to all sorts of kowtowing before the radical left in the FRG. The party favored a thoroughly romantic concept of "resistance" and contested the "power monopoly of the state." Indulging a radical electoral constituency also encouraged all sorts of "immediate" demands. The "escape from the nuclear energy trap" was supposed to come to pass with the same dispatch as withdrawal from NATO or the abolition of the German armed forces.

Until the end of the 1980s, with its fierce internal struggle to maintain the "correct line," the party mesmerized a certain politicized segment of the German public. The battle was joined between its two rival wings. On one side were the "political realists" who espoused a policy oriented toward reform and coalition. On the other side were the "fundamentalists" who remained unyielding in their principled commitment to predominately leftist and feminist positions which, in the end, boiled down to staunch resistance to the "ruling system." The struggle ended in 1991 with the exodus of the fundamentalist wing from the party.

The "battle of the party wings" within the Greens had dialectical effects on the younger generation, which had grown up in the Federal Republic of the post-war era. In its early days, party members honestly believed that they could and would employ some magic means to set themselves apart from other parties. Because the abandonment of these earlier convictions took place in a completely public fashion, the defection came off as an object lesson and self-instruction in the advantages of institutional democracy.

The controversy around deputy rotation developed into a vote in favor of independent deputies. Previously, the Greens had subjected their candidates to the vote of a poorly defined "decision of the base." Later, the party deprived them of their financial independence and placed them under strict discipline. Now, following an intense dispute, the party has returned to the classic democratic definition of the relation between party and parliamentary fraction. This experience has taught the entire party the advantages of democracy. Whoever once subjected the democratic procedures of the FRG to a radical critique, and later repudiated the implications of such radical positions, has undoubtedly studied democracy more thoroughly than anyone who takes its rules for granted.

THE SAME COULD BE SAID FOR THE DEBATE over the "power monopoly of the state." There was a process of assimilation that became manifest for the Greens who represented an entire generation through their confrontation with the state. They soon realized that, for the first time in German history, a civilized and democratic state was in place which even permits those other forms of political engagement cloaking themselves with their pathetic formula of "resistance."

The very existence of the Greens was made possible by their capacity for

change, as well as by the opportunity to initiate new political processes, and even establish a new party within a democratic framework. If something has changed the postwar FRG it was the creation of this new party which perhaps, who knows, might yet supplant the Free Democratic Party (FDP) in the near future. But more of this later. In any event, with the Greens, a democratic assimilation was carried out in a way which scarcely could have been expected from most Germans after 1945.

This process of assimilation was, of course, firmly sustained by the integration of a protest party into national politics and the republic itself through being granted a share of power. The party first came to power in the municipalities and then at the regional level. Hessen was the first region governed by a Red-Green coalition. From this point on, the most radical and far-reaching demands began to drop by the wayside. In these circumstances, one must ask whether the party is being subjected to a normal process of assimilation, during which radicalism will be ground down into tedious normality. Is the party simply growing older and becoming more conservative and accommodating in the natural course of events? To understand what the party today represents, we must come to grips with the epochal events of 1989.

In 1989, the Greens were not the only politicians in the FRG who failed to recognize the opportunity for bringing democracy, freedom, and human rights, along with economic prosperity, to the East. Many Green and Social Democratic politicians opposed German unification "because of Auschwitz." But this argument was only superficially sensitive to our history. Germany was divided as a result of the Cold War, not because of the crimes of its people.

1989 again made evident the diverse origins of the Greens. The party was founded by environmentalists but with the cooperation of various currents of the left. A convergence of perspectives between these groupings never occurred. A tense standoff resulted, instead. The "left" within the Greens included not only pragmatic "undogmatic" individuals of libertarian orientation, like Joschka Fischer or Daniel Cohn-Bendit who had a libertarian orientation, but also attracted people from the old dogmatic sects of the student movement. These included groups close to the SED and the GDR (along with, as we now know, an alarming number of those who were extremist militants or even belonged to the Red Army Faction).

There were also many who came from the peace movement of the 1980s where the prevailing opinion was that the danger emanating from the West (from the imperialist U.S.) was far greater than that from the "peace-loving" Soviet Union. We had an especially difficult time, of course, persuading Eastern European dissidents to support their Russians oppressors' opposition to the nuclear rearmament policy of Reagan and Chancellor Schmidt. But contact with the East European dissidents was made by Petra Kelly, among others. All the more strange that the events of 1989 should have produced a surge of visceral feeling against the victory of the West which threatened to put an end to the "socialist experiment" and the socialist "utopia" forever.

"EVERYBODY IS TALKING ABOUT GERMANY BUT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT THE WEATHER." That was the spirit of the age, especially among German intellectuals of both the East and the West. It was also the campaign slogan of the Greens during the first all-German elections of 1990. Male and female voters paid us back for this his-

torical stupidity by tossing the Greens out of the Federal parliament. That experience was a healthy shock for the party.

The defeat began a complex and fruitful process of engagement and merger with the "Alliance-90." The latter organization was one of the protagonists of the peaceful East German revolution of 1989. The members of Alliance-90 were human rights activists who had entered the Federal parliament in 1990 on the basis of the initially different electoral arrangements in the former GDR. Along with Werner Schultz of Alliance 90, Margareta Wolf, a co-author of this article, was at the center of the negotiations between the Greens and the civil rights activists. Alliance 90 was not simply gobbled up by the stronger battalions of the Western Greens. The party has pledged itself to become something new and different, now calling itself "Alliance 90/Greens."

The voters may have rewarded us for this decision. In the October 16, 1994 elections, the Greens received the greatest number of votes in its history with 7.3 percent of the returns, which made the Greens the third largest parliamentary fraction after the CDU and the SPD. Perhaps, the 1990 elections did not reflect a sustained trend but only a rap on the knuckles delivered by the voters. Perhaps the Greens may also be benefiting from the weakness of the FDP. But the Greens are no longer primarily a leftist environmentalist party. We have come to represent many things that the informed middle-class are unable to find in the liberal FDP. Since the merger with Alliance 90, the Greens are no longer primarily perceived as proponents of ecology and an efficient economy. We are now also seen as a party of democracy, civil liberties, and constitutional law. The Greens have established themselves as a third force in the country, not just in parliament.

THE ELECTION OF THE GREEN POLITICIAN, ANTJE VOLLMER, to the post of vice-president of the German parliament has a broader significance beyond mere symbolism. Vollmer was elected through the combined votes of the Greens, CDU, and FDP. Up until November 10, 1994, the Greens had always been regarded by the CDU as the "bastard child and spoiled offspring of the SPD." Moreover the Christian Democratic leadership treated the Greens' representatives as security risks and used its power to exclude them from holding many important parliamentary posts. Interestingly enough, however, opposition to the election of Antje Vollmer did not come from the CDU, it came, instead, from the SPD despite that party's cooperation with the Greens in numerous municipal and regional parliaments and governments. For the SPD was forced to relinquish a vice-presidential post to the Greens that it had previously routinely claimed. In this confrontation, the SPD was the big loser.

The election of Antje Vollmer must be seen as a rupture in the Greens' relations with the SPD. Since that vote, the Greens are no longer considered the "poorly brought up" children of the SPD. The election was, in its own way, a blow for freedom which the Greens used to underscore their new position as the third strongest force in parliament. The vote also demonstrated that the party was no longer confining itself to the political ghetto to which it had been consigned by rival parties. Today, the Greens believe themselves to be a modern political force oriented toward the future.

THE AVENUE OF ESCAPE FROM SOCIAL, ECOLOGICAL, AND ECONOMIC CRISES does not run through the "Sunday-school Marxism" of important elements of the SPD,

capitalism *pur a la* FDP, or that conservative segment of the CDU fixated on the nation and long defunct values. All three strategies reinforce the crisis and endanger the position of Germany economically and socially, as well as culturally.

Meanwhile, the new "respectability" of the Greens has also further aggravated their already strained relations with the SPD. The SPD finds itself in a difficult position at present. Its leadership cannot completely ignore the old constituencies. But it must simultaneously win the support of the modern urban middle class. Hans Hichel, the Prime Minister of a Red-Green coalition government recently returned to office with a strengthened Green fraction, formulated the dilemma facing his SPD in the following terms: "We have become the party of the marginalized, the unemployed, and those on welfare while the Greens are successfully representing themselves as the modern party of the future." The crisis of the Red-Green city government of Frankfurt demonstrates the reservations harbored in the ranks of the SPD toward the small Green Party, which has gradually taken over the power of the purse and public order in the region. Running the badly strapped finances of Frankfurt is Tom Koenigs, a member of the Greens.

The growing conflict with the SPD goes hand in hand with a more or less heavy flirtation between the Greens and some conservative politicians. In the CDU, the Greens also have found a partner of dialogue and alliance for their strategy of socio-ecological restructuring and our fusion of individualism with social responsibility. The party has been flirting with the CDU for ten years, and it with us. But the overtures have now become more passionate. For while the "milieux" from which both parties recruit may be extremely different, they are nevertheless in flux.

The electoral potential of our 15-year-old party has drastically changed over the past four years. Today the Greens can count on the electoral support, not only of the established middle class, but also of the socially vulnerable. Nobody can any longer claim that the electoral potential of the Greens lies primarily in the "leftist political ghetto." Women under the age of 45 and young people vote disproportionately Green. In both these social groups, the Alliance/Greens are the strongest political party. The Greens have broken out of the ghetto and are now sought after as a negotiating partner by all those who recognize the need for innovation in the broadest sense — industry, researchers, and dissidents in other fractions.

The fate of the FDP will determine whether the Alliance/Greens will find themselves facing the question of power in Bonn at any time during the near future. Perhaps the need to make a decision on this score may come to pass sooner than we would like. This would entail opening the party to other electoral strata, and new ideological content, and integrating it into the political scene of the FRG. Such a turn of events would also mean that the party could no longer serve as the vehicle for the steadily dwindling protest potential in the country. Still uncertain is the extent to which the cards held by different factions of the party will be completely reshuffled.

The Case Against Market Socialism

Mel Bienenfeld

THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, THE LEFT IS ADRIFT. Ironically, it took the collapse of the Soviet system, long rejected by many socialists, to fully reveal that we have no guiding political vision.

But developing (or redeveloping) such a vision requires a common conceptual framework and a set of shared analytical tools, also lamentably missing. Nowhere is this absence clearer than in the debate over "market socialism." Here attempts to construct systems that avoid the pitfalls of both capitalism and Soviet-style state "socialism" invoke orthodox liberal notions of market rationality.

Determining how, or even if, market forces can coexist with any notion of socialism should demand that the sharpest picture of socialism's critique of the market be brought into the argument. Unfortunately, the central argument of Marx's first volume of *Capital* — that an economy based on commodity exchange necessarily entails capitalist exploitation and instability — is usually ignored and poorly understood even by many on the anti-market side of the debate.

This is the situation David McNally tries to remedy in *Against the Market*.^{*} McNally, a Canadian political scientist, sees much of the left succumbing to a "glorification" of the market. Their concessions to pro-market ideas represent more than just an accommodation to some competing vision of socialism.

For what is at stake is not an argument over different mechanisms of socialist economy, but, rather, the survival of socialism itself as an alternative to capitalism. For the logic of the modern cult of the market is a thoroughly anti-socialist one. If the market is the solution, then ... socialism and Marxism are finished. The choice before us, then, is *socialism or the market*. (p.2; italics in original)

M McNALLY CENTERS HIS WORK AROUND MARX' ORIGINAL CRITIQUE of the market and his analysis of commodities and money. But far from being a work of exegesis on abstract economics, McNally places Marx's argument in the context of the development of the ideas of 19th century political economy and their use by both left and right as weapons in the debates over contemporary working-class struggles. By examining the historical context of Marx's ideas, McNally is able to show that

^{*}David McNally, *Against the Market: Political Economy, Market Socialism and the Marxist Critique*, Verso Press, 1993, 224 pp.

they were *entirely and precisely* aimed against dominant contemporary left-wing doctrines that viewed market mechanisms, freed from particular capitalist institutions, as means for the abolition of exploitation and misery. A concluding chapter then employs the Marxist critique to argue the possibility of (non-market, democratic) socialism, engaging some of the ideas of today's market proponents.

To argue that current notions of market socialism are echoes of early 19th century radicalism requires a familiarity with pre-Marxist socialism missing from most recent discourse. Neither social planning nor the collectivization of productive property were significant components of the thought of early socialists. Their central concerns were the obstacles to equitable distribution created (as they saw it) by the power of capitalists and landlords. They found justification for their theories in the emerging ideas of political economy, and this is exactly what led Marx to a critique of these ideas.

The early socialists and their pro-capitalist intellectual opponents were not, in fact, at odds about whether markets were socially beneficial. Instead, as McNally shows, a tension within the conception of the market's role eventually took the form of two opposing stances. This tension was present in the original work of Adam Smith.

While Smith is the acknowledged prophet of laissez-faire, his political economy nevertheless displayed more social concern than other proponents of the virtues of self-interest. Although participants in a market economy work, buy, and sell for their individual benefit, Smith believed that the freest possible market system worked in the interests of the poor and against those of the rich. Interference in the market to him meant monopoly, unreasonably high prices for the means of subsistence, and restrictions on the right of workers to find employment (all viewed as pre-modern, feudal residues). "Natural" (freely competitive) prices in his theory were also "just" prices. Smith denounced the "mean rapacity ... of merchants and manufacturers," (a trait which disqualified them from being the "rulers of mankind"), and argued against the widespread current sentiment that the poor must remain poor in order to have an incentive to work. He looked forward to high industrial wages and abundant consumer goods as positive outcomes of a free market.

It ought not to be surprising, then, that early 19th century radicals found in Smith's ideas the theoretical underpinnings for their political demands. The image of Smith's competitive market as counterposed to social concern, benevolence and solidarity, McNally argues, derived from a process of vulgarization that began with T.R. Malthus and continued through Friedrich von Hayek, the 20th century anti-socialist and extreme free-market exponent. Smith's legacy thus bifurcated into intellectual camps constituting quite explicitly the attack on, and defense of, emerging popular radicalism and rebellion.

THE EMERGENCE OF THESE CAMPS IS VISIBLE AS EARLY AS THE SECOND EDITION of Malthus' *Essay on Population* (1803). Malthus aimed to refute Thomas Paine and others who provided the intellectual underpinnings of a growing popular militancy, arguing that the free market would provide adequate subsistence for all were it not for the political dominance of the rich. Paine went so far as to assert the *right* of all citizens to a decent standard of living, helping to inspire a widespread notion of a right to subsistence which was associated with a freely functioning market.

Against this idea of a right to subsistence, Malthus, abandoning his original overpopulation thesis (according to which subsistence for all was impossible), took the position that the poor had a choice: either keep their numbers small enough to equal the demand for their labor, or destroy the benefits of the market for others with demands for relief that recalled the pre-modern attitudes of feudalism. The poor have "no claim of right on society for the smallest portion of food beyond that which [their] labor [will] fairly purchase." This political consequence, rather than the cogency of Malthus' theoretical argument, earned him a solid following among the leading contemporary economists (including David Ricardo, who opposed him on other theoretical grounds).

By espousing this position Malthus established an intellectual connection between a free labor market and the view that adequate subsistence must remain sufficiently out of reach to motivate the poor to work. Adam Smith's moral intent had been separated from his theoretical conception. It would not be long before this version of economic theory became the underpinning of the official side of the debate on the Poor Laws: rebellions in the early 1830s again sparked an anti-radical reaction, eventually culminating in harsh restrictions on poor relief. (Current ideology in the U.S. debate on "welfare reform" is, of course, directly descended from Malthus).

But the other side in the 1830s debate in the immediately preceding period did not concede Smith's vision to its opponents. Though people like Robert Owen espoused "cooperation" as an alternative to competition, what they meant by this was a system in which independent laborers associated themselves in a common market that they supplied. In this association, goods would be traded at prices precisely reflecting the amount of labor-time that went into their production — Smith's "natural" prices. According to Owen (and others), it was the system of metallic money that prevented exchange directly in proportion to labor time. Removing the "artificial" standard and performing a simple determination of the average labor time needed for each product's production were all that would be necessary technically to establish a socialist society. The categories of Smithian political economy had thus come to be seen as providing the key to the establishment of social justice.

The large output of works on political economy by radical supporters of the working class in this period reveals a process of groping toward a theoretical understanding of exploitation and how to end it. By and large, they located exploitation in the process of exchange, as "monopolistic" big capitalists "added on" extra profit to their prices (rather than in the labor market or in the production process). They attributed this ability to "add on" to the existence of "artificial" standards of value (and thus became quite concerned with currency reform). Their proposed solution was the rationalization of exchange by associations of independent producers (who would continue to own their means of production and output until it was exchanged). Very rarely, and inconsistently, as in the case of William Thompson's *Labor Rewarded* (1827) did they propose that production itself be organized according to a socially planned scheme.

Thus, these early pro-working class intellectuals were "market socialists." They perceived that in the science of political economy lay the key to understanding exploitation, but their work contained large analytical gaps (the problem of how an average necessary amount of labor is determined, the explanation of how non-metallic money ensures a "just" reward to labor). Their labor exchanges,

islands of independent producers in a sea of industrial capitalist employers, were doomed, and they often turned to idiosyncratic currency reform schemes in the hopes that these would allow their cooperativism to flourish.

THIS WAS THE INTELLECTUAL ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH KARL MARX UNDERTOOK HIS critique of political economy. Marx contended with the strong influence of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon on European socialism, which directed the movement away from strikes and revolutionary struggle and toward what Marx saw as hopeless utopian schemes. Proudhon envisioned a system of “fair” exchange of products by independent small producers, whose genesis would primarily occur through the implementation of a banking reform that would replace the gold standard by a paper accounting system based on labor time. Proudhon shared with his English predecessors the notion that it was the power of capitalists and landowners that allowed unjust prices to be charged, and explicitly believed that free competition would insure a reward to workers directly in proportion to the quantity of their labor (and eliminate capitalist and landed property), if only the mediation of money could be abolished.

McNally’s chapter on Marx demonstrates how essential parts of Marx’s economic works were written in answer to Proudhon, in particular, and to “Smithian socialist” ideas, in general, which Marx saw as a theoretical muddle and a danger to the workers’ movement. Free participation by independent producers in a market economy is incompatible with the existence of a socially known standard of the amount of labor required for each good’s production. In the real working of markets, supply and demand balance only accidentally, so that certain specific acts of labor may turn out *post hoc* to have been superfluous. If those working in a particular industry turn out to have worked on average more efficiently, or more intensely, or with better equipment than a particular worker has, then one hour of that worker’s labor will be valued by the market as less than one hour of socially necessary labor. This is impossible to avoid.

Unplanned production for a market — the basis of an exchange economy — necessitates guessing by individual producers about how much to produce and how intensely to work, and demands an unceasing attempt to produce more efficiently than others to insure that others don’t “get there first” and devalue one’s own labor. This guarantees variation among the producers in the amount of labor required per unit of output and an ever-changing standard of necessary labor time that cannot be calculated in advance (and can therefore not be measured by a “direct labor” form of money). It is *existing market relations* in their necessarily fluctuating way, involving winners and losers, that create the tendency to exchange (on average) according to equal labor times; the Smithian socialists thus are trying “to reconstitute society on the basis of what is merely an embellished shadow of it.”

McNally tackles another idea inherent in most contemporary market socialist (and other radical) thinking: the conception that workers’ cooperatives, by establishing democratic control of privately but collectively owned workplaces, can eliminate the need for a class of wage-paying, exploiting capitalists.

The Proudhonian version of this idea was that appropriation of the surplus product by workers, rather than capitalists, was in keeping with a just society. Marx’s refutation of this derives from his view of the market. The establishment

of prices that can function as mechanisms for market regulation implies the existence of competition with other producers and a struggle to remain at least as efficient as they. This requires both the ability to invest in new methods of production and an unceasing attempt to capture new markets from competitors. For these purposes the essential tool is a fund of purchasing power (exchange-value), which is, hopefully, larger than that of other producers. No amount of this fund is ever sufficient, because it is always possible that competitors are financially stronger. (This — and not directly because it takes personal greed to become a capitalist — is why Marx called the capitalist appetite for profit “insatiable.”)

THUS THE HYPOTHESIZED WORKER-OWNERS ARE FACED WITH THE NEED to divide their sales revenue into a portion for their own consumption (which can never fall below a certain minimum) and a profit surplus to “plow back” into the business (which has no maximum). This tension is unavoidable, and must result, first, in the line being drawn right at the point where the minimum to maintain the workers’ standard of living is met, and second, a constant pressure to reduce that standard. The existence of these pressures is what Marx is referring to when he says that the “conditions of labor ...take on a *personality*... or ...are posited as the property of a personality alien to the worker,” and elsewhere that “[t]he capitalist functions only as *personified* capital.”

The division between wages and profits is thus innate in market production, and wages themselves, again because of the pressures of competition, will tend to equalize among enterprises by means of an unplanned, impersonal market. A market in human labor-power is therefore central to any system of commodity exchange.

McNally’s portrayal of Marx’s economics as a counterposition to “market socialism” is convincing. It was the attempt to reappropriate and criticize the work of Adam Smith (and others) that led to *Capital*. To be sure, there are no exact analogues to the “Smithian socialists” today. With a modern perspective, today’s marketeers emphasize state intervention in the economy to avoid capitalism’s excesses, and generally avoid “primitive” schemes like tricks with currency. But they accept the theory that the market is the best possible organizing force for human activity just as uncritically as their predecessors, and their reliance on the outspokenly apologetic ideas of neo-classical economics is a worse type of market fetishism than that of the more naive early socialists.

IN HIS CHAPTER ON THE POSSIBILITY OF SOCIALISM, some of McNally’s anti-market arguments are particularly interesting. He points out, for example, that the costs that go into the formation of market prices cannot, in principle, measure the entire array of social and environmental effects of the organization of the production process — including, particularly, the lack of time for the human development of the worker. To reorganize production so that negative effects were minimized consistent with human need (and not with an external, “objective” need to sell a product most cheaply) would necessarily be to socialize it. In the planning process it would still be possible to calculate efficiency; that is, arrive at a measure of the relative costs to society of different alternatives (as Oskar Lange argued in the 1960’s); but an efficiency dictated by a force external to human needs *need no longer be the single criterion* by which all economic acts are judged.

Although tensions among different social goals will always exist, “efficient” work methods, the need to increase output, and the need to shorten working time in order to enjoy life more could be balanced against one another in a democratic (and fallible!) process:

Indeed, this is what it means to move from the realm of blind necessity to the realm of freedom. There is nothing metaphysical in the idea. It simply refers to the fact that democracy and conscious human deliberation would direct the basic pattern of economic reproduction of society. In such a context, the criterion of efficiency would become a means to human ends, not an end in itself to which all needs are subordinated. (p. 209)

Other particulars of this discussion are worth noting, such as the distinction between market *regulation* and market *mechanisms*. In a society where the production and distribution of the great bulk of consumption goods was socialized, the element of compulsion underlying market regulation would be missing. This would not prevent individuals trading their allowances to certain goods, or purchasing luxury goods in a market sector with vouchers earned by extra work (perhaps at set prices to encourage or discourage specific behaviors).

But the usefulness of this chapter is not as a thorough discourse on the possibility of socialism. Key questions are left unaddressed, such as what mechanisms, if any, are needed to motivate each individual’s social contribution, or how to address serious conflicts among the needs of various groups and individuals. Instead it is an excellent illustration of how to bring into the debate what is ignored by market socialism’s proponents: the analysis of market relations as alienated, thus necessarily precluding the ability of human beings to realize their humanity through their social existence.

McNally points out that the economic arguments of market socialists are purely technical; that they are attracted to the “objective” efficiency of market prices and the formal absolutism of the economic theory describing them. When writers like Diane Elson, a proponent of “socialized markets,” argue that prices and money are necessary components of a “decentralized” socialism, they appear unconcerned that Marx’s critique — in which prices and money embody all of the contradictions of capitalism — should even be engaged.

The danger for the development of socialist theory is that an alternate, thoroughly critical, perception of the market will exist only stagnantly in the minds of fewer and fewer socialists. With the brutality of the market revealing itself increasingly in the East, as well as the West, we cannot afford to lose clarity on what it is about capitalism that must be changed. And the confusion about the nature of Stalinist systems, so damaging to the growth of an inspiring socialist vision, must be addressed with the same Marxist conceptual tools. It is high time that the “Russian question” emerged from the arcane squabbles of Trotskyist sects as a critical problem in social analysis, involving the questions of what constitutes social planning and whether non-market forms of compulsion can regulate production in industrial society.

But we need to understand the market not only to propose a social vision. That vision itself cannot be separated from the struggles that lead to it, and today’s battles against what capitalist development means for us — the call for “free trade,” workplace restructuring, the crisis of the welfare state, the increasing dominance of world development by volatile financial forces — requires an approach that understands the essential dynamics of the system.

In the 19th century Marx used his analysis to approach issues like currency reform, cooperative societies, and the length of the work day. Today, too, we need to understand the limits of successful reform within a market system. Marx's comment on Proudhon applies to many of today's proposals to reform the evils of capitalism while maintaining its mode of social reproduction: these proposals amount to *imagining* the existence of such systems without demonstrating that they are possible. We must be able to judge accurately when and how to propose demands that reject the logic of the market.

That is why *Against the Market* should be welcomed as a vitally important contribution. It suggests a thorough reworking of socialist discourse and points the direction other work must take. Clarifying Marx' intent rather than obscuring it can strengthen and propagate an intellectual tendency that can counter today's defeatist conservatism. Current theory, when it does not admire technical efficiency and "rational choice," often relies on *ad hoc* inventions and unfounded judgments such as the idea that a planned economy requires a totalitarian state, or that the only economic democracy possible is the alienated "democracy" of the marketplace. In contrast is Marx's pointed characterization of commodity society suggesting that the hope for human freedom lies in the possibility of transcending market relations and replacing them with the institutions needed for conscious, collective regulation of human life.

The “Russian Question” And World War II

Julius Jacobson

BECAUSE OF SPACE CONSIDERATIONS, MOST OF A LENGTHY SECOND PART of my discussion of the “Russian Question” will have to wait for the next issue of *New Politics*. There is room, however, for a more abbreviated article, culled from the longer version, dealing with the Russian Question and World War II through the Stalin-Hitler Pact; particularly appropriate since it coincides with a series of 50th anniversaries of various phases of the war. Ceremonies celebrating the Normandy landings, the Battle of the Bulge, the liberation of Auschwitz, VE-day (at the time of writing, the victory over Japan is yet to be celebrated) were rarely comprehensive and, as often as not, marred by touches of chauvinistic flag waving and sanctimonious commentaries about a “time for healing” and “reconciliation.” For all that, many of the accounts, reminiscences, and interviews in the press were sensitive, and the images of the war on the television screen often poignant. They were particularly evocative for people who were of age in those years of anxiety when everyone, to one degree or another, was personally affected by the war. Most affected were the kin of the war’s most tragic victims, the vast armies of young people killed in what is now commonly called “the Good War.”

The Good War! It is meant to comfort the still-living bereaved with the assurance that “they did not die in vain.” And coming into vogue in the past decade, homage to “The Good War” is designed to reduce the horror of the bad war in Vietnam to no more than a blemish on the evolving historical contours of a just nation. Yet, it is not exactly a felicitous phrase. One need not be a pacifist to recognize that there is something oxymoronic in describing any war as “good.” Wars can be justifiable, even necessary. But “good”? The phrase is bothersome not only because it is in poor taste, it is also simplistic, even misleading as applied to World War II. The Good War implies that in the years 1939-1945 battle lines were drawn between the forces of good, on one side, and the armies of Armageddon, on the other. And that Good prevailed. No one with a spark of humanity could deny the absolute and unique evil of Nazism, which reached unimaginable depths of depravity during the war. But that does not mean that the wartime enemies of Nazi Germany were partisans of

JULIUS JACOBSON is co-editor of *New Politics*.

the good. The moral caliber of the Allied forces remains to be judged by such criteria as, what they represented socially, how they operated on the military and civilian fronts, and the domestic *and* global consequences of their victory.

One of the problems with the good versus evil dichotomy is that the Soviet Union was co-responsible with Nazism for igniting the war. This junior, but loyal and initially indispensable military ally of German fascism, suddenly found itself pushed across the moral divide into the camp of the good when Hitler decided that Stalin had outlived his usefulness.

The question then: did the abrupt realignment of the major actors in the European war change the moral political chemistry of the reshaped Western Alliance? Did the new war partner degrade the good camp? Was the Soviet Union's involuntary shift of allegiances the equivalent of a moral conversion? Or was the cynical notion that, now that Stalin is on our side, the Soviet Union's sins are to be forgotten and its current crimes concealed?

These questions have been given added prominence by a novel aspect of this year's commemoration of VE-day. For the first time there was wide acknowledgement of the Soviet role in defeating the Wehrmacht. Up to now, especially during the Cold War, it was always "we" — the West — that won the war, guided by the military genius of Ike and Monty (in that order, at least in the U.S.). This time there was more than a nodding recognition that Russia had something to do with it, too. Clips of the awesome battle of Stalingrad and the Red Army's costly assault on Berlin were given equal footage to the Normandy landings and the fighting in the Ardennes. More than one analyst admitted that were it not for the Russian role in a war that cost the lives of 25-30 million Soviet soldiers and civilians, there is no telling how much longer the war would have lasted, or even certainty about its outcome.

If Russia is now (accurately) recognized as the major military factor responsible for defeating the German war machine, then the "Russian Question" looms larger in importance for understanding the character of the war. The nature of Stalinism and Russia's role and conduct in the war (first as an ally, then as an enemy of Hitler) goes to the heart of the question: how good was the war that it (primarily) won.

FOR MANY, THE "GOOD WAR" COULD ADMIT TO NO IMPERFECTIONS. To keep the illusion intact, there was only the occasional critical reference to Russia's role circa September 1939-June 1941. Instead, there was a heavy concentration on the enormous losses the Soviets suffered. Yet, it was surely appropriate to point out that a large percentage of the 25-30 million lives lost were attributable to reprehensible Soviet policies and actions before and during the war, elaborated below. Apparently to have taken note of these ugly events or to take full cognizance of the disastrous consequences of the victory in the good war for the subjugated peoples of Russia's new

sphere of influence, might interfere with the myth of the celebrated good war. And that, most commentators were not about to do. Better to accent the positive about Soviet heroism and recall the sacrifices. Sentiment gives way to sentimentality and, with it, truth to falsification.

Thus, a lead editorial in the *New York Times*, in keeping with that paper's long tradition of mixing cant, self-righteousness, pseudo-liberalism and plain malarkey, all in high-flown prose, urged President Clinton to attend the May 8 VE-day ceremonies in Moscow that would pay homage to Russia's role in the war so that, among other things, he could "remind Mr. Yeltsin and the Russian Army that the Chechen war is a betrayal of *the principles that united the allies against Fascism*." (The universalizing cap "F" is in the original, the emphasis is mine.)

First of all, there is the absurdity of suggesting to President Clinton that he make an emotional appeal for an end to the butchery in Chechnya on the "principles" of anti-fascism to convince President Yeltsin — responsible for blowing up a wing of the Russian White House after dissolving a legally elected parliament — that it is wrong to make war on Chechnya today. Yeltsin could no more be influenced by "anti-fascist principles" to stop the killing in Chechnya than Lucifer could be moved to abandon his devilish ways after reading the Ten Commandments.

Absurd also is the *Times*' discovery of *principles* that *united* the allies against fascism. Nowhere in the editorial is there a statement of the operative anti-fascist principles bonding the capitalist democracies and Stalinist Russia in the war. It would be a thankless task to try to find them. There weren't any.

In the United States, despite the rhetoric of the Four Freedoms, there is no evidence that Roosevelt ever pursued a democratic foreign policy. Instead, there were gunboats on the Yangtze and a Good Neighbor Policy that was good for business and not very neighborly to semi-dependencies to the South.

When Franco, with his mercenaries and civil guard made war on Spanish democracy, FDR and his Administration came to the Generalissimo's aid with an embargo on arms to Spain. Roosevelt was clearly more interested in winning Catholic voters to further his dynastic ambitions than in protecting democracy in Spain.

The sentiments of the Four Freedoms were lofty but the reality of an administration top-heavy with anti-Semites was not. It cruelly restricted the right of entry to Jews desperate to escape their Nazi tormentors; actually turning back a boatload of Jewish refugees, some to perish in Hitler's camps. It could not be swayed by the entreaties to do what it could have done militarily, with a minimum of risk, to save Jews wasting away in German extermination camps.

How could a country fight a war on democratic principles with a segregated army in a segregated society? And what does rounding-up over 100,000 Japanese-Americans and herding them into concentration camps

for the duration say about the political character of the administration's war aims?

As for the supposed democratic foreign policy of our British wartime allies, every school child knows that at Munich in September 1938, the British ruling class — hardly a bastion of anti-fascism — and its government made it quite clear that, if there had to be a war, their preference was to aid Hitler's Germany in a war against Stalin's Russia.

Striking proof of the moral and political bankruptcy of the Grand Alliance as a whole was Yalta where Roosevelt and Churchill met with Stalin to sanction the prototype of a cruel imperialist compact which divided Europe without regard for the needs, interests or wishes of the peoples of Eastern Europe. This is not to say that Roosevelt and Churchill gave Eastern Europe to the Kremlin as booty. The Red Army had already conquered most of the area and could not be dislodged short of risking another war. Nevertheless, it was the ease with which they accommodated to Soviet domination of Eastern Europe that revealed their callous indifference to the welfare of tens of millions ceded to what was euphemistically called Russia's "sphere of influence." In truth, the descending Iron Curtain that divided Europe in the Cold War was not forged by Stalin alone but was cast in the foundry of inter-imperialist machinations fired by the three heads of a collapsing imperialist alliance.

If the search for compelling democratic anti-fascist principles in U.S. and British ruling circles reminds one of Diogenes' quest, so far as the Soviet Union is concerned the effort is phantasmagorical. Making war on fascist Germany cannot be equated with making war in defense of anti-fascist principles. A commitment to anti-fascism is a commitment to democracy, and in the Stalinist state — particularly during the war — a visible commitment to democracy was treasonable and could be rewarded with a bullet in the back of the head. How could a society in which bureaucratic class rule was conditional on the efficacy of its system of terror, conduct a war with democratic aims?

To believe that Molotov, NKVD officials, Vyshinsky, Gulag commanders, Beria, the administrative bureaucrats, Khrushchev, and all the other hangmen, torturers, assassins, Generals, etc., who made up the various levels of the bureaucracy, all "living" (for how long no one could be sure) in deadly fear of Stalin, could lead a moral crusade for democracy against fascism, is to lose touch with reality.

Yet, that was not only the case with our poor *New York Times* editor-in-chief. Sorry to say, there are many in the left who still believe that during the war Russia was in the vanguard of a mighty people's crusade against fascism.

THERE IS GREAT IRONY IN THE FACT THAT WHILE STALIN and the Soviet armies were mainly responsible for destroying the Third Reich, Stalin was the individual most responsible for Hitler's accession to power in Germany,

who helped secure Hitler's position in Europe, who made it possible for Hitler to conquer virtually all of continental Europe, and who, irony of ironies, made it possible for Hitler to come within a hair's breadth of destroying the Soviet Union.

Never has one man achieved so much in so short a time.

Stalin and his Comintern Help Bring Hitler to Power

BY THE EARLY 30s, THE SOVIET COMMUNIST PARTY and the Soviet Union had long forfeited the right to be called a workers' party and a workers' state. The party of the revolution could not possibly survive the defeat of the international world revolution.

In its place, there arose an antithetical, hierarchically structured bureaucracy in which the Communist Party controlled the operations of subsidiary administrative and economic agencies, as well as the military. And within the party, the maximum leader reigned as the supreme arbiter.

In the 20s and 30s the bureaucracy was largely absorbed with consolidating its power. For all its reliance on the idiom of socialism and internationalism, its ideology was the ideology of power. Its international perspectives were invariably designed to further national bureaucratic objectives. It made no difference that an international Communist line could damage or even destroy a national Communist Party. The decisive criterion was whether it was good for the Soviet bureaucracy. And it made no difference if an international political strategy spelled disaster for an entire people, so long as it was perceived as serving the interest of the Soviet party and its leader. Thus, in Germany in 1933, Hitler came to power and the powerful German Communist Party was destroyed as a direct consequence of an international Stalinist line. That line imposed during what was known as the Third Period was irrational on the surface but found its rationale in Stalin's campaign to crush what was left of a so-called Right Opposition within the Russian party. It was a line that not only equated fascism with social democracy — if anything social democracy was even worse — but that foreclosed the possibility of a genuine united front of the German Communist and Social Democratic parties to combat Hitler. The combined electoral support of both parties was actually greater than the vote for Hitler in 1932. Hitler could have been defeated, but his victory was assured by the German Communist Party's greater fealty to Stalin than to the interests of the German masses. Stalin didn't care. Hitler's victory was less important to him than defeating his rivals in Russia.

And after Hitler assumed power, the German Communist Party, which had won the support of more than six million voters, and had its own fighting units, never took to the streets. It simply collapsed.

That collapse, too, conformed to Stalin's self-perceived interests. Had

the party resisted, it might have led to a state of civil war, of huge mass struggles that neither the German party nor its Moscow master could control. And, by the early 30s, Stalin already recognized the threat to his own well-being from democratic revolutionary mass movements from below in any country, but, above all, in Germany, the most advanced country in Europe. Turmoil was dangerous, and socialism and working-class revolt anathema to Stalin because he always understood that rapprochement with Hitler was a possibility. Why not? Fundamentals count for something. Whatever differences there were between Stalinism and Nazism — and there were many — at least the fabric of their totalitarian systems used similar threads that could draw them closer together under special circumstances.* Those special circumstances arose just six years later leading to the infamous Stalin-Hitler Pact and World War II. But first came Stalin's knavery in Spain.

Crushing the Spanish Revolution

IN JULY 1936, FRANCO UNLEASHED HIS COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY FORCES in Spain. It was not Republican armies that bore the initial brunt of the fascist attack, but workers' militias organized from below in factories, communes, unions, etc. In Catalonia, workers controlled nearly three-fourths of industrial enterprises, democratic collectivization was spreading to other provinces. Anarchist, syndicalist and socialist organizations were far more powerful than Stalin's pliant Spanish Communist Party. The Marxist POUM had considerable strength in Catalonia, with Barcelona as a special stronghold, and had organized its own militia.

The power and passion of Spain's armed working class was electric and charged the morale of the authentic left worldwide. But it shocked the Soviet Union which instinctively recoiled in horror at the specter of social

*The Germans understood that well. They were aware of the anti-socialist nature of the Stalinist regime and indicated that it was precisely because Russia was anti-socialist that a temporary Pact was possible. In a report by Julius Schnurre, a leading economic expert in the German foreign office involved in negotiations leading to the Stalin-Hitler Pact, he explained:

"The antagonism of National Socialism resulted naturally from the fight against the Communist Party of Germany which depended upon Moscow and was only a tool of the Comintern. The fight against the German Communist Party had long been over. Communism had been eradicated in Germany. The importance of the Comintern had been overshadowed by the Politbureau, where an entirely different policy was being followed now than at the time when the Comintern dominated. The amalgamation of Bolshevism with the national history of Russia, which expressed itself in the glorification of great Russian men and deeds (celebration of the battle of Poltava, Peter the Great, the battle on Lake Peipus, Alexander Nevski), had really changed the international face of Bolshevism, as we see it, particularly since Stalin had postponed world revolution indefinitely. In this state of affairs we saw possibilities today which we had not seen earlier..."

revolution in Spain. What if the working class crushed Franco and Spain emerged as an authentic socialist — therefore anti-Stalinist and anti-capitalist — Republic? That was a chilling prospect for Stalin. Spain's socialist contagion might infect the working class of neighboring France and find its way across the channel to England. No telling where it might end.

Out of self-interest, Stalin moved resolutely to crush the magnificent Spanish revolution.

Yes, Stalin selectively sent military assistance (only a tiny fraction of what poured into Franco's arsenals from Hitler and Mussolini). But there was a financial and political price tag. The financial quid pro quo was the bulk of Spain's gold reserves, which wound up in Russian vaults.

Stalin shipped several thousands of NKVD and assorted inquisitors and assassins to Spain who proceeded methodically to gut the revolutionary forces. They even organized their own courts and prisons. There were trials, frame-ups, assassinations and executions. The victims numbered in the thousands. Stalin had succeeded in destroying a revolution.

For Stalin, Franco fascism was far preferable to a proletarian socialist order.

By mid-1938, Soviet aid to the Spanish Republican government dwindled to a trickle and came to a full stop six months before the government collapsed. With the crushing of the Spanish revolution, there was less incentive for Stalin to continue even minimal assistance. That did not fit in with his evident interest in exploring the possibilities of a rapprochement with Hitler.

In Germany, Stalin helped Hitler to power. In Spain, he strengthened Hitler's expansion in Europe. We now come to the Pact which kindled the war and allowed Hitler to overrun most of Europe.

The Stalin-Hitler Pact

THE NAZI-SOVIET PACT WAS SIGNED IN MOSCOW but must have been conceived and sealed in hell. Has there ever been a document in recorded history which in so direct and immediate a fashion unleashed so much pain and suffering? It not only triggered a world war that would consume 50 million lives but there was no less a cause and effect relationship between the Pact and the Holocaust.

Of course, Herr Stalin didn't see it that way. The day the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Treaty was signed in Moscow, on August 23, 1939, he offered a toast to Comrade Hitler.

A week later, vast German armies descended on Poland. That is what Stalin was really toasting. We wonder how many Poles were crushed under German tanks that day? And who was there in the Kremlin to toast them?

Things are going well. Warsaw falls. In only a matter of weeks the seizure of the Western half of Poland assigned to Germany is complete.

Commissar Molotov is pleased. He sends a cable to his Nazi friends of the moment:

I have received your communication regarding the entry of German troops into Warsaw ... I convey my congratulations and greetings to the German Reich government.

Now that the German comrades have completed the conquest of Western Poland, perhaps cheered by Molotov's greetings, they can start concentrating on resolving the Jewish Question in Poland.

Molotov's congratulations are somewhat lacking in warmth. So Stalin adds his felicitations:

I know how much the German people love its Führer. I should therefore like to drink to his health.

Upon receiving congratulations from von Ribbentrop on his 60th birthday, Stalin turns Wagnerian. He wires back:

The friendship of the German and Soviet people is cemented in blood ... and has every reason to be everlasting.

Further cementing the relationship, is the German Soviet Friendship and Border Treaty signed on September 29, 1939, gushing with comradely mutual respect. The Treaty is a signal to all Communist parties to stop anti-fascist propaganda. In the Soviet Union Beria sets the example with an order to Gulag commanders that they no longer refer disparagingly to prisoners as "fascists."

The order remained in effect until June 22, 1941.

Playing for Time

AT THE TIME, SOME FOUND THE PACT EVIDENCE THAT STALIN was a great Warrior-statesman who had first fooled Hitler and then destroyed him. Even now, there is the suggestion that since war was probable with the Soviet Union as everyone's prime target, by agreeing to the Pact with the Nazis, Stalin was "buying time."

The assumption here is that in his imperial ambitions for *lebensraum*, Russia was Hitler's prime target. Not quite. Hitler was a fiend and a megalomaniac but neither he nor his generals were fools. In 1939, they knew that war on two fronts — against the democracies in the West and Russia to the East — was an invitation to disaster.

And all the evidence indicates that the Soviet Union was not Hitler's first enemy of choice. For all his ranting about "Bolshevism," it was the advanced "degenerate" democracies of continental Europe, and England and its empire (what Hitler called "real estate"), that was coveted as the grander prize. The betrayal of Czechoslovakia at Munich in September 1938 only increased Hitler's contempt for the English. And their revealed weaknesses only made the Western imperial plum seem juicier and the

riper for picking. The Russians could be dealt with later. For the moment, he would secure his Eastern flank via a Pact of a special kind with the Soviet Union.

But even if Stalin only wanted to buy time, that might make the Pact tolerable in some Machiavellian world of “realpolitik” where principles count for nought and Position and Power are everything. Viewed through a moral prism, the Nazi-Soviet Pact was reprehensible, and does not allow for any apologia. “Buying time” meant buying time from Hitler, and the price of that purchase was unleashing the Nazi armies of annihilation and the Holocaust.

But even in its own terms, the suggestion that Stalin was only trying to buy time to build up the country's defenses is not convincing. If Stalin was driven into a compact with Hitler to buy time why didn't he do so? Why was it that in the 22 months of the Pact the Soviet army improved so slowly compared to the rapid increase in the strength of the German war economy and the German armed forces?

If Stalin's toasts to the Führer were a ruse, why the insistence on fulfilling economic commitments that were so helpful in building up the German war economy and the German army? The Soviets delivered huge amounts of raw materials to the Germans — petroleum, phosphate, lumber, cotton, platinum, etc. According to a report by Julius Schnurre, economic expert for the German foreign office:

The supplies from the Russians have heretofore been a very substantial prop to the German war economy.

And just five weeks before the German armies plunged into Soviet territory, the same Herr Schnurre reports:

The status of Soviet raw materials deliveries still present a favorable picture. ... The quantity of materials now being contracted for are being delivered punctually by the Russians, despite the heavy burden this imposes on them, which ... is a notable performance.

Stalin's shipments of quantities of raw materials to help the Germans at a time that millions of Russian soldiers were being rushed to Russian borders in preparation for a massive assault was more than a notable performance, it was an incomprehensible performance if Stalin's motive in signing the Pact was to buy time to defend Russian national integrity.

This fixation on trade agreements and an obsequious devotion to the Pact suggests that Stalin's judgment was damaged by desperation or that he had deep ties to an alliance with Hitler.

Similarly puzzling was his refusal to acknowledge what everyone knew by the end of 1940: that Hitler was getting ready to abrogate the Pact and attack the Soviet Union.

In mid-1940, Hitler decided that the Pact had served its purpose: Germany's war economy and the Wehrmacht were strong enough to conduct a war on two fronts. Plans had to be made to attack the Soviet Union.

Western intelligence services got wind of this and it was relayed to Stalin. He would not hear of it. All a provocation. By the end of 1940 Hitler had actually signed the plans for an all-out assault on the Soviet Union to begin the following May. "Operation Barbarossa" was an open secret. Warned a number of times about the attack, Stalin's response was: "a provocation by the enemies of the Soviet Union and Russo-German amity."

Stalin persisted in his dogged refusal to believe that Hitler would violate the non-aggression treaty. As late as June 14, 1941, just eight days before the German attack, when four million German soldiers were stationed along the Soviet border and after there had already been border incidents and incursions, a Soviet statement announced:

According to the information of the USSR, Germany is observing the terms of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact as strictly as the USSR. Therefore, in the opinion of the Soviet circles, rumors about Germany's plans to break the pact and undertake an attack on the USSR are quite unfounded.

When the attack proved all too "founded" eight days later, Stalin was so disbelieving that he apparently went into a state of shock and was not heard from for a week.

"Big Day" or Big Lie

WHEN THE WORLD FIRST LEARNED OF THE HITLER-STALIN PACT, the international affiliates of the Comintern were staggered. Rumors to that effect were denied as the slander of provocateurs and worse. But the vast majority of the party managed to regain its composure as it made the necessary political and psychic readjustments to a new line that substituted the anti-imperialist struggle for the Democratic Front. The Pact was not only justifiable but proof of Stalin's genius. And some still continued to refer to the People's Struggle Against Fascism. However, when the Soviets, honoring its part of the deal with Hitler, attacked Poland on September 17, it sparked new anxieties in the Communist movement. With the Soviet Union as an active military partner of the Wehrmacht how could one boast of the Soviet Union as the world's leading anti-fascist power? But the majority of the party survived these after-shocks as well. It turned out that Stalin's invasion of Poland was just another display of his humanity, shrewdness and independence. Eastern Poland was invaded to save it from the Nazis, to protect 13 million Poles, and above all, to save the Jews of Poland.

Thus, there appeared in the Jewish Communist *Freiheit* an article by the notorious Communist intellectual, Moissaye Olgin (an expert on Trotskyism whose chef d'oeuvre, *Trotskyism: Counterrevolution in Disguise* was required reading for young Communist theoreticians) that explained it all.

A big day in Jewish life. ...For 20 years the Jews have been deprived of their rights, they suffered pogroms and shameful treatment in the newly created Polish state. ...The war came. Chamberlin and Daladier betrayed Poland. The life of Jews became a thousand times worse. A cry of anguish and pain issued from millions of Jewish hearts. ... Suddenly big news shot like a bolt of lightening around the world. The Red Army is marching!!! The army of Bolsheviks! ...Happiness overflowed the hearts of masses of Jews all over. Hundreds of thousands of Jews in America repeated *Mazel Tov*. Jewish hearts are overflowing with thanks to the Soviet government. The Red Army marched into Poland to free the people from their Polish masters and from the threat posed by Nazi armies in German-occupied Western Poland.

All a lie! Yet, and this is extraordinary, in a more measured way, the myth persists to this day.

The Red Army didn't *decide* to march into Poland. The decision was not theirs to make. It was, as it had to be, by prearrangement with their Nazi superiors. It was detailed in part in Point 2 of the separate secret protocols.

Not only did the Germans want the Red Army to take over its assigned half of Poland but they wanted them to do it with all deliberate speed.

As early as September 3, Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop wrote to German ambassador Schulenberg in Moscow advising him to discuss, "at once," the question of the Red Army fulfilling its obligation to seize Eastern Poland:

Please discuss this at once with Molotov and see if the Soviet Union does not consider it desirable for Russian forces to move at the proper time against Polish forces in the Russian sphere of interest and, for their part, to occupy this territory. In our estimation this would be not only a relief for us, but also, in the sense of the Moscow agreements, in the Soviet interest as well.

A week later, the German ambassador wires back to the Foreign Minister that he is pressing Molotov on the question. A note of annoyance begins to show on the German side. The Russians aren't moving quickly enough. But there is an equally marked note of relief in the Ribbentrop communication of September 15, as the Russian invasion, finally, seems close at hand:

The Soviet government thus relieves us of the necessity of annihilating the remainder of the Polish Army by pursuing it as far as the Russian boundary. Also the question is disposed of in case a Russian intervention did not take place, of whether in the area lying to the east of the German zone of influence a political vacuum might not occur.

By the end of September, Eastern Poland is under Russian occupation. The Nazis are clearly pleased. The Polish people are not.

One of the biggest lies: The Red Army liberated Polish Jews! Let it be said outright: A Jew in the Soviet zone had a better chance of survival than a Jew in the German zone. But a chance of survival hardly qualifies

as freedom for the Jewish people.

A higher survival rate in Eastern Poland does not absolve Stalinism for the enormity of its criminal policy that led to the German occupation of Western Poland with its millions of Jews, and eventually to the Holocaust.

That Jews had a better chance of survival in the East is a half truth hiding the full truth, which recognizes that persecution of the Jews in the Russian zone was extensive, and often deadly. On the tips of bayonets and in the turrets of tanks, Stalin exported his political system with its terror. Political parties, autonomous unions, social and cultural organizations were crushed. No layer of society escaped the terror. Certainly not Jews. In the brief months of the first Russian occupation (the second would come toward the end of the war), approximately 1.4 million Poles out of a population of slightly over 13 million were deported to Soviet camps, colonies and exile. Think of it! Ten percent of the populace! Of this number about 400,000 were Jews. That means about 25 percent of the Jews in the Soviet zone were deported. That is still better than the chances in the German zone where no Jews were spared. Are we supposed to cry *Mazel Tov* and hail the Russians as liberators because not all Jews were destroyed?

It puts this writer in mind of a marvelous parable by Leon Trotsky. An arsonist burns down a house with ten inhabitants. Five are consumed in the flames and he rescues the other five. Should we hail the arsonist as a hero, especially when it becomes clear that he rescued the five only in order to reduce them to semi-slavery?

In Poland, large number of anti-Nazi activists were handed over to the Germans by the Russians. At one point, 570 German Communists, including a number on the Nazi wanted list, were rounded up in Moscow, shipped to the Russian zone in Poland and turned over to the German authorities. Few survived.

THERE IS A SMALL, TRAGIC BUT POWERFUL BODY OF LITERATURE recounting the inhumanity of Russian occupiers and their Polish Quislings who barred Jews who sought to escape the German zone, or turned over to the Germans Polish Jews already living in the Eastern zone, especially those who were political activists, Bundists, socialists, Communists.

It was during the period of the Soviet "liberation" of Poland that 23,000-25,000 Polish officers charged with "counterrevolutionary activity" were dispatched with the ritualistic bullet in the back of the head and shoved into mass graves in Katyn forest and surrounding sites. The horror of the crime was exacerbated — if that were possible — by the cynicism of the Stalinist executioners, who accused the Nazis of the crime, and of their Western allies, including the Roosevelt Administration which pretended not to know that the mass murder was the work of their wartime ally.

For those on the left who believe in the social superiority of the Soviet

economic system, attention should be called to the widespread looting and pillaging committed by the Russians during this period. In the city of Lwow alone 6,500 of its 8,500 shops were shut down, and throughout Eastern Poland factories were stripped of their fixtures and equipment for shipment to the Soviet Union.

When the Red Army moved into the Baltics, that too was hailed by the Communist press as a bold measure rescuing Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. Just as in Poland. The truth lies elsewhere. The occupation of the Baltics was executed with the full, and well-documented, approval of the Third Reich, anxious to secure its Northern flank.

On October 10, 1939, the Russian occupiers signed what was euphemistically called a Treaty of Mutual Assistance, an appellation that does Orwell proud. The very next day, local NKVD agents who suddenly sprang from nowhere like poisonous mushrooms were on the scene to draw up lists of socially unacceptable, anti-Soviet categories “*regardless of concrete data concerning their anti-Soviet activities.*” (emphasis in original)

On deportations, an NKVD directive ordered:

Operations shall begin at daybreak. Upon entering the home of the person to be deported, the senior member of the operative group shall assemble the entire family of the deportee into one room. ...In view of the fact that a large number of deportees must be arrested and distributed in special camps and that their families must proceed to special settlements in distant regions, it is essential that the operations of removal of both the members of the deportee's family and its head shall be carried out simultaneously, without notifying them of the separation confronting them.

When the Soviet Union annexed the Baltic countries the NKVD list of socially dangerous elements expanded to include all those “expelled from the Communist Party and the Young Communist League.”

Of the 5 million inhabitants of the three Baltic states, an estimated 200,000 were deported of whom 50,000 died. (The numbers would swell after the Russians, having lost the Baltics in the first week of the Russo-German war, recaptured them in 1944.)

Despite all initial claims to the contrary, the Germans approved and welcomed the Russian war on Finland in late 1939-1940. This, too, is well documented. The Germans had no reason to doubt that if the Russians could establish their presence in Finland it would further secure their Northern flank. Stalin had given every reason to his German allies, up to the day of June 22, 1941 to believe that he could be trusted not to interfere with the best interests of German fascism.

HOW WAS IT POSSIBLE AGAINST THE BACKGROUND of the Nazi-Soviet Pact for so many in the left of that period to have clung to the notion of the allegedly socially progressive nature of the Soviet Union; that it was a workers' state. It is not a matter of looking back with the wisdom born of hindsight. All the evidence was in by the early 40s, even earlier, calling

for better judgment. And the odious character of the Nazi-Soviet Pact should have dispelled all such illusions.

The term “workers’ state” is possessive. It means a state that belongs to the workers. How can a state belong to workers when that state destroys every vestige of democracy and all working-class institutions — and must do so to survive? This was clear enough in the 30s but everything associated with the Pact and the earlier history of Stalinism, its responsibility for Hitlerism, its counterrevolutionary role in the Spanish Civil War should surely have carried more judgmental weight than the fixation on statistics about economic growth or ritualistic invocations to a nationalized form of economy.

These are not idle questions but are intended in the spirit of provoking discussion including responses from those whose understanding of Marxism and history are such that they still believe that a society that could have made a Pact with Hitler and served the Third Reich so well could have been a society that had any redeeming social value.

Book Reviews

Racial Tensions on Campus

BATTLING BIAS: THE STRUGGLE FOR IDENTITY AND COMMUNITY ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES by Ruth Sidel, Viking Press, 1994. 290 pp. \$22.95

GENERATION AT THE CROSSROADS: APATHY AND ACTION ON THE AMERICAN CAMPUS by Paul Rogat Loeb, Rutgers University Press, 1994. \$24.95

Reviewed by Reginald Wilson

Everybody seems afraid — afraid for their jobs, their safety, their children's education. And politicians have whipped this fear into a frenzy, a Red scare from within rather than without. Now the enemy takes the form of the poor, the elderly, the black, the alien. Can America discover its soul before it degenerates into total race and class warfare?

Bart Schneider

HATE MAIL WAS STUFFED INTO THE MAILBOXES OF BLACK LAW STUDENTS at Boalt Hall, the law school at the University of California at Berkeley this winter. Chancellor Chang-Lin Tien said to black students in response, "I know that I speak for the campus community when I assure you that what offends you offends our entire community." But Dr. Tien's brave words may not be quite accurate. The latest Washington Post/ABC poll found 68 percent of white Americans are opposed to preferential treatment for minorities in college admissions among other things.

At the University of Pennsylvania this spring, a white student campus paper, *The Red and Blue*, printed derogatory remarks about Haitian people that provoked an explosion of outrage among black students and, in another incident, tensions increased between black and white women students.

Variations on these incidents have been occurring on college campuses all over the country with increasing frequency since the 1980s. For example, in 1987, 42 campuses reported ethnoviolence that drew some media attention. In 1988, there were reports on 103 campuses and in 1989 there were 113 reports. By 1993, 85 percent of campuses with enrollments over 10,000 had reported at

REGINALD WILSON is the Senior Scholar at the American Council on Education and a member of the New Politics editorial board.

least one incident of ethnoviolence. Most scholars who study such phenomena agree that such incidents are vastly *underreported*, since most racial conflict and disruptive situations are not reported. "The opposition and hostility to the increasing enrollment of black students (and later to Hispanic and Asian Pacific students) was predictable," says Howard Ehrlich, director of the Prejudice Institute, "a rapid shift in the ethnic composition of a population is almost invariably accompanied by increased group conflict." However universally anticipated, what was conspicuously absent on most college campuses was the preparation for such disruption and racial tension. Students were left to flounder and respond on their own to racial conflict in various ways; campuses only reacted and attempted to contain them when these incidents got out of hand. What was also conspicuously apparent was that campuses seldom learned from these incidents: first denying their racial basis; then dismissing them as an aberration on a "normally" peaceful campus; then finally, reluctantly, acknowledging the racial basis of the disturbance.

Most of the widely publicized incidents are well known — the racist jokes at the University of Michigan, the "water buffalo" incident at the University of Pennsylvania — and have been studied in depth in news reports and commissioned studies. Less studied are the reactions of individual students of the current generation to the increasing presence of racial minority students on college campuses and the reaction of these minority students to life on predominantly white campuses. In addition, there is a rise in incidents of sexual harassment and gay bashing on campuses which appears to be related to any appearance of difference on what were racially homogeneous campuses only a few decades ago.

The two fine books reviewed here explore the complex questions of race and related issues on college campuses and how they affect the lives of individual students. Both books were published near the end of last year. It is unfortunate that they appeared before the November elections. It would be interesting to learn students' reactions to Republican proposals to cut student financial aid and their plan to introduce legislation eliminating affirmative action. Nevertheless, both books are valuable for what they do tell us and their speculations about the future.

RUTH SIDEL, THE AUTHOR OF *BATTLING BIAS*, IS A WIDELY RESPECTED sociology professor at Hunter College who has written extensively on the problems of working class women and on child care. In preparing for this study she visited 17 campuses and talked to over a hundred students between 1991 and 1993. While she might be criticized for spending an inordinate time on Eastern campuses and interviewing too few students in static situations, her observations are usually wise and penetrating.

She poses the question early on: "How is it possible to transform such closed, hierarchical institutions into ones that truly welcome people from many backgrounds?" The answers she gets are equivocal. She finds in general "that even on so-called liberal campuses people of color, gays and lesbians and often women are made to feel as though they are outsiders and do not quite belong." In reaction to racist behavior some students are transformed into political activists while others turn inward and focus on academic work, or become alienated and drop out. At MIT, Professor William Watson stated in response to a campus survey, "One must conclude ... that women at MIT ... live in an environment that is much

more hostile ... more demeaning ... more dangerous that it is for men."

On the other hand, some students react to their changed circumstances by becoming more politically aware. Lisa Graham, for example, came to the U.S. from the Philippines at the age of two, lived in a white suburb and went to a white suburban school. When she went to college she was "very white-identified," but by the second semester of her freshman year she became more political and tried to form an Asian American support group. She turned for help to the African American community, which was well organized but was rebuffed. "Just because you are dealing with your own oppression," she observed, "doesn't mean you can understand another's oppression." This astute observation could be applied to most relations between and among minority groups — blacks and Jews, Koreans and blacks, women of color and white women. One would expect their common oppression to bind them but their hostility to each other makes it difficult, if not nearly impossible to build coalitions. Thus, most minority groups suffer their alienation alone except on those campuses like Boston College and Colgate University where groups with the acronym ALANA (Asian American, Latin American, Native American and African American) have been formed that work on issues of common concern without losing their respective identities. But these groups are not mentioned by Sidel as possible models of collaboration to emulate.

ONE ISSUE THAT SHARPLY DIVIDES WHITE AND MINORITY STUDENTS is the question of different admission standards, with most white students insisting that the criteria should be based strictly on "merit" (read test scores and GPA), and minorities insisting that prior racial exclusion and inferior education should be considered as well. In both Sidel's and Loeb's books, most white students express the view that "merit is the American way" and are angered at the possibility that some "undeserving" minority may get a place that some "deserving" white student should have. They are completely indifferent to the idea of compensating for past racial discrimination. Indeed, their sense of history is that discrimination existed in the distant past and that "everybody's equal now and should be treated the same." They evince no sense of responsibility for what "somebody's grandfather" did to "somebody else's grandfather," saying, "It's not our fault," therefore why should we pay? In her book, *Racism and Justice. The Case for Affirmative Action*, Gertrude Ezorsky makes the useful point that the Germans born since World War II are still paying reparations to the Jews. A people may not be responsible for what happened in the past but they enjoy a present day advantaged position because of that past. In a society purporting to be egalitarian the advantaged may have to make some adjustments to accommodate the disadvantaged.

There have been some proposals recently to strike all preferences due to race and gender and grant scholarships based strictly on need. But this distorts the original intent of the concept of affirmative action which was to correct discrimination and exclusion based on race and gender *irrespective* of need. Sidel makes the point that when institutions give scholarships based only on need "many black students [choose] to go elsewhere." However, she does not pursue the point that black students may not go just *anywhere*. At the University of California, for example, if merit principles were strictly applied, and scholarships were given based only on need, the student body would be perhaps 80 percent Asian and 20

percent white, and this in a state population nearly 40 percent Hispanic and over 35 percent Caucasian. And this does not even begin to address the question of "legacies" (sons and daughters of alumni who bypass the merit criteria) or athletes (who are admitted with much lower SAT scores than regular admits). In their rush to do away with preferences, proponents of the merit principle will create more problems than they think they are eliminating.

Sidel interviews white, mostly Jewish, students who have a variety of opinions on the issues described above, from qualified support to outright opposition to minority preferences. As with most students, they bring the attitudes and political viewpoints of their parents to the complex issues they face on campus. The campus is, therefore, indeed a microcosm of the larger outside society and exhibits the same ambivalence to confronting its complex problems.

Ending on an upbeat, cautiously optimistic tone, Sidel makes several sound suggestions. For example, among other things, colleges should be providing compensatory help; reconsidering the preference for legacies; considering the positive aspects of activism, and other prescriptions. And she admonishes the academic community to work "for a more humane society [that] is truly a way of bringing people together"

PAUL ROGAT LOEB CASTS A WIDER NET THAN RUTH SIDEL and attempts something more ambitious. He has spent six years researching his study, has visited over 100 campuses and not only interviewed his students, but gone to class with them, lived in their dorms and participated in their protests. He is a true participant-observer and his book reflects that. He, too, has previously written on the travails of working people (*Hope in Hard Times*), and gets into the lives of students in an intense and immediate way. He is also interested in issues beyond race, including how students respond to concerns with the environment, with nuclear policies, with individualism, how these complex topics shape their lives and how they all relate to each other.

Loeb writes in his introduction: "the students who attended college during the eighties and early nineties represent the most ambitious and fortunate slice of their generation." But he cautions, "They have emerged, if anything, more cynical and politically inactive, in part because America's economic decline has landed so hard on their future," and this can be seen in their selfish "me-firstism." According to a 1992 UCLA poll of freshmen, where 20 years ago their primary goal (85%) was to "develop a meaningful philosophy of life," today their main ambition (73%) is to "be very well off financially." But contradictorily, their "commitment to promoting racial understanding" jumped to 42 percent from a low of 27 percent in 1987, and six of seven freshmen (85%) disagreed with the statement that "racial discrimination is no longer a major problem in America."

These contradictory attitudes show up in Loeb's interviews. He notes that white MBA graduates wore signs at graduation saying "For Sale," and that black MBA graduates wore them, as well. Loeb observes that "instead of civic involvement they concentrated on their careers" and "most were afraid to act politically." They had one dimensional views of race. They asked "why should we care about black issues?" and thought it was alright to recruit minorities as long as "it doesn't jeopardize some deserving whites," thus, implicitly expressing the view that blacks are not as valuable as whites or equally "deserving."

On the other hand, people like the Assistant Chaplain Bobbi Patterson, at

Emory University, felt the need to face “the same challenge of how to build a more inclusive community.” And Loeb notes that in his travels to campuses around the country “the same racial tensions continued to surface. Minority students voiced the same frustrations and complaints. White students voiced the same ambivalent concern, bought into the same myths that said you could strip away historical contexts and still understand people’s lives.”

In Loeb’s travels around the country many other important issues came up. From the University of Washington where the myth of peace marchers spitting on soldiers while protesting the Vietnam War was exploded; to the University of Nebraska where Barbara Meister’s activism on farm issues led to “learning to care for each other and respect everyone’s rights and needs and wants,” to the University of Michigan, where Matt Greene went from being apolitical to organizing “Greeks for Peace” among conservative fraternity members.

Paul Loeb also ends his study on an upbeat note. His concluding chapter follows his activist and conservative students to the next stages in their lives after graduation and says, “Though we should be heartened by renewed campus concern, no single generation can bear the sole responsibility for healing the world.”

BOTH RUTH SIDEL AND PAUL LOEB HAVE PROVIDED US with the most indepth look at college students since the 60s studies of campus activism. This generation of students is very different, more ambivalent on issues of race and somewhat more conservative, but there are also some activists. The 60s saw an expanding economy and welcomed diversity. With a faltering economy and increasing selfishness among students fighting for jobs and university slots, the atmosphere is decidedly not as welcoming as it was 30 years ago. With the conservative assault on student financial aid and affirmative action we may, in fact, see our campuses return to what they were before World War II, with expensive elitist, private and highly selective public universities becoming predominantly white again and with most minorities shunted to the affordable, open admissions community colleges. This would set back the battle for educational opportunity nearly 50 years and lead to class conflict such as we have not seen since the Great Depression.

The Bell Curve: Why Now?

THE BELL CURVE by Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray. New York, Free Press, \$30.

Reviewed by Stephen Steinberg

THE TRIUMPH OF LIBERAL SOCIAL SCIENCE HAS BEEN ITS INVALIDATION of scientific racism, beginning with phrenology and craniometry in the 19th century and including 20th century psychometric studies that postulated a causal link between race and intelligence. The question that needs to be addressed is why this discredited paradigm has come back. I want to examine the soil that gave rise to *The Bell Curve*, not just the book itself but also its unusual visibility and impact.

The crucial question is, Why now? What accounts for the book's publication at this time by a major publishing house? And what accounts for its extraordinary reception in the mass media? *The New York Times Magazine* christened the publication with a cover story under the title "Daring Research or 'Social Science Pornography'?" *Newsweek* and *Time* followed with feature stories. *The New Republic* printed a lengthy excerpt, along with an apologia from the editor explaining why such retrograde material should appear on the pages of an ostensibly liberal journal. Thanks to this media blitz, augmented with appearances by Charles Murray on numerous television programs, *The Bell Curve* rapidly climbed to second place on the *New York Times* Best Seller list. Against this background, it behooves us to ask: What is it about this book and the times that make them "right" for each other?

This question is especially apropos because there is little that is new in *The Bell Curve*. Notwithstanding all of the cybernetics that the authors bring to bear — a daunting array of statistics and graphs — the book's major tenets are only a rarefied version of arguments that began with the development of IQ testing early in this century: that there is a unitary thing called intelligence, that it exists independently of environmental influences and can be accurately measured by conventional IQ tests, that the source of intelligence is in the genes and is therefore a matter of biological inheritance, and that some groups — notably African Americans — have lower average intelligence and this genetic deficit explains why they occupy the lowest strata of society. Far from new, this time-worn model had long ago been relinquished to the trashbin of history, and perhaps would have remained there if not for the persistence and largess of the Pioneer Fund, an ultrarightist foundation that was founded by eugenicists in the 1930s and has subsidized much of the research that forms the basis of *The Bell Curve*.

Biological determinism originally fell into disrepute, not only because its knowledge-claims were debunked by the emerging social sciences, but also be-

STEPHEN STEINBERG writes frequently on race and class. His latest book, *Turning Back: The Retreat from Racial Justice in American Thought and Policy* will be published by Beacon Press in September 1995.

cause the prevailing system of social relations was no longer conducive to maintaining a theory that defined social status as immutable and fixed. Notions of biological inferiority had been perfectly tailored to a caste-like society where, in the words of one anthropologist, "everyone is sentenced for life to a social cell shared by others of like birth, separated from and ranked relative to all other social cells." In the 20th century, however, the forces of industrialization, urbanization, and modernity transformed traditional society, and threw into question the ideological justifications of the old order, including the pseudo-scientific theories that consigned whole groups — racial minorities, women, and the poor — to permanent inferiority. Especially as these groups were elevated in status, it became increasingly difficult to maintain the postulates of biological determinism. To state the obvious, if this nation had followed through on the promise of the civil rights revolution, and enacted the changes that would have established a basic parity between blacks and whites in socioeconomic status and living standards, we would not today be debating whether black subordination is a product of genes.

CLEARLY, IT IS THE EXISTENCE OF A "PERMANENT UNDERCLASS" that is sustaining the recrudescence of scientific racism. *The Bell Curve* comes on stream at a time when the American class system has become more static, when poverty is on the increase, when the gap between the haves and have-nots is growing wider, and when many of the middle rungs on the ladder of success have been eliminated, making it more difficult than ever to escape poverty. For the black poor, who must cope with the impediments of race as well as the disabilities of class, their situation is not far removed from one where "everyone is sentenced for life to a social cell shared by others of like birth." The significance of *The Bell Curve* is that it provides ideological justification for this rigidification of class lines, and the concomitant swing to the Right. The book is driven by the same ideological agenda as Murray's previous book, *Losing Ground*, which argued that social programs to uplift the poor were futile and even counterproductive, in that they fostered a welfare dependency that kept its beneficiaries trapped in poverty. Thanks to his collaboration with Richard Herrnstein, Murray has added a biological twist to this argument. The underclass is destined by nature to remain on the tail end of the socioeconomic curve. Ameliorative social policy is destined to failure. We can only resign ourselves to the dictates of nature in the name of a perverse multi-culturalism.

Yet it would be premature to conclude that *The Bell Curve* represents a decisive shift in the prevailing paradigm. For one thing, there has already been an avalanche of criticism heaped on the book, even before it has been reviewed in scholarly journals. As Adolph Reed has noted, "even illiberals like Pat Buchanan, John McLaughlin and Rush Limbaugh ... are eloquently dissenting from Herrnstein and Murray's unsavory racial messages." (*The Nation*, 11/28/94) The same is true of a number of conservatives who participated in a symposium on *The Bell Curve* in *The National Review*. (12/5/94) The reason these conservatives do not want "to play the IQ card," as one put it, is not that they have seen the liberal light, but rather that they prefer the neo-conservative idea that traces inequality to aberrant values rather than defective genes. As far as they are concerned, Murray had it right the first time, and his fling into biology along with Herrnstein threatens to discredit the entire conservative position. Besides,

the notion that this is a nation where *everyone* can rise to the top — where people are judged by the content of their character — is the ideological linchpin of the American myth, irreconcilable with Herrnstein and Murray's conception of a Brave New World stratified by the content of one's germ plasm.

In the final analysis, *The Bell Curve* is flourishing on its notoriety, on its petulant flouting of ideas long considered taboo. In this sense the publication of the book, and the wide public discussion that has ensued, represents the triumph of the anti-PC campaign. Nevertheless, there is good reason to think that, like the earlier publications of William Shockley, Arthur Jensen, and Herrnstein himself, *The Bell Curve* is destined to collect dust on our bookshelves.

As Gunnar Myrdal noted in *An American Dilemma*, periods of racial advance have typically been followed by periods of retreat, though "not as much ground was lost as had been won." Race history, one might say, has observed the pattern of two steps forward and one step back. *The Bell Curve* represents that metaphoric step back. It leaves "America again at the crossroads" — the title that Myrdal chose for the concluding chapter of *An American Dilemma*. Indeed, this is the tragedy of history — that half a century later the nation finds itself again at the crossroads, still uncertain whether to take the road back to the benighted past, or to forge a new path leading to a historical reconciliation between the black and white citizens of this nation.

"BOOKS FOR STRUGGLE" APPEAL

Boris Kagarlitsky and Richard Greeman are appealing to *New Politics* readers to support "Books for Struggle," a project to fill a container with Western radical literature for shipment to the Victor Serge Labor Library in Moscow.

Ransack your own and friends' radical libraries, pack cartons with material from Alinsky to Zapata and mail them to: "Books for Struggle" c/o News & Letters, 59 E. Van Buren, Rm. 707, Chicago. IL. 60605. Attach an invoice and your donation will be acknowledged at full retail value including postage.

Act now! Books must be in before July 1995. If you can't part with your books, please send a contribution to pay for the container. For further information contact Richard Greeman (203) 521-5559.

Undermining Young Girls' Self-Esteem

SCHOOLGIRLS: YOUNG WOMEN, SELF-ESTEEM, AND THE CONFIDENCE GAP, by Peggy Orenstein, New York, Doubleday, 1994. 335 pp., \$23.50.

Reviewed by Jennifer Scarlott

FIVE MONTHS INTO MY DAUGHTER'S LIFE, I WORRY ALREADY about her growing up female in a world that is deeply hostile to women. Peggy Orenstein's study of eighth graders in two California middle schools does little to alleviate my fears.

Schoolgirls follows on the heels of a number of academic investigations into the psychology of American girls on the brink of adulthood. Orenstein is a journalist, however, and brings the work of such scholars as Carol Gilligan, Joan Jacobs Brumberg, and Carol Tavis to life in her anecdotal account of girls hitting the brick wall of their gender.

Orenstein read news articles in 1991 about an American Association of University Women (AAUW) report called "Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America" that inspired her to spend 1992-1993 among junior high school students to probe the report's findings. The AAUW attitudinal survey of 3,000 boys and girls between 9 and 15 showed that many girls develop a crisis of confidence in early puberty.

In her introduction, Orenstein says that she was initially skeptical of the trendy notion of self-esteem, concerned that "we do girls a disservice...if we encourage them to feel good about themselves rather than targeting the overarching institutions, policies, and cultural attitudes that make them (understandably) feel worthless" (p. xviii). But, like Gloria Steinem, whose best-seller *Revolution from Within: A Book of Self-Esteem* helped shed political light on a concept which at first glance might seem best relegated to the "self-help" category, Orenstein realized that if girls do not come through their adolescent years with their self-esteem intact, they are unlikely to "feel a sense of entitlement...[a] license to take up space in the world."

At various times an editor at *Mother Jones* and *7 Days*, Orenstein spent half-a-year each at a suburban school with a predominantly white, middle-class student body, and at an inner-city school dominated by low-income minority students. Both schools were co-educational. The book alternates between anecdotes of Orenstein's conversations with and observations of the students, their parents and teachers, and sociological discussions of the ways in which the AAUW findings were borne out by what she observed at each school. She does a wonderful job of creating rounded and sympathetic portraits of the 4 or 5 girls she focuses on at each school, providing graphic and chilling descriptions of parents, teachers, and male schoolmates. In many cases these people could hardly do a more effective job of undermining the girls' self-confidence if they had been colluding with each other to that end.

INTERESTINGLY, SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF GIRLS IS A MAJOR SOCIAL PHENOMENON at

JENNIFER SCARLOTT is editor of Peace & Democracy.

both schools Orenstein visits. Despite an innovative California law passed in 1993 requiring every school in the state to develop a written sexual harassment policy for staff and students, and empowering principals to suspend or even expel students who engage in sexual harassment, the administrations of both schools failed miserably to implement the law effectively. Orenstein is very good at placing the reader in the classroom, and in the minds, of female eighth graders as they endure verbal and physical abuse from classmates and teachers. But she makes clear that sexual harassment is only the most overt manifestation of the treatment afforded girls in the classrooms she observed. On a systematic basis, girls are marginalized by teachers and by outmoded textbooks. Many of the girls Orenstein came to know responded by dropping out of programs for gifted students, getting increasingly poor grades in subjects they once excelled in, and succumbing to eating disorders and self-mutilation.

Orenstein periodically emphasizes the AAUW finding that only girls who managed to sustain high grades in math and science through high school, and took at least three math courses in college, managed to emerge from their school years with their self-esteem essentially intact. It seems somewhat improbable, however, that girls who excelled in, say, history, or languages, or English, do not emerge with a comparable sense of self-worth. But Orenstein seems to accept this "finding" at face value. In fact, one of the weaknesses of the book is that she provides us with a view only into the lives of girls who are losing ground in their battle for a positive self-image by the eighth grade. It would be interesting to look at girls with strong self-esteem and see how they differ from their less fortunate counterparts.

Another problem with Orenstein's book is that it comes apart a bit at the middle. The girls (mainly African-American and Latina) who she comes to know at the inner-city school suffer some of the same problems as their white counterparts in suburbia — rampant sexual harassment, neglect in the classroom, and so on — but the reasons many of them drop out or earn lower and lower grades have more to do with conditions of poverty, abuse and violence in their communities and homes than with specifically gender-related issues. In fact, the AAUW study found that of the three racial groups, African-American eighth graders seemed to enjoy the highest levels of self-esteem, followed by Caucasians and Latinas. Orenstein does not do a particularly effective job at sorting out these differences.

My final complaint is with the hardback's slip cover, which features photographs of unusually attractive young girls — certainly an irony given Orenstein's intelligent discussion inside the book about the ways in which American culture has hacked away at young girls' self-perception through its unending emphasis on the importance of a standardized notion of feminine beauty.

These criticisms aside, Orenstein has made a vivid contribution to the growing literature on the sociology of young women, helping to explain how many young girls never recover from their experience of vastly different expectations for boys and girls.

Retrieving a Heretical Marxist

THE WAGER OF LUCIEN GOLDMANN: TRAGEDY, DIALECTICS AND A HIDDEN GOD by Mitchell Cohen. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994.

Reviewed by Michael Löwy

ALASDAIR MACINTYRE DECLARED HIM “the finest and most intelligent Marxist of the age,” and Jean Piaget considered him “a creator of ideas such as one rarely meets in a lifetime” as well as “the inventor of a new form of symbolic thought.” Why, then, were Lucien Goldmann’s name and his rich contribution to the philosophy of the human sciences, to the sociology of culture and to socialist theory eclipsed and neglected so long? Certainly, this is related to the popularity, on both sides of the Atlantic, of anti-humanist structuralism and its offspring, anti-humanist post-structuralism. It is true that Goldmann always remained something of an outsider in relation to the dominant trends in French and Western philosophy or politics. But this is precisely what makes his unique brand of Marxist humanism so seminal and interesting. Perhaps Mitchell Cohen’s remarkable book will help a new generation discover the thought of one of the most gifted representatives of the dialectical imagination.

As Agnes Heller emphasized in her advance praise, Cohen’s book is “a brilliant deed of archaeology, resurrection, and insightful appraisal in one act” that “excavates entirely new facts about one of the undeservedly forgotten protagonists of ‘Western Marxism’.”

The “archaeological” moment is particularly important in the first chapter, “Youth in Romania,” an outstanding piece of research which, through interviewing Romanian contemporaries and consulting local archives, uncovers a completely unknown chapter of Goldmann’s intellectual biography. Thanks to this research, we are now able to understand his roots in Jewish Central European culture and to perceive his evolution in a new light. Born in the Romanian town of Botosani in 1913, Lucien Goldmann joined the Zionist youth movement, Hashomer Hatzair at age 14. The distinctive world-view of this movement — combining Zionism, Marxism, anarchist socialism (Gustav Landauer), romantic anti-capitalism, communitarianism and secular religiosity — remained (with the exception of Zionism) at the heart of Goldmann’s thought; as Cohen argues, he reinvented those ideas in various guises in his life’s work.

In 1930, like many other Jewish students, Goldmann joined the Romanian Communist Youth and, after a stay in Vienna (studying with Max Adler), he began to write his first articles for leftist journals. His open sympathy for Trotsky led to growing conflicts with the Communist leadership and to his break with the

MICHAEL LÖWY is the author of *Redemption in Utopia: Jewish Liberation Thought in Central Europe* (Stanford University Press) and, more recently, *On Changing the World: Essays in Political Philosophy from Karl Marx to Walter Benjamin* (Humanities Press).

Party in 1934. He left Romania soon afterward, and established himself in Paris.

This first part of Cohen's book is perhaps the best, not only because of the new material it contains, but also because it examines Goldmann's intellectual development in close connection with his political evolution; in the later chapters, there is a separation of the two for the sake of exposition. But, as the author himself acknowledges, Goldmann always saw his philosophical and cultural work as simultaneously political, aiming at "the liberation of man and the realization of a true community."

During the war, Goldmann was able to escape Nazi persecution by taking refuge in Switzerland. It was there that three events occurred which were important for his future intellectual career: the discovery — thanks to a conference organized by Manes Sperber at a Swiss internment camp where both had been imprisoned! — of Georg Lukacs' major work, *History and Class Consciousness*; the encounter with Jean Piaget, the creator of "genetic epistemology"; and the writing of his doctoral dissertation on Kant at the University of Zurich.

AUTHENTIC HUMAN COMMUNITY IS THE CENTRAL CONCEPT of Goldmann's sociological and political work. It runs throughout his writings, from his 1945 thesis on "Human Being, Community and World in the Philosophy of Immanuel Kant," to his essays on the sociology of literature in the 1960s, as well, of course, as in his masterpiece of 1955, *The Hidden God*, a study of the tragic vision in the *Pensées* of Pascal and the tragedies of Racine. As Cohen perceptively comments, this concept, using Kant, Hegel, Lukacs and Heidegger, is a Marxist reinvention of the romantic anti-capitalist distinction between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. In Goldmann's philosophy of community there is a dialectical oscillation between the parts and the whole in an attempt to transcend (in the sense of the Hegelian *Aufhebung*) the dualisms between form and content, subject and object, individual and collective, fact and value that reified capitalist society generates.

Goldmann never hid his enormous intellectual debt to Lukacs' early writings, and in particular to *History and Class Consciousness* (1923), from which he took many of his key concepts: totality, reification, possible consciousness. But (understandably!) he had much less interest in Lukacs' later works, impoverished by their author's compromise with Stalinism. That conflict is documented in their correspondence, and in particular by an ironic letter from the old Lukacs to Goldmann in 1959: "If I had died around 1924 and my unaltered soul were to look at your literary activity from another world, it would be filled with genuine gratitude for your intense occupation with my early works." The early Lukacs' theory of tragedy, in the essay "Metaphysics of Tragedy" from *The Soul and the Forms* (1910), was instrumental in Goldmann's study of the tragic worldview in Pascal and Racine. The importance of *The Hidden God* lies not only in its highly original sociological analysis of the class background of Jansenism — the *nobless de robe* in 17th century French society — but also in its interpretation of Pascal as a forerunner of dialectical thought (in opposition to Cartesian rationalism and atomistic individualism) and above all in its far-reaching parallel between Marx and Pascal: both socialism and (tragic) religion are forms of faith, in the broadest meaning of the word, based on a wager that implies risk, the possibility of failure, and the hope of success.

Rejecting bourgeois individualism in its two philosophical forms — empiricism and rationalism — Goldmann insisted on the importance of transindividual

subjects as responsible for historical change and cultural creation. Like Lukacs in 1923, he believed that the revolutionary proletariat had the possibility of breaking through capitalist reification and establishing an authentic human community; but he rejected as apocalyptic Lukacs' idea of the working class as "identical subject/object of history."

AFTER DE GAULLE TOOK POWER IN 1958, WITH CONSIDERABLE POPULAR SUPPORT, Goldmann began to have serious doubts about the revolutionary potential of the Western proletariat. He believed that the traditional working class had been integrated into capitalist society, and he sympathized with the ideas of "revolutionary reformism" presented by French sociologists like Serge Mallet and André Gorz. Like them, Goldmann believed he had found a new subject for social change: the "new working class," composed of highly qualified technicians whose struggle for structural reforms could lead to factory self-management (*autogestion*) and to a sort of market socialism.

However, as Cohen correctly emphasizes, Goldmann remained radically opposed to traditional social-democratic reformism, on both philosophical and political grounds. He also rejected Stalinism as a regression in relation to the human achievements of bourgeois society, such as individual freedom, tolerance and equality before the law. Although he considered the revolutionary position of Rosa Luxemburg, Trotsky and the young Lukacs unrealistic, he could not hide his moral and human sympathy with it.

This is why, in *Toward a Sociology of the Novel*, he celebrates "the Trotskyist value of immediate revolutionary community" represented by the Shanghai revolutionaries of Malraux's novel, *Man's Fate*. For the same reason, he was able to perceive signs of revolutionary opposition in French society in 1966, and to some extent predict May 1968 through an insightful interpretation of Jean Genet's theater (an issue that is somewhat confusedly presented by Cohen). Referring to Genet's piece, "The Screens," Goldmann asked himself: "Is this only an isolated, accidental phenomenon? Or is it the first swallow which announces the arrival of spring, representing a turning point in intellectual and social life today?" The answer came soon enough, in the spring of 1968, with the famous "May Events," to which Goldmann reacted with great enthusiasm and which prompted him to acknowledge that the working class still had a powerful role to play.

Goldmann defined his method, his creative reformulation of Lukacsian Marxism and Piaget's genetic epistemology, as "genetic structuralism," in opposition both to Sartre's voluntaristic individualism and to ahistorical structuralism. A typical example of his battle with structuralism — represented by such leading French intellectual figures as Claude Lévy-Strauss, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan and Louis Althusser — was his debate in January 1969 (misprinted as 1968 in Cohen's book) with Foucault, when he asserted, quoting a May '68 graffiti: "Structures don't go into the streets." However, anti-humanist and anti-historical structuralism, which Goldmann interpreted as the expression of social stabilization under organized capitalism after World War II, soon became hegemonic and shifted his type of Marxist humanism to the intellectual sidelines.

One can only hope that Mitchell Cohen's pioneering study will contribute to bringing Lucien Goldmann's ideas and his socialist wager on human community back to the center of philosophical and political debate.

Working-Class Life and Culture

RAINBOW AT MIDNIGHT: LABOR AND CULTURE IN THE 1940s by George Lipsitz.
Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994. 359 pp.

Reviewed by Dave Roediger

NOT LONG AGO, I ASKED A UNITED STEEL WORKERS summer school class to imagine that they were writing a history of U.S. labor. If they were to close the book with a chapter titled "The Crisis of the Unions," I wondered, what date or event would mark the beginning of that chapter? Would there be a postscript signaling that the decline of organized labor had begun to be reversed? The first question provoked far greater interest. The oil crisis of the 1970s dated the beginning of labor's defeats, according to one early reply. Several workers pointed to the smashing of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization by the Reagan Administration as the down turning point. Near the end of the discussion, an older participant offered the most deeply historical scenario. He identified the 1940s, and particularly the passage of the Taft-Hartley labor law revisions, as initiating a long-term weakening of the labor movement. Attempts to justify various points of departure led to revealing exchanges about just what was lost and how differing periods pointed to different strategies for change. The animated discussion suggested that many of the workers were practiced at reflecting on defeats and on how not to be finally defeated.

Those are the precise concerns of George Lipsitz's brilliant, learned and passionate *Rainbow at Midnight: Labor and Culture in the 1940s*. As Lipsitz explains, the book grew out of his attempts to understand and explain the promise and the defeat of a St. Louis rank-and-file teamster caucus he supported in the 1970s. Its title, taken from a 1946 country music hit by Ernest Tubb, suggests that Lipsitz joins the most voluble of the steel workers in seeing the 1940s as key years for labor. Tubbs' image conveys Lipsitz's insistence on seeing that decade as one filled with utopian hopes and forbidding possibilities for working people. *Rainbow* first appeared in 1981, in an under-distributed edition which quickly became an underground classic treasured for its attempt to study the whole lives of the whole working class. Writing at a time when historical scholarship on working women and on men and women of color was only beginning to flower, Lipsitz took many intellectual chances and left some gaps. In the decade and a half since *Rainbow's* first publication, he not only read new studies which amplified and altered his views, but ultimately did what scholars typically avoid. He fully rethought and rewrote his own book, producing a new *Rainbow* even more vivid and arresting than the first.

Lipsitz's tough-minded treatment of defeat may surprise those who know his reputation rather than his work. His approach profoundly reflects the influence

DAVE ROEDIGER teaches history at the University of Minnesota. His most recent book is *Towards the Abolition of Whiteness* (Verso).

and mentoring of two writer-militants closely associated with *New Politics* over the years: Stan Weir and the late George Rawick. Like them, he begins and ends with the belief that working people have wanted and want freedom, mutuality and happiness and that they pursue such ends with great intelligence, creativity and effect. Such a stance routinely causes Lipsitz to be criticized as a "romantic," especially by those who (as Weir observes) "assume that any positive judgments about the working class must stem from 'romanticism.'" In addition, Lipsitz finds the aspirations of working people to be *expressed*, and not only shaped, distorted and contained, by popular culture. From zoot suits to roller derby, he finds hope in the ways workers create, remake and receive the popular. He is, as a recent and generally uncomprehending *Village Voice* review dismissively puts it, a "pop cult optimist."

As one who does not believe that "romantic" and "optimist" ought to be slurs, I have no wish to defend Lipsitz from such charges. Nor do I want to summarize a book which should be savored for its unexpected twists and delightful turns. Worth recounting, however, are several ways in which Lipsitz's *Rainbow* shows that romanticism and hope are virtues entirely compatible with facing up to the realities of oppression, tragedy and loss.

LIPSITZ BEGINS WITH AN IN-YOUR-FACE INTRODUCTION of three unexpected "wartime workers." These working class heroes are parachute packer-turned-Hollywood goddess, Marilyn Monroe; welder-turned-"hillbilly" singer, Hank Williams, Sr.; and war factory worker-turned-popular novelist, Chester Himes. Beginning in this way, powerfully makes the point that the new possibilities of mass unionism, shopfloor struggles, and widening job opportunities for those marginalized in the labor market created during World War II did not simply disappear after the war. Instead "the utopian spirit that enabled Hank Williams, Marilyn Monroe, and Chester Himes to dream of a better world" (a spirit which "had everything to do with changes in working class life and culture at critical times in their lives"), became an enduring part of U.S. culture because of their artistry and their popularity.

But in making this wonderful leap, Lipsitz never loses sight of costs, contexts and power. His working class subjects are a woman, a Southern poor white (Williams, who may also have been partly Native American) and an African American (Himes). Their lives reflect deep divisions among working people. The Mobile docks where Williams welds are the scene of wartime hate strikes and white riots against black workers. Monroe's husband scorns women's wage work, and eagerly shows her pin-ups to male co-workers. She "hates to be a thing." Williams carries the ravages of childhood malnutrition and hookworm, as well as the scars of a violent and broken family life, throughout a singing career all too quickly ended by alcoholism. Himes becomes a published author from prison.

This same willingness to portray workers in full complexity runs through Lipsitz's general accounts of labor during the war and in the postwar strike wave. Lipsitz shows us a working class which signs no-strike pledges and then strikes, which engages in wildly creative direct actions and ugly racist mobilizations. He carefully avoids attributing shopfloor militancy simply to the (often government-sponsored) growth of union membership, showing instead how the logic which led so many workers to wildcat in support of each other challenged both management and bureaucratized unions. Most important, Lipsitz portrays working

women's, African Americans' and Latinos' struggles as working class struggles and the retreats of the unions on racial and gender issues, like the victimization of black and Latin zoot-suit wearers, as defeats for labor.

LIPSITZ IS SIMILARLY HARD-NOSED IN ACCOUNTING FOR THE EXTENT to which the unprecedented and unsurpassed 1944-46 strike wave failed to produce lasting political and shopfloor openings which could be used by those who saw the working class as central to the realization of the vision of rainbows of freedom and opportunity. Like the historically-minded steel worker in my summer school group, he fiercely focuses on the coercive power of the state, showing brilliantly how the Taft-Hartley revisions of labor law both bespoke a new configuration of antilabor class forces and, as Staughton Lynd once put it, took decisive steps to "outlaw solidarity." Lipsitz also details, at both the national and the local level, how the industrial unions proved unable to articulate an alternative international vision able to compete with the "globalism and growth" Cold War platform of corporate and government planners. He totals the costs of anti-Communism without losing sight of deficiencies in Communist union leadership.

In an arresting insight, Lipsitz organizes his account of the triumph of "liberal totalitarian" forces around the "fight for moral authority." He is able to show how corporate liberals won this fight both out of their own strength and labor's weaknesses. That strength included a potent apparatus of repressive forces, but also a willingness to institute an array of wage, benefits and "welfare" policies which failed to provide for full employment, but did for a time engender a vision of security and the good life for a privileged sector of the working population. Encouraging suburban growth while removing resources from cities, and enhancing the ideology of upward family mobility through (white) male breadwinning, the corporate state provided no rainbow, but did remove for some the terrors of midnight.

However, as Lipsitz also emphasizes, domestication of working class advances toward freedom never stemmed only from ruling class genius and was never complete. The racism of unions, and of union members, combined with anti-Communism to thwart critical efforts to organize the South. Women workers had to fight "their employers and their unions" to try to maintain wartime gains. The suburban family home, the male career, the commodity, and what Merle Haggard has termed "your so-called social security," triumphed as ideals in part for tragic lack of better moral choices.

And yet, such defeats are neither absolute nor unspeakable for Lipsitz. In 1949, strike totals neared the record peaks of 1946. Even when unions and wildcats were much more thoroughly brought under control, working people sought to overcome alienation, isolation and powerlessness in a host of ways which *Rainbow* documents in a pyrotechnic reading of film history, rock and roll, roller derby, customized cars, drag racing, jive talk and more. If none of these cultural forms offered the opportunity of realizing a rainbow of liberation — if all variously reflected what Lipsitz calls, after Marx, "the tradition of all the dead generations" where race, gender and sexuality were concerned — they nonetheless loudly announced that the "fight for moral authority" was not over. Defeat and defiance co-exist throughout *Rainbow at Midnight* and in its final words:

Nothing has happened since the forties to discredit mass mobilization and democratic contestation over resources and power as a necessary element in creating a livable

world or an emancipatory future. To be sure, working-class resistance after the war did not quite generalize itself into human resistance, into a realizable vision of society without exploitation or hierarchy. But there remains a rainbow at midnight — a symbol of what could have been, and what might yet be.

Peace & Democracy

Journal of the Campaign for Peace and Democracy

Nominated for the 1991 Utne Reader Award for International Reporting

Past authors: Daniel Singer, Christopher Hitchens, Randall Forsberg, Holly Burkhalter, Aryeh Neier, Andrew Reding, Ann Snitow, Lynne Jones, Thomas Harrison, Joanne Landy, Stephen Shalom, Adolfo Aguilar, Jennifer Scarlott, Konstanty Gebert, Richard Falk, Ruth Rosen, Erwin Knoll, James Weinstein, Kathryn Kolbert, Matthew Rothschild, E.P. Thompson, John Feffer, Todd Gitlin, and Kim Moody.

The Campaign for Peace and Democracy supports movements in the Third World, the former Communist countries, and the West that challenge oppressive institutions and promote popular power. We work for a new, democratic U.S. foreign policy that embraces and encourages these movements.

☐ I want to subscribe to **Peace & Democracy**. Enclosed is \$7 for my subscription. (make checks payable to Campaign for Peace and Democracy)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

CPD, P.O. Box 1640, Cathedral Station, New York, NY 10025, (212) 666-5924,
fax: (212) 662-5892, email: campeacedem@igc.apc.org