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NEW POLITICS is pleased to announce that Alan Johnson, a British socialist, has joined its editorial board.

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A Movement Begins: The Washington Protests Against IMF/World Bank

Jesse Lemisch

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AGO almost to the day (April 17, 1965), I had gone to Washington as a participant in the first major Students for a Democratic Society demonstration against the war in Vietnam. It drew a surprising 25,000 people. Now, after many demonstrations in between, I went back April 14-16 for the protests against the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

It was exhilarating and informative, an intensive course, somewhat like the teach-ins of the sixties (which give the lie to notions of New Left anti-intellectualism).[1] Young people had mastered the complexities of "structural adjustment," the imposition by IMF/World Bank (WB) of poverty and stagnation around the world, the two institutions' functions as fronts for looting and plundering of underdeveloped economies by giant, mostly American, corporations. Scholars, activists and scholar-activists from around the world were there to offer case studies of the grim experience of country after country at the hands of IMF/WB. A British group costumed variously as pom-pom girls, Secret Service boys and others sang wittily and rhythmically of Monsanto's "Frankenfoods." Another comedian with purpose lugged through the streets a glass case containing an allegedly genetically altered giant potato. The kids, as they are condescendingly but inevitably called, are great.

Among the most extraordinary moments was the arrival during the weekend from Cochabamba, Bolivia, of Oscar Olivera, a machinist who is leader of the popular uprising against privatization of the Cochabamba public water system for the profit of a subsidiary of the American Bechtel Corporation, Aguas del Tunari.[2] (A careful reader of *The New York Times* had found only paltry mention of Bechtel in its accounts of the uprising.[3]) This seizure of the very water by Bechtel for profit off the backs of the poor was brought about under pressure from the WB, and before the weekend protests it was defended by the Bank's head, James Wolfensohn. The Bolivian government's violent attack on the protest movement that arose included: declaration of a 90-day state of emergency; seven water protesters dead and more than 100 injured. A crowd was fired on by a

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graduate of the U.S.' notorious "School of the Americas," and government at various levels there is infested by other graduates. Olivera said: "The blood spilled in Cochabamba carries the fingerprints of Bechtel." But Bechtel had been thrown out of the country in a model of resistance which the protesters in Washington greeted with wild applause. (Wolfensohn now has problems with invitations he received to deliver commencement addresses before his name became, like Spiro Agnew's, a household word.)

On April 14 the International Forum on Globalization presented a twelve-hour teach-in to an overflow crowd at the Foundry United Methodist Church, where Clinton prays, but manages — as Ralph Nader pointed out — to forget it all in his limo in the short drive back to the White House. At Foundry, and in other appearances, Filipino sociologist Walden Bello described stagnation rather than growth as the product of IMF policies; the WB's creation of, rather than alleviation of, poverty; the IMF's "devastating performance . . . during the Asian financial crisis," worsening things; and the collapse of the old WB/IMF paradigm in the face of the criticism even of ardent pro-capitalists[4] (Joseph Stiglitz[5], Congress's Meltzer Commission Report[6], et. al.): it doesn't work. Far from relieving poverty, the institutions have *made* poverty and have rushed in to capture the resultant collapsed economies for the benefit of corporations, which have seen economic crisis as opportunity. It may well be said, to paraphrase Yale's influential mid-century diplomatic historian Samuel ("Wave the") Flagg Bemis, that the world's distress has been America's success[7], or at least the success of America's corporations.

The DC police (backed up by the Pentagon, National Guard, U.S. Marshals, Capitol Police, and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agents) acted in ways that reminded some Nigerians in Washington (from scholars to activists to cab drivers) of home: drawing their line around 90 blocks, closing Interstate 395, parks and some Metro stations, removing mailboxes; closing down "Convergence" headquarters (cynically discovering a "fire hazard" and claiming, at first, that chemicals used for painting puppets were ingredients for Molotov cocktails), closing down copy shops, trapping demonstrators at 20th and K, and then removing video reporters before arresting 600 protesters (as well as some tourists and press), keeping street vendors of drinks and food totally away from the Great March to Nowhere through Foggy Bottom on the hot Sunday of April 16[8], removing their badges. Many press people were furious at the treatment they got at the hands of the police. The cops did an abundance of video-taping for their own purposes, and welcomed observers from various police forces around the U.S. By the end of the protests, they had arrested around 1300 — and, with "jail solidarity," some stayed in for as long as five days.

The increasing anger on the part of the demonstrators makes perfect sense when seen against the background of a peaceful protest that was set upon by a police force that had been summoned and armed with the latest weaponry for a blatantly political purpose. The police ignored the Constitution and acted like an occupying army. The language of military rule became part of everyday conversation: "perimeter," "sealed off," "locked down." This is how they managed to claim that the protest had failed, since the meetings had indeed gone on despite the protests. Cities around the world will not be vying for the opportunity to host such "successes" in the future. This is not the Olympics. After Seattle, and now Washington, it's hard to imagine where on earth these loan sharking organizations can meet without an army to defend them, and bus them to their meetings in the dead of night. (Related events occurred in London and Berlin before and on May 1[9], to be followed by the Democratic (Los Angeles) and Republican (Philadelphia) National Conventions in the summer, and then Prague in the fall.)

In all this, I found weaknesses as well as strengths. Walden Bello spoke clearly for abolition of IMF/WB. But many others did not know whether they were for abolition or for reform — whether they sought "to fix it, or nix it."[10] Many of the young don't yet know of the extraordinary resilience of the system, with its Orwellian ability to rename itself (e.g. "Poverty Reduction") as a way of staying in business. Certainly this has been a major theme in American history: this capacity to absorb has repeatedly killed off movements that have not learned that knowing what you want is an important part of doing successful battle against a sponge.

If we are to abolish these institutions — as we should — what will we then put in their place? With much of the movement rooted in an ascetic environmentalism, hostile to development, and talking, archaically, about "self-reliance," there seems an absence of willingness to think about what a radically different democratic international institution to aid Third World countries' rise from poverty would look like. The important notion that WB/IMF should be abolished, when combined with failure to give hard thought to alternatives, leaves the bad guys inevitably in charge of the inadequate solutions and renamed old solutions that they are even now cooking up. Sometimes this small-is-beautiful ideology on the part of protesters, this failure to engage with the needs and desires of Third World people (including the desire for joy and for consumption), leads to ludicrous and insulting non-solutions: Nader speaks passionately of the desirability today of mud huts developed in ancient Egypt,[11] while others testify to the virtues of "twenty thousand years of humble agriculture."

I will vote for Nader for President; he is obviously very strong in his anti-corporatism (though vulnerable to charges that he seeks to make corporate capitalism responsible rather than to abolish it). But socially he seems very conservative. He has shown — and his 2000 candidacy announcemnt reflects it — what appears to be hostile indifference to feminism and gay liberation, having earlier described them as "gonadal politics." When challenged for this, he simply hunkered down, or boasted — while his audience cringed — of something he did for women when he was on the *Harvard Law Review*, a kind of an updated "some of my best friends . . . "

At Foundry on April 14, Nader spoke out, rightly, for vaccination, but attacked Viagra and Prozac, apparently seen as only life-style frivolities.[12] From the audience, Joanne Landy (a Nader supporter) cried out — as is her custom in such situations, particularly in large domed spaces — "Whatsamatta with Viagra!!?" The gentle sound wafted toward the dome of the beautiful church; two days later, at the Ellipse, Nader delivered the same speech, but without the offending passages. But they are likely to come back. There is, with Nader, a strong ascetic streak which is very much in the American grain, but also very much out of touch with the cultural revolution wrought by the sixties. Even Oprah knows better than Ralph Nader. (As Landy points out, half seriously, a Nader presidency could leave us depressed, in our mud huts, suffering from erectile dysfunction — and possibly without any tv to watch.)

Nader's kind of austerity is widespread in the left and in environmental movements, underlying much of the critique of consumerism and the pursuit of such narrow goals as "decent housing and adequate food."[13] There seems little awareness that abundance and consumption have a utopian side and that, as Hans Magnus Enzensberger writes, "Consumption as spectacle contains the promise that want will disappear." It's not clear whether the real limits to what the earth can produce and tolerate cause the ascetic complex, or whether the ideology comes first, focusing attention on the limits rather than the possibilities. In any case, the ideology of parsimoniousness and "self-reliance" is unfriendly to development. This, in turn, leaves protesters uninterested in devising democratic approaches to development, which leaves them wide open to criticism as sustaining backwardness in Third World countries, with the mud hut as their alternative.

Youth are the heart of the movement — the campuses are coming alive, and both on and off campus youth culture is revealing more and more of its left potential. In Washington, they were bold, courageous, resilient and savvy, in self-organization and in confrontation on the streets. Arts flourished in imaginative ways, with puppets, Structural Adjustment machines, giant potatoes, etc. They went to jail in great numbers, and continued to resist while in jail.

Although jail solidarity is magnificent, we need to know more about the internal governance of the affinity groups and the processes by which they reached consensus ("consensed," in one usage I heard), both in jail and in the streets. Decision-making by consensus has sometimes had a grim underside. Before sixties veterans further romanticize youth, once again uncritically mistaking the appearance of participatory democracy for democracy, we might want to re-examine Jo Freeman's early radical feminist classic, "The Tyranny of Structurelessness,"[14] seeking to avoid a repetition of the horrors of some of the sixties collectives and communes.[15]

Because of all of the truly admirable characteristics of the youth movement, but also because sixties radicals have always searched for some authentic vanguard,[16] there seems to be a tendency among these now older radicals to select youth as the vanguard of the moment, and to send themselves into retirement, to function only as advisers, and then only with great humility. Let me stress that it is not youth that has imposed this mandatory retirement, but rather the sixties radicals themselves. I have heard such notions from, for instance, some older radical feminists, who have spoken of the need to stand aside and let the young lead. This seems to be combined with a kind of I-wonder-what-will-happen-next attitude, a spectatorial stance which waits for *others* to make a movement. In all this, there is a lack of awareness that sexy and trendy not-your-mother's-young-feminists are, in part, an invention of the media, another stick with which to beat radical feminism.[17]

Perhaps that is why, so far as I could see, there was no radical feminist presence in the Washington protests. Naomi Weisstein has incisively suggested that feminists march — faux-pregnant, faces painted grey, preceded by drumming — and articulate the kind of protests that should be central in globalization struggles but that were ignored in Washington: reproductive rights, abortion, anti-rape, and the stagnation and poverty resulting from women's subjugation under patriarchy.

The wild kids that the media have told us about may in fact be (with important exceptions) deferential, respectful, and with — sad to say — good manners and a poignant longing to love and be loved by their adversaries. An April 15 Jewish Community Center non-debate between critics on the one hand, and hacks employed by the IMF/World Bank on the other, featured a moderator — a writer for, G_d help us, *The Nation*[18] — who fawned over and repeatedly hugged the hacks (this really happened!) These sickening gestures and commendations (for courage, mutual benevolent feelings, etc.) brought feel-good applause for the casually dressed IMF/WB-ers from the youthful audience, rather than the boos and hisses that would have been appropriate. The longing to be at peace with your adversaries is death to social movements. A generation many of whose members think that forthright debate should be avoided as "towel-snapping," and groove on the benighted and directionless kids of *Blair Witch Project*[19] is a generation which, even at its best, sometimes reflects the worst in its times. Sweet and good-natured, but also somewhat addled by the Age of Oprah, attuned to consensus rather than conflict, many of the young have about the level of consciousness that many SDS members had at an early stage of the movement against the war in Vietnam, say around 1965.

On the other hand, if this is only 1965 in the life of the new movement, well, that's just wonderful, compared to where we have been. So, hallelujah, it's a time of rebirth, with the voracious capitalism of the conservative world order under deserved attack. This time, perhaps, we may help to build a true internationalism, a globalized resistance, a global alternative to the global crimes of the IMF/World Bank.

An earlier, shorter version of this article was posted on www.TomPaine.com, April 19, 2000. The writer acknowledges the help of Joanne Landy and Naomi Weisstein, who are not responsible for the above. Comments are welcome at utopia1@attglobal.net

NOTES

1. For a scholarly response to such notions, by a brilliant young historian of the New Left, see John McMillian, "Love Letters to the Future": REP, *Radical America*, and New Left History, *Radical History Review*, 77(Spring 2000), pp. 20-59.

2. For this and the following, see (in addition to Oscar Olivera's talk at the April 14 teach-in) Jim Shultz's reports at www.democracyctr.org; and the same author's "Water Fallout: Bolivians Battle Globalization," *In These Times*, May 15, 2000, pp. 11-12.

3. There is no mention of Bechtel in "Bolivia Calls an Emergency after Protest Over Water," *The New York Times*, April 9, 2000. There is one mention in "Bolivian Water Plan Dropped after Protests Turn into Melees," ibid., April 11, 2000.

4. For a short version of Bello's valuable analysis, see his "Meltzer Report on Bretton Woods Twins Builds a Case for Abolition but Hesitates" (available at www.focusweb.org).

5. See Stiglitz, "The Insider: What I Learned at the World Economic Crisis," *The New Republic*, April 17 & 24, 2000, pp. 56-60. (*TNR* displayed this on its cover, calling it, "What I saw at the Devaluation: Why the IMF can't be Trusted to run the World Economy.") Stiglitz was chief economist and vice president of the World Bank, 1997-2000. See also David Moberg, "Silencing Joseph Stiglitz: The World Bank Cuts its Ties to the Economist who Became an Unlikely Hero to World Trade Protesters," *Salon* (www.salon.com), May 2, 2000.

6. For Allan Meltzer's reaction to the Washington protests, see his "A Better Way to Help the World," *Financial Times*, April 28, 2000. While Meltzer is far from an abolitionist, he is very critical of the WB: "By its own admission, half of its projects are unsuccessful, and the failure rate is even higher in the poorest countries. The Bank's management must stop its current public relations flim-flam and start improving its effectiveness in reducing poverty. If the demonstrators help achieve that, their efforts will have been worthwhile."

7. It's my memory that Bemis, a scholar of immense influence who was known at the time as the Dean of American Diplomatic Historians, used the phrase, "Europe's Distress is America's Success."

8. I don't know how this route was negotiated with the police, and I am sympathetic with those who did the negotiating. However, the AFL-CIO seemed obsessed with separating itself from illegal activities, associating itself only with "permitted" components. Perhaps as a result of that, the march wound around through a deserted Foggy Bottom and came back to its starting point at the Ellipse, rarely encountering a citizen of Washington. Ironically, despite all the talk from Seattle of "Teamsters and Turtles," there was minimal labor participation in the march, although a fair number of the speakers came from unions. (There were numerous turtles.)

9. *Financial Times*, April 19, 2000.

10. For the phrase, see Patrick Bond, "Run on the Bank," *Znet Commentary*, April 6, 2000: www.zmag.org.

11. This is the way that I, and others who heard Nader to whom I have spoken, heard it. But perhaps Nader was actually referring to a recent article in *The New York*

Times about the work of the twentieth-century Egyptian architect, Hassan Fathy. (For the following, see Susan Sachs, "Arts Abroad: Honoring a Visionary If Not His Vision," *The New York Times*, April 4, 2000.) If so, the picture is even grimmer. The Aga Khan Award-winning architect built the village of New Gourna from bricks of mud and straw, but the poor for whom it was intended have rejected it. Hoping to build a village where peasants "would follow the way of life that I would like them to," Fathy eschewed what the *NYTimes* calls "the idea of running water directly to each house as too expensive and unsuited to village customs, [and] he installed neighborhood wells and rhapsodized about the result."

The dire results for women of such retrograde romanticism are unintentionally revealed by Fathy's words:

> It is hard to imagine a village in Egypt without its black-robed women, . . . erect as queens, each with her water jar carried nonchalantly on her head, and it will be a pity to lose the sight.

The people of New Gourna, the *NYTimes* notes, "see no charm in communal wells and prefer running water." All this should be a warning for those who romanticize non-development.

12. For an earlier presentation of such notions, see Ken Silverstein, "Millions for Viagra: Pennies for Diseases of the Poor [sic]," *The Nation*, July 19, 1999. Silverstein, apparently thinking that the poor don't (or shouldn't) suffer from sexual dysfunction, and that, in whatever class, such needs are trivial, reviles "lifestyle drugs — remedies that may one day free the world from the scourge of toenail fungus, obesity, baldness, face wrinkles and impotence." In this and in other articles (e.g. condemnations of tourism), *The Nation* often reveals vestiges of Old Left asceticism.

13. For this and the following, see Jesse Lemisch and Naomi Weisstein, "Cornucopia Isn't Consumerism: How We Came to Love our White Rabbit Hats," *Against the Current*, January/February 1992, pp. 31-34.

14. In Anne Koedt, Ellen Levine, Anita Rapone, eds., *Radical Feminism* (New York 1973), pp. 285-299.

15. For a horrifying and accurate account, which nonetheless does not turn sour on the movement's splendid utopianism, see Vivian Rothstein, "The Magnolia Street Commune," *Boston Review*, 1999 (available at www.bostonreview.mit.edu).

16. For a critique focusing on issues of authenticity in left folk culture, see Jesse Lemisch, "Pop Front Culture: I Dreamed I Saw MTV Last Night," *The Nation*, October 18, 1986; Jesse Lemisch, "The Politics of Left Culture," *The Nation*, December 20, 1986.

17. For a critique of "Third Wave" feminism by a "relative youngie," see Sonia Shah, "Young and Younger," *ZNet commentary*, October 5, 1999.

18. John Nichols, who writes a good column called "The Beat."

19. *Blair Witch Project* bears comparison with Steven Spielberg's *Jaws* (1975), which echoes sixties themes of agency. *Jaws*, like *Blair Witch*, is about a small group of people trying to overcome terror and find their way out of a grotesque and frightening situation. *Jaws* features Brody, an inept and not-manly former New York cop who can't swim (Roy Scheider), and Hooper, a small nerdy icthyologist (Richard Dreyfuss), still partly encased in the character of the previous year's *Duddy Kravitz* (1974). Physically limited but resourceful, these heroes overcome the terror. *Blair Witch*, however, portrays a surrender to directionlessness — with, to boot, a misogynist portrayal of the central character. For an earlier presentaton of this point, see Jesse Lemisch, "Black Agency in the Amistad Uprising," *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society*, Winter 1999, pp. 57-70.

Symposium on Globalization: Hard Questions for the Left

Introduction

THE STUNNING PROTESTS IN SEATTLE LAST NOVEMBER and Washington D.C. this spring expressed the growing opposition of environmentalists, trade unionists, and millions of others to a global economy dominated by corporations and unelected, unaccountable trade bureaucrats. The protests inspired progressives to hope that we might be at the beginning of a rebirth of radicalism, both in the United States and on an international scale.

Not so long ago, Margaret Thatcher tried to deflate social movements by telling us that we simply had to accept a world run by giant corporations: "There Is No Alternative," she proclaimed. The global resistance emerging against the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization both in the Third World and in wealthier countries shows that this conservative message is rapidly losing its power. Testimony to the tremendous growth of the opposition movement is that officials of the World Bank are already finding themselves confronted by the threat of major demonstrations if they speak on campuses around the United States (shades of the Vietnam War!), and it looks like every meeting of the international financial institutions, no matter the country in which it is held, will be met by explosive protests as well.

However, the globalization issue raises many crucial questions that the Left has not yet fully thought through, but that we will need to answer as the national and international debate unfolds. It was clear to me as I joined in the spirited protests in Washington, D.C. that it will take time for this new movement to develop its own alternatives to the existing system; in my view, this task is made particularly difficult by the success conservatives have had so far in equating socialism and the public ownership of key economic sectors with the tyranny and inefficiency of Communism.

But with the collapse of Communism, the corporate-capitalist global order stands alone, to be judged on its own merits, and people around the world — most vocally the young — are more and more finding that it wreaks unacceptable damage on humanity and the environment. This destruction offers a strong incentive for activists to think through a democratic model of globalization that takes power away from economic and bureaucratic elites and gives it to ordinary people.

In the following symposium, *New Politics* hopes to stimulate discussion of the kind of alternative globalization the emerging movement stands for, and how to get there. Participants were asked the questions below — some answering them directly and individually, others weaving their responses into an integrated essay.

This is only the beginning of a critical discussion of positive alternatives to today's *realpolitik* globalization. We look forward to continuing the discussion in future issues of *New Politics*.

—Joanne Landy, member of the editorial board

1) In Seattle, some Third World governments argued that proposed labor and environmental standards would have the effect of denying their countries needed foreign investment. Are they right? Are there ways to insure public, social investment in poorer countries if they reduce their "comparative advantage" in substandard wages, working conditions, and environmental regulation, and thus lose private investment? Do aid and debt relief offer sufficient answers?

2) Workers in wealthier countries fear that they are losing jobs to workers in countries with lower wages and labor standards, and will lose further ground as globalization continues. Are these concerns grounded in reality? If so, are there ways to have full employment and high wages in more affluent countries without hindering the economic development of poorer countries? What is the relationship between the economic well-being of workers in wealthier countries and the living standards of workers in the Third World?

3) Is "protectionism" sometimes justified? By richer countries? Poorer countries?

4) How can economic growth and development be pursued without further damage to the environment? Can existing environmental damage be reversed in ways that are compatible with economic expansion?

5) How realistic is it to envision effective international regulation of corporations and investors to ensure protection of labor and the environment? Even if you think it is unrealistic, is it politically useful to demand such regulation as a way to raise consciousness and project a long-term progressive alternative to the status quo? Are there any dangers to making demands on corporate-dominated governments to involve themselves, even in economic support, for Third World countries? Are there ways to raise demands for support to the Third World that avoid those dangers?

6) Should progressives and the left campaign for the reform of the IMF, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization, or fight for their abolition?

Thanks to Stephen Shalom and Thomas Harrison for their help with this symposium.

Global Democratization: Spotlight on the United States

Ellen Frank

RECENT GLOBALIZATION PROTESTS GENERATED A HEAVY DEMAND for pro-trade pundits. As events unfolded last fall in Seattle, economic commentators like Paul Krugman, Jagdish Bhagwati and Thomas Friedman were everywhere, dismissing the protesters as hopeless naïfs, unacquainted with the hard facts of economic life and clueless about the Third World. Citing a plethora of statistical studies, the pundits argue that globalization, contrary to popular mythology, is not driving down U.S. wages, depriving U.S. workers of jobs, or degrading environmental standards. As evidence, mainstream economists point out that the U.S. economy has been creating jobs at a record pace. Despite globalization, average U.S. wages rose briskly over the past two years.

Mainstream studies of foreign investment also question whether globalization has set off an environmental race to the bottom. Dirty and heavily-regulated industries have moved production off-shore, but so have all industries. Regulated industries like chemicals are no more likely to flee the U.S. than are lightly-regulated industries and may, in fact, be less likely to shift production abroad.

Finally, free-traders argue that any attempt to rein in the global juggernaut will destroy the hopes of impoverished countries to raise their own living standards through imports of modern technology and industrial jobs. Bhagwati and others charge that first world protesters are elitists, concerned only with protecting their own incomes and indifferent to the aspirations of the developing world.

To counterpoint the critiques of the protesters, free-trade enthusiasts have composed a pro-globalization refrain that seems compelling and reassuring. Globalization is good, or at least there's no evidence it's bad. More markets mean more prosperity. Trade is a win-win game that yields cheap goods for the middle class and new jobs for the poor. Yes, globalization requires change and change can be painful, but free-traders are realistic and hard-headed. Globalization is the wave of the future. It is modern and multi-cultural, cosmopolitan and dynamic, embraced by people with vision and verve.

As globalization proceeds, rhetoric of this sort has become critical in the struggle for the hearts and minds of the U.S. public. Those who oppose current globalization trends — unions, environmentalists and progressives of all stripes

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— face a great challenge. They must convince themselves, their supporters and the public at large not that that pro-trade position is wrong, but that it is wholly beside the point, an elaborate distraction from the issues of power and control that are fundamental to such organizations as the IMF and WTO. The debate over globalization is not, and must not devolve into, a debate over the costs of lost U.S. jobs versus the benefits of jobs gained in Haiti.

Whether or not the global expansion of unfettered markets — the program rightly known as neo-liberalism — destroys jobs or depresses wages, there is no question that many Americans experience the neo-liberal agenda as a threat. By lowering tariffs and codifying property rights, trade treaties like the WTO and NAFTA vastly simplify the process of moving goods, jobs and money across borders. Whether or not businesses actually move, the agreements represent a credible threat to move and this threat, in and of itself, severely compromises the negotiating position of workers and ordinary citizens.

Over the past 25 years, wages and benefits for the average U.S. worker have fallen slowly but inexorably. Economists argue about how much of this decline stems from jobs moving overseas, how much from technological change, how much to the demise of unions. In fact, these are not separable causes. Labor researcher Kate Broffenbrenner reports that U.S. businesses routinely wield the threat of moving jobs abroad precisely to weaken unions and counter organizing drives. Economist Dani Rodrick cites ample evidence that the threat of moving jobs abroad is a potent tool in corporate battles over taxes, regulation and social policy.

This is the real stake in the battle over globalization. Whether corporations invest in the U.S. or Asia or elsewhere, the advent of institutions like the WTO give them the upper hand in all negotiations, everywhere. The ability of workers, community groups, environmental advocates, or state and local governments — here or in other countries — to demand better wages, safer working conditions, cleaner production processes, or even corporate tax payments is gravely undermined when corporations can credibly threaten to pick up and leave; when no restrictions are placed on capital flight or plant closings and when enforceable international property rights make shifting production a far less risky endeavor than it used to be.

The process of capitalist development, nationally and globally, has always been complex, improving the material standards of life in some areas and at some times, lowering them in others. The "new" global economy will no doubt bestow benefits and inflict harms unevenly and unpredictably, just like the economy of old. Some Americans have benefited and will likely continue to benefit from some aspects of globalization — cheaper consumer goods, a booming high-tech, white-collar sector. Others have suffered and will continue to suffer from diminished job security and the loss of manufacturing jobs. Workers in developing countries are also affected in ways that are difficult to predict and confusing to interpret. Poverty rates have risen in many countries, but so too have the numbers of the middle class. Rapid urbanization in poor countries has brought with it all the attendant miseries of slums, poor sanitation and glaring inequity, yet in many of these rapidly urbanizing countries life expectancy is rising and infant mortality falling. Two years ago, opponents of globalization seized upon the economic crises in Asia as a symbol of all that was wrong with the new global economy. Yet those very crises helped bring down the corrupt

Suharto regime and emboldened the Korean labor movement. In east Asia, thousands of young women are exploited in apparel sweatshops reminiscent of the New England textile mills of the 1800s. Yet like the New England mill-girls, some relish their new independence from the patriarchal village life.

Arguing, therefore, about whether global markets will raise or lower wages, create or destroy jobs, generate prosperity or plunge the world into depression is profoundly unhelpful. Global capitalism will do all these things and more. Progressives must not allow these economic questions, important as they are, to divert attention from the essential question of power in the new global economy. The battle over globalization will be the 21st century's version of the centuries-old struggle for democratic governance. The neo-liberal agenda is profoundly anti-democratic, designed to enrich and empower economic elites. Opposition must never let up on the demand that both domestic and global institutions be built upon public control and popular accountability.

Power, Finance and the Role of the U.S.

THANKS TO SEATTLE, THE WTO, WITH ITS FREE-TRADE BUREAUCRATS and closed-door tribunals, became a lightning rod for popular discontent with globalization. Protesters call the WTO undemocratic, hostile to the rights of labor and indifferent to environmental protection. Poor countries complain that WTO rules favor the rich G-7 nations — exempting U.S. textiles and Japanese rice, but not Ghanaian coffee or Ecuador's bananas, from the bracing wind of competition. Global trading rules, however, are not the only things rigged to the advantage of the western corporations.

The greatest villain by far in the global economic saga is the international financial system — rigged by the IMF in close collaboration with the government of the U.S. The current system of global finance functions as an almost perfect mechanism for transferring wealth from the world's poor to the rich. Control over resources, labor and markets — once seized and held by force of arms in colonial wars — is now won through the device of currency crisis, foreign debt and IMF austerity plan.

The game of international financial control is almost fiendishly clever. First, developing countries are pressured to "open their markets" to foreign goods. Since poor countries lack the currency reserves to pay for trade, the IMF and private banks press foreign currency loans upon corrupt governments, opening the way to eventual economic control by the IMF, the G-7 and their corporations. Because neither private nor official lenders will lend to developing countries without IMF approval, even extraordinarily honest and well-managed governments are only an earthquake or crop failure away from foreign currency debt and IMF oversight.

Interest charges, also due in the foreign currency, mount quickly and the debt soon balloons. Once ensnared in the debt trap, poor nations must scramble for foreign exchange or be cut off entirely from world markets. It is this need for foreign exchange that drives the furious scramble for foreign investment dollars.

Before the debt crisis engulfed the Third World in the late 1970s, most poor countries — even those with corrupt and autocratic governments — saw "import substitution" and internal development as the foundation of their economic futures. Countries in Africa, Asia and South America hoped to build domestic manufacturing capacity by promoting local firms, boosting consumer purchasing power and developing domestic markets for locally produced industrial goods. "Protectionist policies" were designed to protect "infant industries" from direct competition with the larger and better-capitalized transnational corporations. Tariffs, capital controls and local-content rules kept resources at home where they could be used for internal development.

But foreign debts have forced virtually all poor countries to renounce internal development goals. Instead of promoting internal investment by local firms in local industries, countries vie for injections of foreign investment dollars with which to pay debts. Indebted governments offer up their "comparative advantage" in exploitable labor, cheap resources, lax health and safety standards to transnational corporations which receive, in return, control over mines, land and people.

The logic of debt repayment requires that both human and natural resources be exploited rather than conserved. Indebted governments must promote short-term foreign exchange earners like timber and beef, rather than nurture the long-term growth of local pharmaceutical or consumer goods industries. Environmental protection and labor rights suddenly become "luxury goods" — too costly because they might drive away transnational investors like Disney or Chiquita. Entire nations are turned into export platforms, where human labor and natural resources are transformed into the foreign exchange needed to repay external debts.

SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT OF A DEVELOPING COUNTRY BALK, should they attempt to restrict access to their resources, or place limits on the removal of funds, the IMF steps in to remind them who's in charge. With an arrogance WTO bureaucrats can only marvel at, IMF officials dispense with the slightest pretense of openness or even-handedness in debt negotiations. Voting shares in the IMF are sewn up by the G-7 (the U.S. alone controls nearly a fifth of the votes). Debt agreements are hammered out in lengthy secret meetings between affected governments and high-ranking IMF officials. Dictators and popularly elected officials alike suffer public humiliation, as the IMF imposes loan conditions that strip countries of sovereignty, dismantle public employment, welfare and pension systems, or force dramatic transformations in the target countries' legal and political systems.

There is very little wrong with the global economy that can be made right without fundamental and thorough-going reform of the global financial system. Moreover, there is little wrong with the global financial system that could not, with sufficient political will, easily be made right. The IMF's own Articles of Agreement, hammered out by John Maynard Keynes and Harry Dexter White in the 1940s, contain many laudable ideas for global financial restructuring — ideas that were never put into practice. Numerous international financial experts, like Jane D'Arista of the Financial Markets Center in the U.S. and John Eatwell of Cambridge University, have developed well-conceived workable plans for reform. The G-24, representing developing countries, called last year for broad-based international meetings to plan financial reform, as has the European Union and numerous NGOs.

But such calls cannot overcome U.S. obstructionism. U.S. and IMF intransigence impede even the most minimal financial reform gestures. Years of high-level discussion and blue-ribbon studies on African debt, for example, have had no impact. The IMF's plan to partially forgive debts of such desperately poor countries as Mozambique is so tangled in attached strings, extended waiting periods and conditionality that it amounts to no relief at all. In the meantime, IMF and U.S. Treasury officials actively prod larger economies — like Brazil, Indonesia, or Ecuador — to "liberalize" their financial sectors and attract foreign investor dollars with the lure of high interest rates or casino-style stock exchanges. When investors panic and flee, the IMF arranges "bailouts" in which affected governments underwrite losses, usually by borrowing from the IMF, leaving their countries mired in debt.

Is it any wonder that representatives of developing countries scoffed when Clinton called for international labor standards in the WTO? That delegates of poor nations yawn when Clinton or Blair exhort CEOs and other big-wigs about the "unintended costs" of globalization and the need to look out for those "left behind"? Officials of developing countries perceive, correctly, that these calls for reform are opportunistic political gestures, intended to mollify first-world labor groups. To be sure, government leaders in developing countries are often corrupt opportunists themselves, cynically complaining of ruinous debts and first-world oppression while secretly conspiring to sell out their citizens. But this does not mean that they are wrong about the real intentions of the U.S. government and its allies in the IMF. If the U.S. were serious about the plight of impoverished workers in poor countries, our officials would not be convening meetings to extend the mandate of the WTO. They would be initiating broad-based negotiations to reform and democratize the international financial system.

The Road Ahead

AS THE GROUNDSWELL OF OPPOSITION TO GLOBALIZATION GROWS, pro-globalization officials will no doubt offer up compromises. A working group here, an investigative commission there. Pundits otherwise unalterably opposed to government "interference" in the economy will weigh in for limited regulations to protect the poorest and weakest from the market's excesses. This process is already well underway. Limited debt relief for very poor countries is on the table. There is talk of easing up on intellectual property laws, so that African nations can obtain drugs to combat AIDS. The object of these limited offers and small concessions is to hamstring the opposition in endless strategic disputes over whether to settle for minor reforms of the system.

What will not be offered up is genuine participation by the public at large. The WTO, World Bank, IMF and other international institutions were specifically and deliberately designed to concentrate power in the hands of the economic elite. The entire globalization project establishing the WTO — pushing trade agreements through legislatures with minimal debate, pressuring country after country to open up financial markets, increasing the power and mandate of the IMF, pushing to extend the scope of NAFTA throughout the Americas, accelerating the entry of China to the WTO — can best be understood as a concerted effort by corporations to establish a body of international laws and a system of international enforcement that will supersede local laws and weaken the ability of citizens to regulate business. The very structure of these institutions is a clear and present danger to democracy. Popular accountability and democratic access in international affairs must be the over-arching and uncompromising goal of the opposition.

An essential part of achieving such an ambitious goal must be to democratize the U.S. For American residents the old adage “think globally, act locally” is still particularly relevant. The U.S. government is the major stumbling block to genuine reform in the international arena. It is the U.S. government, not alone but more than any other, that controls the IMF and dictates policy, that harangues the entire world to “open up” economies to transnational investment. The U.S. stymies all efforts to address in a humane and rational manner the environmental consequences of economic development, by blocking and bottling up international accords on global warming and energy policy. The U.S. contemptuously disdains to ratify conventions on labor standards agreed upon by the United Nation’s International Labor Organization and, indeed, refuses even to pay its debt to the UN.

When poorer countries attempt to exert some control over their own economic destinies by, for example, restricting foreign borrowing or imposing local content standards on manufactured goods, the U.S. orders them to cease and desist, threatening loss of access to the U.S. market or a cut-off of credit. And, of course, the U.S. has financed troops and trained torturers to put down strikes and protests all over the world.

This is not to say that international solidarity and global organizing efforts should be neglected. But those engaged in protesting globalization need to be aware that it is not simply the global institutions that need fixing. Global institutions are creatures of national governments and national governments must still be held to account. Local politics still matters. Union organizing matters. The governance and accountability of nation states matters. And the U.S. government matters most of all. People all over the world would breathe a huge sigh of relief if Americans could get their own house in order.

Anti-Global, *No*
Anti-Capitalist, *Yes*

Martin Thomas

CAPITALIST GLOBALIZATION EMERGES FROM LONG-TERM TRENDS. It is not, or at least not primarily, a sudden about-turn in economic life with a precise watershed somewhere between 1979 and 1992. Technology has made it a lot less expensive to transport commodities from country to country. More of trade is in manufactured commodities, and less, proportionately, in bulk materials. The greater average value-per-kilogram makes longer-distance trade more economical. The communications necessary for global networks of production and marketing are very much cheaper and easier. In more and more industries, a nationally-limited network of production is now unviably small-scale.

Without those long-term technical developments — and some political and social developments, too — the financial globalization of the last two decades, the giddy whirl of short-term international trading in currencies, shares and bonds, would not have acquired such momentum and importance. Financial globalization has played a big role in shaping the depressive slant of capitalist development since the early 1980s — the relentless bias of capitalist state policy towards low inflation, relatively high interest rates, and short-term profits. It took off very rapidly indeed in the early 1980s, with the abolition of exchange controls. But financial globalization is not the fundamental driving force of the broader "globalist" processes, the increasing organization of production, trade, and communications in international networks.

The European Monetary Union has seriously suppressed the whirl of the international financial markets in Europe, yet cross-border trade and investment there continue to expand. The 1980s, the period of the first dramatic expansion of the international financial markets, were also a time of relatively slack international flows of direct investment. So financial globalization is a particular aspect of broader processes. It is not their driving force. Dealing with capitalist globalization is not just a matter of beating down cliques of finance-traders.

When Sweden dramatically abandoned full employment and embraced welfare cuts in late 1990, *The Financial Times* commented: "the international money markets have become the arbiters of Sweden's future, not the Social Democratic ideologues" (October 27, 1990). But in general it is not true that capitalist globalization means states losing power to markets, or to private corporations. Countries are integrated into the global markets by deliberate decisions of their

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states. Those decisions are made in the perceived interests of the capitalist classes which sustain those states (or, at least, of the weightiest and most powerful sections of those capitalist classes). They are not forced on them by other states or by particular private corporations. States line up to join the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization. They do that because they are stronger — more able to define a sharp-edged concept of the general interest of profit-making and to enforce it — not because they are weaker.

Technical: improved transport and communications, increasing industrial complexity. Social and political: for the first time, almost every country in the world is now capitalist, with wage-labor as the basis of decisive sectors of production, some industrial infrastructure, and a functioning bourgeois state.* Result: globalization.

The "import-substitution-industrialization" strategy, pursued with some success by some Latin American states in the mid 20th century, has reached the end of its historical rope. It depended on taxing landed oligarchies or primary-product-export oligarchies to raise resources to build manufacturing industries (replacing imported manufactures) under cover of import controls. Today, manufactured commodities dominate world trade, and dominate exports for a very wide range of countries. Outside of the oil-exporters and maybe a few others, there are no countries offering obvious openings for a populist policy of financing aid to an up-and-coming class of manufacturing capitalists, producing replacements for goods previously imported as luxuries, and concessions to the working class, from taxes on a lucrative primary-product export industry run by an old oligarchy.

TO RESPOND TO CAPITALIST GLOBALIZATION BY SEEKING TO RESTORE OR REINVIGORATE the national states is thus to misunderstand it. It is also false, I think, to see capitalist globalization as a process of the overwhelming of all other states by one particular state, the United States, and the big corporations based in the U.S. Since the collapse of the USSR, the U.S. has certainly become the world's only military superpower. In recent years, capitalism in the United States has done somewhat better economically than capitalism in the European Union and Japan. But that is partly thanks to capitalists based in the EU and Japan buying up chunks of capital in the U.S. The balance of the evidence is that the long-term trend of the last half-a-century for a decline in the United States' relative economic dominance continues.

Capitalist globalization is not a world conquered by the U.S., or a world of states overwhelmed by markets and corporations, or a world of production being overwhelmed by financial markets. It is not capital turned American, or capital turned stateless, or capital turned financial. It is capital writ large. The actual process is not the only way capital could have written itself large. The particular

*In my view, the Stalinist states were a form of state-*capitalism* even in their heyday. But — contrary to the conclusion of most theorists of Stalinism-as-state-capitalism in the 1940s — they represented not the highest form of capitalism, not a forward extrapolation of the trends of advanced capitalism, but an aberrant form of capitalism tied to crude initial industrialization. Hence their states were, though capitalist, not quite *bourgeois* in the sense of bourgeois rule-of-law. See my article, "Globalization and its discontents," *Workers' Liberty* 50-51, October 1998.

evolution of the regimes of international finance has shaped it. So, perhaps more importantly, have the missed opportunities of the working class in the 1970s, and the outright defeats of the 1980s. It is not a benign process. It writes large the vices of capitalism — inequality, pauperization, uneven development. It must be combated by global solidarity — not by seeking to turn back the clock, or by appealing to illusory allies (other states against the United States, states in general against the markets, industrial capitalists against financial capitalists).

Capitalists have long used migrant workers and the unemployed to beat down employed workers. Work harder, longer, and cheaper, or the capitalist will find someone else, cheaper and more pliant, to replace you — on the streets or off the boats! Or, now, with globalization — in another country.

In labor history, one answer to the capitalists' use of the unemployed and migrants has been crony-unionism (reserving jobs for a chosen section of the working class). Another has been support for anti-immigrant legislation. Both were self-defeating in any but the short term and destructive of socialist politics in any term at all. The solid answer always was and is united organization of the employed and unemployed, and of native workers and migrants, to demand improvements for both sections. The battles in France since 1995, where unions and unemployed organizations have combined — sometimes by staging "invasions" of the unemployed into workplaces — to demand shorter hours with a guarantee of new hirings, are a recent example of the feasibility of that socialist response.

The same goes for the capitalists' use of other countries. The answer is internationalism, united organization of workers in different countries. One of the best things about the tremendous Seattle and Washington demonstrations was that their dominant mood was not "America First," but for global solidarity and a new internationalism. Of course it will take much discussion and debate to work out exactly what this global solidarity and new internationalism mean, and how they can be organized. Organizing that global solidarity is not a task of a few minutes, any more than uniting the employed and unemployed or natives and migrants ever has been. Yet some preconditions have been laid down. More countries world-wide have real independent trade-union movements than ever before (though some are very weak). The technical revolutions in communications are potentially of much greater import to workers' movements than to the rich, who could always afford air fares, telexes, international phone calls, and so on. Some trade union movements, especially the Korean, have started using them systematically for international solidarity. Web sites, notably Eric Lee's *www.laborstart.org*, provide world-wide information on workers' struggles in a way never possible before.

"Internationalism" is not the whole answer to every particular struggle. If capitalists threaten to move jobs to another country — or to fire the whole workforce and replace it with recruits from the unemployed — the appropriate immediate answer may be to call their bluff, or to seize the workplace and the machinery and use them as bargaining chips. The long-term program of uniting workers, employed and unemployed, native and migrant, and across national borders, is not dispensable, but it is not to be counterposed to immediate struggles either.

Governments in countries with lower wages, restricted trade-union rights, and fewer social guarantees use those as selling points to attract multinational investment. Not only Third World governments do that, but also, for example, Ireland and Britain, "selling" themselves as lower-cost production sites in Europe. How can labor be internationalist if we do not demand leveling-up of standards, and as much legislative force as can be achieved for that leveling-up? Maybe rich-country labor movements demanding international guarantees of labor standards will seem to be, or actually be, "covering for" rich-country protectionism. The antidote is to ensure that trade unions in the poorer countries are seen to take the lead in the demands for "leveling-up," and to link the demands with calls for a transfer of funds from the richer countries to the poorer ones to reduce the "comparative disadvantage" of the latter in infrastructure, education, and so on.

Such a transfer actually exists — in a very corrupt, bureaucratic form — in the European Union. In fact, over the decades of European integration, labor movements in Europe, on the whole, have proved strong enough, despite lamentably feeble international coordination, to make the "leveling-up" of wages consequent on that integration more a leveling-up than a leveling-down. Spanish wages have risen much closer to German wages, and not by German wages being beaten down in the same way as U.S. wages.

Those U.S. wages have been beaten down by U.S. capitalists, not by Korean or Chinese workers, and mainly by the employers' offensive within the U.S., where wage rates for jobs which cannot be moved to Third World countries — janitors, retail workers, etc. — have been pushed down just as much as those for those which can. World-wide, there has not been a down-down of wages. There has not been a down at all. Workers in some previously low-wage countries have won big improvements thanks to strong and courageous union organization (South Korea being the prime example), but overall, averages of income have become more unequal between countries, rather than more equal.

IT IS NOT TRUE THAT INDUSTRIALIZATION MUST FOLLOW LOW WAGES. The Australian *Financial Review Magazine* (April 2000) reports on how over the last 25 years hundreds of thousands of textile, clothing and footwear jobs have been moved from Australia to China and other south-east Asian countries. "Chinese factories... pay workers at 69 cents an hour when the hourly rate in Australia is $11.50." But the calculation is not as simple as it seems. Most capitalists do not go where the wages are lowest. Most industry is still in relatively high-wage countries. Very little multinational industrial investment goes to the lowest-wage countries. Taiwan, Korea, Mexico and Brazil, with their relatively higher wages and stronger unions, have faster-growing industry than Africa. Availability of skilled labor and nearby markets, and networks of transport, communication, supply, services and distribution, are generally much more important for capitalists in choosing production sites than wage levels alone.

Naturally, multinational capitalists would not like it if Chinese workers' wages doubled, their hours were shortened and their factories made safe, and they gained legal freedom to organize trade unions. It does not follow that the multinationals would cease to invest there. If the improvements for workers went together with a clear-out of bureaucratic corruption, a cutback in China's huge military establishment, and the establishment of a more-or-less clear and reliable rule of law, then investment might well even increase. And if it didn't?

The resources currently siphoned off by China's bureaucratic and military establishment are ample to generate a continuing rapid expansion of Chinese industry.

THERE IS NO WAY TO PURSUE WORKING-CLASS STRUGGLE WITHOUT ANNOYING or disturbing capital, or risking reprisals. Improvements in one workplace — or in one country — may be met by "strikes of capital." But by fighting for improvements, workers increase their confidence, organization and solidarity, increase their chances of making general political and social gains, and push the capitalists into technical and social investments they would not otherwise make. This argument — necessary against "give-backs" in every workplace — is surely even more true for improvements won or defended in whole countries than for those won or defended in particular workplaces. A large general rise in wages in Brazil, for example, could not conceivably happen without a great strengthening of the labor movement in Brazil which in turn would have a great range of further effects, and not just in Brazil. It would create conditions for a more successful international resistance to the rules of profit, even if it did trigger a "strike of capital." And it is not at all certain that capital would find it feasible or advisable to respond by a "strike."

Trade-union militancy has won huge increases in wages in South Korea — it must have been one of the fastest wage-upswings in any country at any time in world history — and capital has not stopped investing there.

Aid and debt relief are not sufficient for the industrialization of poorer countries. By themselves they can well lead to nothing much but the enrichment of a government and crony-capitalist elite, and the expansion of military establishments and prestige construction projects. Wider benefits in those poorer countries depend on the development of labor and popular movements strong enough to shift government policies. At best, the benefits from aid and debt relief are by-products of a process driven fundamentally by the self-interest of capitalist states (military alliances, construction and supply contracts, straightening out international banks' balance-sheets, etc.). The details are decided at so great a distance from any democratic processes that it is foolish to imagine that lobbying and petitioning from below can change that fundamentally within a stable capitalist regime. Even the meager by-products, however, may be very important for some of the poorest countries. Korea and Taiwan owe their dramatic economic lift-off in large part to "aid" militarily-motivated from the United States. And any socialist world policy must include massive, democratically-controlled aid from the richer countries to the poorer. The fundamental socialist answer remains not to petition the billionaires to please invest some of their wealth in this place rather than that one, or to dispense a little more in philanthropy, but to take the billions from them and put them under democratic social control.

Transitional demands along those lines might include: opening the books of the multinationals; information and veto powers for international shop stewards' committees over multinationals' investment plans; action by international shop stewards' committees to demand "leveling-up" of wages and conditions; aid from rich countries to poor ones under the control of workers' and community organizations in those countries, and along the lines of workers' reconstruction plans worked out by those organizations; taxing the rich to finance workers' reconversion and reconstruction plans in countries where industry is shutting down, and so on. All these, and others, flow from a general approach of working for workers' control over social wealth, rather than petitioning the World Bank, IMF, WTO or whomever to act more charitably.

To oppose globalization flat-out is, I think, a dead-end. Obviously socialists should support and promote protests like the Seattle and Washington demonstrations against today's capitalist globalization. I think the message we should advocate within those protests is not "stop globalization," or "halt globalization at all costs until labor is strong enough to impose its own global alternatives," but rather "fight capitalism within its process of globalization by building global solidarity to work toward socialist globalization."

Globalization may possibly go into reverse, with a new era of heightened economic barriers between nations, in the event of a catastrophic crisis of the world financial system, but that would be no boon for workers or for socialist politics. Short of that, so long as the capitalist classes and their states are strong enough to rule, they will for the foreseeable future maintain globalization. To attempt to roll back globalization would be as futile as attempting to impose a general ban on cost-cutting technology. It would only strengthen nationalist prejudices in the world's labor movements, and thus make us less able to deal with global capital now. In a socialist future, we would not want to roll back globalization. "Anti-globalization" is as much a dead-end as the stance of voting "no to Europe," or favoring withdrawal from the European Union, taken by most of the British and Irish left in the 1970s, or the opposition to a single European currency on principle by much of the European left today.

What can be done, instead, is to fight against capitalism within its process of globalization, and for working-class globalization. Our anti-capitalist efforts may hinder the actual capitalist process of globalization, but that is a different matter from setting out to halt or roll back globalization as such. A workers' government in any country would need "protectionist" controls on foreign trade and money movements. In some poorer countries "import-substitution industrialization" may not be as obsolete as it is generally. And there are circumstances, in many countries, where a very sudden and brutal abolition of "protectionism" would mean sudden ruin or even starvation for workers in a particular industry, or small farmers, with very little chance to organize for alternatives.

IN THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES, CONTINUED "PROTECTIONISM," or a gradual reduction instead of a sudden abolition, will be demanded by the capitalist interests tied up with the sector too, to give them a chance to reconvert without ruin. It is not our business to come out against them by being free-trade fanatics. It is our business to explain to the workers and small farmers that tariffs and import controls are no long-term solution. Clinging to such controls cuts against the necessary alliances with the workers and small farmers of other countries. Their best answer is a workers' reconstruction or reconversion plan. Workers' reconstruction plans were proposed by revolutionary socialists in Europe after World War II, and the capitalist governments there actually carried out capitalist reconstruction plans, rather than leaving reconversion for peacetime to the free play of the markets. In the 1970s in the UK, there was a small spate of workers' reconversion plans for particular enterprises — Lucas Aerospace and Vickers.

Should we seek to reform the WTO, IMF, and so on, or abolish them? On one side it can be argued that the process of capitalist globalization is ineluctable (short of socialist revolution). It is progressive, in the sense used by Marxists to describe capitalist development as progressive, i.e. not that it is a good thing, to be applauded and supported, but that it pushes along the contradictions in society and increases the potentialities for working-class socialist transformation. It is less destructive than the only real capitalist alternative, a world of higher barriers and sharper conflicts between nations.

On the other hand, it can be argued that the WTO and IMF actually function as shock-troops to open up the whole world as a free-fire zone for the multinationals and the international banks, with the consequent destruction of livelihoods and state-welfare protection for many millions of workers and small farmers and the razing of environmental and safety regulations. They are not public institutions of the sort which, susceptible to more or less direct elected control, can be reformed in the various functioning national bourgeois-democratic polities. They are the peaks of a structure whose foundations are chiefly in the permanent unelected state bureaucracies of the strongest nations. They can be blocked or deflected on this or that particular issue, but no amount of lobbying can positively transform them in a major way.

Both arguments are true, I think. The alternatives are false. We cannot choose between reforming or abolishing the WTO and IMF any more than we can choose between reforming or abolishing the Federal Reserve. Instead, our job is to build an alternative, socialist, framework for international economic coordination, and in the first place to build the international working-class links necessary to underpin the battle against the existing frameworks and for a new one.

What we need to abolish is not just the IMF, the WTO, and the World Bank, or globalization — but capitalism. We must build up the global workers' solidarity which can win battles against global capital now and establish socialist globalization in the future.

On “Engaging Power”: An Interview with Saskia Sassen

Question: *In Seattle, some Third World governments argued that proposed labor and environmental standards would have the effect of denying their countries needed foreign investment. Are they right? Are there ways to insure public, social investment in poorer countries if they reduce their “comparative advantage” in substandard wages, working conditions, and environmental regulation, and thus lose private investment? Do aid and debt relief offer sufficient answers*?

Answer: Yes, there are ways for developing countries to obtain needed social investment while adhering to labor and environmental values, but this requires enormously innovative work and the political will to carry it through. Implementing such standards would, at least initially, raise the costs of producing goods and services for local firms and for foreign firms either directly operating there or using local subcontractors — which is where the threat of losing competitiveness sets in. It would take a concerted effort on the part of developing countries to implement such standards, at least in those sectors that are export market oriented or in the hands of foreign firms. Capital will shun poor countries that try to maintain decent labor and environmental standards — unless all poor countries join together to insist on the same standards. The highly developed countries have worked at such concerted efforts in order to institute a whole variety of policies that make the existence of a global capital market possible, and that secures certain guarantees for firms operating in developing countries. They made their cake and ate it. Why can’t developing countries do this? (Remember OPEC in the 1970s — it stunned the rich oil-importing countries. Too bad the money was not better used by the exporting countries.)

I think there are at least two extremely important issues here that are part of the picture. First, the lack of alternative conceptions to the neo-liberal norm for thinking about development among the leadership in the developing countries. This is in good part due to the fact that government and corporate elites in many of the developing countries are becoming integrated into the zone of prosperity that globalization produces. These elites are developing vested interests that coincide with the process of economic globalization. This alters the political

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landscape radically: there was a time when, in Latin America, for instance, the leadership was deeply nationalistic, against privatizing public sector firms and strongly against allowing foreign ownership. These elites were by no means devoted to the well being of their people, but they had an alternative conception that they could use to confront U.S. transnationals. That is gone among these new elites. This tells me that the leadership will have to come from somewhere else — from various domains of activism and from social movements.

The Seattle and Washington protests were so important because they signaled that the leadership and the energy are there — the willingness to confront and engage power and to fight for what might seem an impossible objective. They signal that it can be done; making these voices present has already had an impact on mobilizing more and more people who may have wondered how one can fight concentrated power. It has had an impact as well on many elites — you hear more and more talk of the "problem" of inequality — though there are of course risks of this type of discourse becoming a platitude on the part of entrenched elites.

***Q:** Workers in wealthier countries fear that they are losing jobs to workers in countries with lower wages and labor standards, and will lose further ground as globalization continues. Are these concerns grounded in reality? If so, are there ways to have full employment and high wages in more affluent countries without hindering the economic development of poorer countries? What is the relationship between the economic well-being of workers in wealthier countries and the living standards of workers in the Third World?*

A: People in the highly developed countries need to support the efforts of less developed countries to find the way to resist the race to the bottom. From the research I have been doing on the global economy over the last 15 years I see it is constituted through multiple highly specialized cross-border institutional domains. So one way of thinking about organizing and doing political work is to unpack the global economy into these specialized domains and launch actions and do organizing and educational work inside each of them. The world of human rights activists is different from that of environmentalists, from that of first-nation people struggling for direct representation in international fora, from that of feminists struggling for certain types of women's rights. Yet the overall impact is one that goes in a shared direction. Well, we can see the same in the global economy: the world of anti-trust regulators is different from that of international arbitrators, from that of the crowd working on international accounting standards, from those working on making new law at the World Trade Organization, from the financial services firms, from the legal services firms, from the telecommunications services, and so on.

It just strikes me that we should think of organizing around the issues you raise in the first two questions on these multiple, specialized fronts, with a common objective of instituting labor standards, environmental standards, accountability standards, etc. We cannot hope to bring the concentrated system of power to its knees by engaging it from the outside so to speak, though we need to keep on doing this — as in Washington and Seattle. We need to work also from the inside (and use all those knowledgeable lefty academics, lawyers, journalists).

The implementation of agreements such as NAFTA also constructs a zone that can be entered to launch actions that are different from those that the creators of the institutional framework intended. In fact, I could say that after years of not knowing how to handle it, U.S. labor has now found a way to engage in joint efforts with workers in Mexico within the framework of NAFTA.

***Q:** Is "protectionism" sometimes justified? By richer countries? Poorer countries?*

B: That is a tough one. I think we need a better understanding of what made protectionism work and for whom. It worked to bring about an expanded middle class and empowered working class because the mode of economic growth was deeply embedded in the necessity of internal mass consumption: the wages and salaries of workers mattered for economic growth. Today, this has changed: intermediary consumption has become enormously important (that is, firm-to-firm buying); luxury niche markets are increasingly important for final consumption; and finance has created a mode of wealth production that does not really need the large masses of workers. So I am not sure that under current conditions protectionism would have the positive effects it had in the 40s, 50s, and 60s in the U.S., for example, or in some of the Latin American countries.

Second, protectionism and that particular form of economic growth left many people out — we know that was the case for many African-Americans and whites in the U.S. — and it benefited women less than men, etc. And it enriched a limited number of capitalists enormously. So we need to find alternatives to protectionism. Also, protectionism is too deeply intertwined with the national, and I am not so keen on strengthening the national. On the contrary. I think that thinking/acting across borders, partly disembedding identity from the national, all of this is important for the new era that we are entering. The national state produced war, refugees, exclusions, fanaticisms moving men and boys to go kill other men and boys. . . . There has got to be a better formula.

We need to repossess our states and use them as administrative capacities rather than nation-states.

***Q:** How can economic growth and development be pursued without further damage to the environment? Can existing environmental damage be reversed in ways that are compatible with economic expansion?*

A: This is a complicated, difficult question. I would like to refer readers here to a new *Encyclopedia for Sustainable Development* I am co-editing with Peter Marcotullio, which has contributions from over 100 researchers and specialists from around the world. This is a multifaceted issue with many different angles and combinations of possibilities, and no one country or situation provides the definitive answer. An example of the kind of answer that is possible is the fact that many cities in rich countries have succeeded in improving their air quality even as they have a growing number of cars.

***Q:** How realistic is it to envision effective international regulation of corporations and investors to ensure protection of labor and the environment? Even if you think it is unrealistic, is it politically useful to demand such regulation as a way to raise consciousness and project a long-term progressive alternative to the status quo? Are there any dangers to making demands on corporate-dominated governments to* *involve themselves, even in economic support, for Third World countries? Are there ways to raise demands for support to the Third World that avoid those dangers?*

A: Yes, I believe international regulation can be effective, but it will take work and inventing new instruments — legal, administrative, etc. But then, capital had to do a lot of inventing of new instruments to reconstitute itself as global capital. There is work to be done. And yes, we must demand such regulation. Look at the activities of students against sweatshops: over 30 universities have now signed on to the anti-sweatshop effort. This is a good example of a specialized focus: the initial effort is to get universities to regulate the production of apparel that will carry the label of the university to ensure that no sweatshops are involved. This is a micro-site in each case, but through strategic alliances it becomes a multi-site effort. This is happening in many domains. It is grassroots globalization and grassroots regulatory work. It is one element in the picture. Legislatures and judiciaries are also enormously important.

Q: *Should progressives and the left campaign for the reform of the IMF, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization, or fight for their abolition?*

A: I used to think we should abolish the whole bunch. But I have changed my mind on this. Having done so much research on the new private systems of "justice" and governance that global capital is inventing and instituting, I have come to see that we must keep supranational organizations going. But they have got to become more representative, democratic, accountable, etc. That is what this current struggle is about. I think there is great potential here. Because the World Trade Organization is supranational, 132 ministers of trade met in Seattle and WTO could become a target for protest. If it were a private system of governance, this could not have happened — and believe me, there are multiple private systems of governance that are being instituted as we speak. And we have no access to them. One of our efforts must be to get the current supranational institutions that you and I pay for to be responsive in a far more direct way to mechanisms for representation of a far broader range of claims than is the case today.

Globalization: Beyond Reaction, Thinking Ahead

Robin Hahnel

FOR THE PAST 20 YEARS, UNDER THE BANNER OF NEOLIBERALISM, multinational corporations have increasingly succeeded in rewriting the rules governing the global economy ever more to their liking. In the 1980s corporations were assisted by conservative governments like those of Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan, and Helmut Kohl. In the 1990s the supposedly liberal governments of Tony Blair, Bill Clinton, and Gerhard Schroeder helped corporations rewrite the rules governing international trade and investment, and reorient the policies of the IMF, World Bank, and GATT/WTO. Like every process of corporate-dominated expansion of the market system before it, this most recent process of corporate-sponsored globalization promises efficiency gains and (trickle down) benefits for all, but actually misdirects productive potentials, benefits the few at the expense of the many, and accelerates environmental degradation. Fortunately, like every previous expansion of capitalism it also spawns critics and opponents as victims begin to recognize themselves as such.

The protests against the WTO in Seattle announced, and the demonstrations against the IMF and World Bank in Washington D.C. confirmed, that a full-fledged movement opposed to corporate-sponsored globalization has finally emerged in the U.S. to join the international movement that raised its voice earlier. Given the fact that the coalition of victims of corporate-sponsored globalization includes workers in different industries and occupations in different kinds of economies, farmers and peasants in different kinds of economies, environmentalists with different analyses and priorities, and citizens whose human, political, and labor rights have been undermined in different countries, it should come as no surprise that there are different ideas about how best to oppose the global corporate juggernaut. I applaud the editors of *New Politics* for organizing this symposium, where contributors are asked to address some of the hard questions concerning the demands our movement should make and the reforms we should fight for. I approach your questions based on three convictions about corporate-sponsored globalization and one "value judgment."

Conviction #1: The "real" global economy — production, consumption, and economic investment — is increasingly held hostage by a system of global wealth

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management that is more and more unstable and prone to crisis. In the early 1990s the IMF and World Bank, at the behest of the U.S. Department of the Treasury, worked hard to create a disaster waiting to happen. In country after country IMF delegations used carrots and sticks to ply amenable governments and to force reluctant governments to eliminate restrictions on not only international business investment, but on the inflow and outflow of speculative, short-run liquid capital. A mushrooming pool of liquid global wealth, created by record profits due to stagnant wages, downsizing and mega mergers, as well as rapid increases in technological innovation, was suddenly free to move wherever and whenever it wished at the click of a mouse on a computer screen.

Moreover, financial liberalization and deregulation in the advanced economies meant that much of this liquid global wealth, managed by 30-year-old recent MBAs knowing little about the "emerging market" economies they invested in, was highly leveraged and therefore even more prone to panic and contagion.

There are two rules of behavior in any credit system: Rule #1 is the rule all participants want all *other* participants to follow: DON'T PANIC! Rule #2 is the rule each participant must be careful to follow herself: PANIC FIRST! The neo-liberal global managers have literally created the financial equivalent of the proverbial 900-pound gorilla. Question: Where does the 900-pound gorilla — global liquid wealth — sit? Answer: Wherever it wants! And when a derivative tickles, and investors obey Panic Rule #2 — currencies, stock markets, banking systems, and, most importantly for the rest of us, formerly productive economies, all collapse in their wake. In 1986 $0.2 trillion per day traded on foreign exchange markets. In 1998 the figure was $1.5 trillion — only 2% of which was needed to finance international trade and productive investment, meaning 98% of the $1.5 trillion traded per day in currency markets was purely speculative! In a word, we are now haunted by exactly the danger Keynes warned against at the Bretton Woods conference over 50 years ago — that crises in a highly unstable international financial system could thwart all efforts to increase global production and trade.

Conviction #2: Liberalization of international trade and investment aggravates global inequalities. Whether or not neo-liberal liberalization has produced global efficiency gains is debatable. But there is every reason to believe that liberalization of trade and investment has aggravated inequality between more developed countries (MDCs) and less developed countries (LDCs) by distributing the lion's share of any efficiency gains to the MDCs. As long as capital is scarce globally it is predictable that international trade based on free market prices will distribute more of the efficiency gains to wealthier countries than to poorer countries, and international lending based on free market interest rates will distribute more of the efficiency gains from international investment to wealthier lenders than to poorer borrowers. (See Maddison for empirical evidence, Roemer for theoretical arguments, and Hahnel 1999, chapters 1, 2, and appendix B for empirical and theoretical arguments.)

Conviction #3: The "race to the bottom effect" is real. Liberalization of trade and international investment does put downward pressure on First World wages, labor standards, and environmental standards as it becomes easier for companies to relocate where wages, labor standards, and environmental standards are lower. Moreover, as liberalization in agricultural trade destroys peasant farmers in Third World countries, swelling the ranks of the urban unemployed, Third World peasants and workers do not enjoy the beneficial effect one might otherwise expect from increased international investment and specialization in labor intensive manufacturing in their countries. Instead we have seen declining real wages in countries like Mexico since NAFTA (See Rendon and Salas, tables 19, 20, and 23) as ten former peasants compete for every new job in labor intensive manufacturing (See Landau.) By strengthening the bargaining power of global capital versus any and all with whom it negotiates, liberalization of trade and investment leads to downward pressure on wages, labor standards, and environmental standards in First World *and* Third World countries.

Value Judgment: The worst off deserve the greatest help.

NOW LET ME TURN TO THE QUESTIONS YOU ASKED:

Labor and Environmental Standards

Question*: In Seattle, some Third World governments argued that proposed labor and environmental standards would have the effect of denying their countries needed foreign investment. Are they right? Are there ways to insure public, social investment in poorer countries if they reduce their "comparative advantage" in substandard wages, working conditions, and environmental regulation, and thus lose private investment? Do aid and debt relief provide sufficient answers?*

Answer: Joan Robinson once quipped: "The only thing worse than being exploited by a capitalist is not being exploited by a capitalist." But recognizing the simple truth that being unemployed is worse than being paid too little did not incline her to advise workers to lower their wages! While Third World governments that primarily serve the interests of local elites have reason to preserve, or even expand so-called "comparative advantages" in substandard wages, working conditions, and environmental regulations, workers and citizens of these countries certainly do not. This "low road" development strategy designed to attract foreign investment by abject prostration is not the road Third World workers and citizens should seek to follow. Nobody "needs" foreign investment so badly that they should seek it on such terms. When participation in the international economy demands a price this high, wise buyers walk away. The kind of foreign investment that would only come for these reasons is exactly the kind of foreign investment Third World countries can do better without. The only reason to want foreign investment in the first place is to raise wages, improve working conditions, and restore the environment. If accepting just the opposite is a condition for attaining the foreign aid, how can it be beneficial?

The question then becomes how to generate employment rather than unemployment in LDCs. If the movement against corporate-sponsored globalization succeeds in reorganizing international financial institutions so that they facilitate provision of more public and social investment to LDCs on terms that are actually beneficial to LDCs, all the better. But that is not what the IMF and World Bank are doing at present, and until they or the institutions we replace them with do, LDC governments need to pursue full employment policies themselves. It seems to me that no matter how lacking a country may be in technology and know-how, it is better off pursuing full employment policies at whatever level of productivity can be mustered locally, than begging for international investment based on a "comparative advantage" in misery. If foreign technology or know-how is absolutely essential in some industry, then "buy" it with tax breaks if it cannot be stolen or obtained by purchasing licenses and headhunting. But to "buy" it with lower wages, labor standards, or environmental standards is self-defeating.

Of course more aid and debt relief make possible acquiring more advanced technology and know-how precisely without giving up the reason to want more foreign investment in the first place. And this is why progressives should fight for increased aid (without strings) from the MDCs and for greater debt relief (without strings) from international creditors. But no matter how pathetic international aid and debt relief programs are, and no matter how lacking public and social investment on favorable terms is, LDCs that succumb to the myth of TINA — there is no alternative to the neo-liberal development model — make a fatal mistake. Fiscal and monetary policies aimed at expanding employment, egalitarian reforms that also fortify domestic demand, land reform combined with technical services, credit, and incentives to promote sustainable land management, combined with highly selective interaction with the global economy is a viable alternative. (See MacEwan for a comprehensive alternative to neoliberalism for developing economies.)

However, there is another difficult and contentious issue regarding labor and environmental standards that threatens to divide opponents of corporate-sponsored globalization. First World workers and environmentalists understandably want to establish meaningful and enforceable universal labor and environmental standards. There is debate over whether to do this through reforms within the WTO, IMF, World Bank, or by increasing the power of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and granting international environmental treaties priority over trade treaties. But the key point First World victims of globalization are trying to insist on is that participation in the global economy require adherence to some set of minimal universal labor and environmental standards.

On the other hand, many Third World constituencies who desperately want higher Third World labor and environmental standards themselves resent being dictated to by their exploiters regarding how they must achieve higher standards, and fear that in a global economy where all reasons other than violations of international labor or environmental standards for raising tariffs have been outlawed by treaty agreement, only LDCs will be unarmed in the event of possible future trade wars. They have learned from long experience that First World industries all too often manage to convince their governments to resort to protectionist measures when pressured by competition from Third World imports. They fear that charging violations of labor or environmental standards could become the new pretext for protectionism in the First World, and that they would be left without any means of retaliating since the universal labor and environmental standards would be those already in effect in the First World and all other reasons for raising tariffs in retaliation would have been outlawed by international treaties. Knowing that the international economic playing field is already tilted against them, southerners are understandably nervous about any changes that further disadvantage them relative to northerners.

Before Seattle the AFL-CIO was insensitive to this legitimate concern on the part of southern opponents of corporate-sponsored globalization. But after Seattle U.S. labor launched a Campaign for Global Justice and increased ties with southern groups opposing corporate-sponsored globalization. Now the AFL-CIO is investigating a number of ways to achieve the goal of raising standards in the Third World to prevent the race-to-the-bottom effect in the first world, while protecting Third World workers from unfair protectionism in the future.

Protectionism

Q*: Is "protectionism" sometimes justified? By richer countries? Poorer countries?*

A: "More free trade is always good and more protectionism is always bad." NOT! The conviction that free trade is always good and protectionism always bad is one of the great myths of mainstream trade theory.

First, ignoring distributional issues for the moment, it is not even the case that freer trade always produces efficiency gains and therefore that protectionism imposes efficiency losses. Even in static models, even abstracting from the true social costs of transportation, even abstracting from the adjustment costs of moving resources and people from one industry and location to another, it is only the case that more specialization and trade yields efficiency gains if relative prices inside countries reflect the true social opportunity costs of producing things. Otherwise, comparative advantage as calculated by commercial prices may not be the same as true comparative advantage calculated in terms of true social opportunity costs.

For example, NAFTA led to less shoe production and more corn production in the U.S. and less corn production and more shoe production in Mexico. This was because the price of shoes relative to the price of corn was higher in the U.S. than in Mexico, so reducing Mexican tariffs on corn and U.S. tariffs on shoes reduced profits for corn farming in Mexico and for shoe making in the U.S. while raising profits for shoe making in Mexico and corn farming in the U.S. But the price of making corn in the U.S. did not include the environmental costs of pesticide run off or full price water for agricultural use, much less the positive probability that there will be future costs of genetically modified corn seeds. These are real costs of producing corn the way we grow it here in the U.S. that are not included in the commercial cost of corn. On the other hand, the commercial price of making more shoes in Mexico did not include the social costs of moving Mexicans out of villages into urban slums. In traditional villages Mexicans enjoy centuries-old kinship safety nets and lower exposure to crime and disease. It is not at all clear that if we take these external costs of living in Mexican urban slums and shanty towns into account that Mexico's true comparative advantage is in shoe production, and if we take the environmental external costs of modern corn farming into account the U.S. actually enjoys a comparative advantage in corn production. Therefore, it is not necessarily the case that by promoting more free trade between the U.S. and Mexico NAFTA has yielded efficiency gains rather than losses. (See Barkin 1990 and Barkin *et. al.* 1990.)

Second, even if there is an efficiency gain from freer trade, when the terms of trade are set by free market forces there is every reason to believe that the lion's share of any efficiency gain will be distributed to the country that was better off in the first place. The empirical evidence that the terms of trade have declined for LDCs is so overwhelming that even IMF studies confirm this fact, and theoretical considerations provide every reason to expect this to occur. Predictable differences in the income elasticity of demand for LDC and MCD exports would yield this result. (See Prebisch 1950 and Singer.) A greater degree of unionization and therefore greater downward rigidity in wages in MDCs than LDCs would also shift the terms of trade against LDCs. (See Prebisch 1964.) And even simple static models, where international markets are assumed to be competitive and elasticities of demand are all assumed to be infinite, predict that a greater share of efficiency gains from specialization and trade will go to countries where capital is relatively abundant while a lower share will go to countries where labor is relatively abundant. (See Hahnel 1999, Appendix B, and Roemer.) This important fact about the international economy (which mainstream economists love to ignore) implies that even if commercial prices did reflect true social opportunity costs (which they do not) so that freer trade would invariably produce efficiency gains (rather than sometimes yield efficiency losses), promoting more international trade at free market prices will almost always aggravate economic inequalities between countries.

While international inequality may not concern mainstream economists, it is a major priority for progressive minded people and should thus be reason enough for us to generally oppose more free trade. And it is surely more than enough reason for us to concentrate our attention on both short-run and long-run programs to manage the terms of trade so as to distribute more of the gains from trade to LDCs. Instead of throwing the agenda of the New International Economic Order of the 1970's and UNCTAD into the dustbin of history, we should be studying and improving upon their initiatives to improve the terms of trade for the South. Unless the terms of trade are managed politically rather than determined by market forces, global inequality will continue to increase.

Third, besides aggravating economic inequality *between* countries, more free trade usually aggravates economic inequality *within* countries. There is a theory in mainstream economics developed by Heckscher and Ohlin which predicts that freer trade tends to lower payments to whatever factors of production are *relatively* scarce within a national economy and to raise payments to factors that are *relatively* abundant. Compared to LDCs, in MDCs unskilled labor is relatively scarce and skilled labor is relatively abundant. And, compared to LDCs, in MDCs labor in general is relatively scarce and capital is relatively abundant. There is no reason to doubt the essential logic and relevance of this theory, which predicts that freer trade will put downward pressure on unskilled labor compared to skilled labor in the MDCs, as well as downward pressure on wages in general compared to returns to capital — thereby aggravating inequality within MDCs. But there is good reason to doubt that globalization will produce a beneficial Heckscher-Ohlin effect in LDCs. Heckscher-Ohlin theory predicts that freer trade should tend to raise unskilled wage relative to skilled wages, and raise wages in general relative to returns to capital in LDCs — thereby reducing income inequalities in LDCs. Unfortunately, however, as I indicated above, trade liberalization in agriculture, combined with elimination of restrictions on foreign ownership of land in many LDCs, has dislodged so many peasants from traditional agricultural pursuits that low-skill labor markets have been flooded throughout the Third World. This effect overwhelms the Heckscher-Ohlin effect in LDCs, putting downward pressure on rural and urban wages, thereby increasing returns to employers and landlords and aggravating inequality within LDCs as well as MDCs. (See Gottschalk and Smeeding.)

MOST OF THE MINORITY OF ECONOMISTS WHO RECOGNIZE THAT FREE TRADE is not always beneficial and protectionism not always harmful do not emphasize these first three problems. Instead they start their critique of free trade doctrine with dynamic models and theories of economic development in which protectionism plays an important temporary role. I consider these arguments further reasons to doubt the beneficial effects of freer trade.

Fourth, "new trade theory" and "new growth theory" do *not* predict that free trade necessarily leads to the most rapid economic growth for LDCs, but instead predict a positive role for protectionist measures to guide the development of comparative advantages yielding higher long-run growth trajectories. (See Krugman.) If one prefers simpler models, there is nothing wrong with the old infant industry argument, illustrated in every introductory text by a concavity in a country's production possibility curve giving rise to a suboptimal local maximum where free trade would keep the country producing.

But the most compelling evidence is empirical rather than theoretical. If ever there was need to be reminded that comparative advantages are to be created rather than accepted as acts of God, and that protectionism can play an important role in changing comparative advantages, empirical studies of the relatively few successful cases of national economic development reveal that protectionism almost invariably has, in fact, played a crucial positive role. The Asian development model responsible for the Japanese economic "miracle" of the 1950s and 1960s, and for the Asian "miracles" in South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and Indonesia in the 1980s and 1990s (see Amsden), the German development model in the 19th century (see Schonfield), and even the U.S. development experience in the 19th century, all speak volumes to the positive role protectionism can play for late-comers to the global economy. And for all the criticism import substitution has received from neo-liberals, it remains the case that Latin America has never grown more rapidly than during the period when it was most cut off from international trade and investment during the Great Depression and World War II, and when Latin American governments pursued import substitution policies. Finally, the "other" economic development success stories in the twentieth century — the centrally planned "socialist" economies during their heydays — are hardly testimony to the advantages of opening one's economy internationally or expanding trade based on free market prices.*

These four points provide more than enough reasons for progressives to question the wisdom of freer trade and speak up in defense of some protectionist measures. A more difficult issue is whether progressives should support protectionism in defense of labor and environmental standards in MDCs. Focusing the fight against the race to the bottom on labor and environmental standards is a potentially divisive issue, as explained above, and requires careful analysis.

One question is simply whether actual concessions received are as great as any concessions given. The Clinton Administration is willing to support a work-

*I do not claim that all protectionist measures are beneficial. There are many cases where protectionism is harmful to the economy and beneficial only to owners (and sometimes employees) in a particular industry. More often than not governments protect industries with political clout rather than industries whose protection and promotion would enhance economic development and therefore advance the general interest. But the possibility and reality of counter-productive protectionism should not lead us to condemn protectionism in general.

ing committee on labor standards in the WTO, but only in exchange for further trade liberalization. But a working committee is a far cry from strong, enforceable standards now, while further liberalization conceded in exchange accelerates the race to the bottom. A second question is how much standards would arrest the race to the bottom in any case. Suppose the WTO gave the U.S. the right to ban imports from any country where labor standards were lower than those in the U.S., and the statute was easy to enforce. That is far beyond the wildest dreams of the AFL-CIO leadership, but how much would it diminish the race to the bottom they fear? If the bargaining power of employees outside the U.S. remained the same as before, the race to the bottom effect on U.S. wages would be just as great as before. Granted, the internationalization of U.S. labor standards would protect U.S. labor standards (for the time being), and would give workers everywhere else the same labor standards as those workers enjoy here. But if the new statute did not change the bargaining strength of employees elsewhere, their employers would pass on whatever the higher standards cost them to their employees in the form of lower wages. Presumably if bargaining strength were not changed the pass-through would be 100% since what employers and employees bargain over is the wage/standards package. Employees want higher wages and higher standards. Employers want lower wages and lower standards since both are costs to them. So while lower labor standards elsewhere would no longer contribute to the race to the bottom effect in the U.S., the greater wage gap would produce the same size effect as before!

The conclusion is that only to the extent that universalization of U.S. labor standards increased the bargaining strength of workers elsewhere would it diminish the race to the bottom effect for U.S. workers. I wonder how many who press for labor standards in trade treaties understand this. Moreover, anything that increased the bargaining strength of foreign workers more than universal labor standards would arrest the race to the bottom effect for First World workers more. What if land reform in the Third World increased the bargaining strength of Third World workers in manufacturing industries more than universal labor standards would? This could well be the case because land reform forces employers in the manufacturing sector to pay workers more by decreasing urban migration, and raising the reservation wage *(the lowest wage someone will accept because they have another income option that is at least as good-Ed.).* In this case Third World land reform would be more beneficial to First World workers than universal labor standards. Or what if stopping U.S. military aid to totalitarian regimes in the Third World improved the bargaining strength of Third World workers more than universal labor standards? In this case stopping U.S. military aid would go farther to arrest the race to the bottom effect for U.S. workers than universal labor standards.

Obviously how much any particular labor standard, land reform, or reduction in military aid affects the bargaining strength of Third World workers depends on the actual reform. But the important thing to remember is that the race to the bottom effect depends on how weak labor is elsewhere, period. Any reform, including universal labor standards, affects the race to the bottom effect only to the extent that it affects the strength of Third World labor. There may well be other reforms that would better preserve the wage/labor standards, or just plain living standards of First World workers than fighting to achieve some level of universal labor standards.

Growth vs. the Environment

***Q**: How can economic growth and development be pursued without further damage to the environment? Can existing environmental damage be reversed in ways that are compatible with economic expansion?*

A: It seems to me that this question, as posed, is not a question about globalization at all, but rather a more general question about how we can improve the quality of people's economic lives, eliminate economic inequality, and restore the environment all at the same time. To make a long answer short: We must, and can do this, but we cannot and will not be able to do this as long as we have a corporate-dominated market economy. The environment is not endangered because there are too many people. Nor is the environment endangered because it is impossible to have a very high standard of economic life for everyone without damaging the environment. The environment is endangered because we produce too many of the wrong kinds of economic goods and services in too many of the wrong ways. No, the rest of the world cannot live like Americans without destroying the environment. But then Americans cannot continue to live as we do without destroying the environment. A transportation system centered on the automobile and gasoline, suburban living while commuting to work, an energy system based on fossil fuels, unrecycled packaging — this and other follies are the problem. But as long as we live in a corporate-dominated market economy these follies will persist. And to the extent that corporate-sponsored globalization spreads the most environmentally destructive economic system ever devised to more and more of the globe, globalization will accelerate environmental destruction.

Much of the environment is a common property resource (CPR). And it is a well-known fact that profit-oriented users will over-exploit CPRs. Pollution is a negative external effect of production and consumption in market economies, and it is a well-known fact that market systems over-produce goods with negative external effects associated with their production and/or consumption, which means market systems over-pollute. Pollution reduction is a public good since all benefit from anyone's pollution reduction. Likewise it is a well-known fact that market economies produce too little public goods compared to private goods, which means market systems reduce pollution too little. And the economics of competition and greed drives us all to work and consume too much and enjoy too little leisure. (See Schor 1993 and Schor 1998.) Until we replace our corporate-sponsored market system with some sort of democratic planning that takes environmental costs into account (see Albert and Hahnel), the environment will continue to deteriorate.

IMF/WB/WTO: Fix'em or Nix'em?

***Q**: Should progressives and the left campaign for the reform of the IMF, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization, or fight for their abolition?*

A: One of the hallmarks of capitalism is supposed to be that people who make mistakes get fired and replaced by people whose advice turned out to be correct. Instead, the only head to fall in the aftermath of the East Asian, Russian, Brazilian, and Ecuadorian financial crises has been Joseph Stiglitz, former Chief Economist for the World Bank — who was the lone critical voice within the establishment of IMF policies during the East Asian crisis. In stark contrast, the chief architect of further liberalization in East Asia, recession-aggravating conditionality agreements, and blame-the-victim pontificating, Stanley Fischer, was nominated for a promotion from second to top gun at the IMF by U.S. Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers and President Clinton. With no sign of meaningful reform at the IMF or World Bank in sight, the place to start is to weaken the power of these institutions to do harm. And the next step will be to revitalize and re-empower UNCTAD and the United Nations as a major player in attempts to reorganize the international economy — as recommended by Walden Bello, professor of sociology at the University of the Philippines and long-time spokesperson for the Global South. While imperfect, to say the least, UNCTAD and the UN are much more responsive to the interests of the global majority than the IMF/WB/WTO holy trinity. Until the IMF/WB/WTO are succeeded by UNTAD/UN as the center of reform efforts we cannot even begin to replace the economics of competition and greed with the economics of equitable cooperation.

The Great Global Asset Swindle

IS IT ANY SURPRISE THAT THE LEAST-NOTICED EFFECT of the East Asian economic crisis among Western economists is that Western multinational corporations and banks bought up East Asia's most attractive assets at bargain basement prices? What may be the greatest global asset swindle of all time worked like this: International investors lost confidence in a number of Asian economies, dumping their currencies, bonds, and stocks. At the insistence of the IMF, in an unsuccessful attempt to protect the currency the central banks in these afflicted economies tightened the money supply to boost domestic interest rates so as to prevent further capital outflows. Even healthy domestic companies could no longer obtain or afford loans, so they joined the ranks of bankrupted domestic businesses available for purchase. As a precondition for receiving the IMF bailout the governments abolished restrictions on foreign ownership of corporations, banks, and land. With a dramatically depreciated local currency, and a long list of bankrupt but highly productive local businesses, the once high flying East Asian "miracle" economies were ready for the acquisition experts from Western multinational corporations and banks, who came to the fire sale with a thick wad of almighty dollars in their pockets. Nicholas Kristof explained the implications of this in an article titled "Asian's Doors Now Wide Open to American Business" in the *New York Times* on February 1, 1999:

> "This is a crisis, but it is also a tremendous opportunity for the U.S.," said Muthiah Alagappa, a Malaysian scholar at the East-West Center in Honolulu. "This strengthens the position of American companies in Asia." A clear indication that the Asian crisis would further the American agenda came in December, when 102 nations agreed to open their financial markets to foreign companies beginning in 1999. It is unclear how the pact will be carried out, but it marks an important victory for the U.S., which excels in banking, insurance and securities. Fundamentally that agreement and other changes are coming about because Asian countries, their economies gasping, are now less single-minded in their concern about maintaining control. Desperate for cash, they are less able to pick and choose, less able to withstand American or monetary fund demands that they open up.

The great global asset swindle has not been confined to East Asia, and is not yet over. Western progressives should not underestimate the damage from this aspect of neo-liberal globalization, nor the resentment it causes among Third World constituencies.

China and the WTO

THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT AGAINST CORPORATE-SPONSORED GLOBALIZATION has every reason and right to oppose China's entry into the WTO. But it is important to do so for the right reason. Anyone who looks at the terms of the deal struck between the Chinese government and the Clinton administration in November 1999 should be able to recognize that the deal is detrimental to the interests not only of American workers, but to the interests of 85% of the Chinese people as well. (See Hahnel 2000.) It is a deal that benefits major U.S. multinational corporations that would receive major investment concessions in China, at the expense of American workers, since China's membership in the WTO would dramatically accelerate the "race to the bottom" effect on U.S. wages and working conditions. It is a deal that benefits the most nimble among the Chinese Communist Party elite, who would get far richer than they have ever been before and have an easier time passing their wealth and power on to their children, at the expense of hundreds of millions of Chinese peasants who would be thrown off the land and hundreds of millions of Chinese workers whose state-owned enterprises would shut down. In other words, we should oppose the deal because it benefits the most powerful and rich in the U.S. and China at the expense of the worst off in both countries.

While it is true that the Chinese government is a major violator of human and labor rights, this is not reason to oppose China's entry into the WTO. Whether or not they should be, the fact is that observance of human and labor rights are *not* conditions for membership in the WTO. Moreover, many of the 135 current members of the WTO have governments that are gross violators of human and labor rights and nobody is calling for their expulsion. While progressives everywhere should denounce human and labor rights violations everywhere, including in China, to hold *only* China to such standards for WTO membership is simply illogical. Moreover, the hypocrisy of the U.S. Congress appointing itself prosecutor, judge, jury, and executioner regarding the human and labor rights violations of any other government is inescapable — given its own dismal record of blatant violations of human rights and international treaty obligations whenever they are deemed in conflict with U.S. corporate or military interests.

The Movement is Everything

IT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO BUILD A MOVEMENT CORRECTLY than to have a "correct" analysis or a "correct" set of demands. Organizing opposition to corporate-sponsored globalization "from the bottom up" is the right approach. The right approach is to organize all constituencies negatively affected to fight for their own interests while they learn why their success necessarily hinges on the successes of other constituencies against whom global corporations will constantly pit them. Joining first with Third World constituencies in the campaign against the global "race to the bottom" is the right approach. Basing the movement on grassroots organizations, unions, and independent institutes and coalitions rather than principally on politicians and governments is the right approach. Adopting the "Lilliput strategy," where each constituency struggles to tie its own string to contain the "Gulliver" of global capital knowing (correctly) how weak and vulnerable that single string is without the added strength of tens of thousands of similar strings, is the right approach. Our biggest advantage is that the international movement against corporate-sponsored globalization in the late 1980s and 1990s has largely taken this form. It is noticeably different from the campaign for a New International Economic Order in the 1970s where heads of states made grand speeches at conferences only to be ignored by First World powers. It is important to appreciate and nurture our greatest advantage for the moment.

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A Green Perspective on Ralph Nader And Independent Political Action

By Howie Hawkins

AS RALPH NADER CAMPAIGNS FOR PRESIDENT ACROSS THE COUNTRY, he is telling audiences, "In 1996, I just stood for election. In 2000, I'm running." In 1996, Nader gave Greens permission to put his name on the ballot for U.S. President, but did not campaign for the office. The Greens got Nader on the ballot in 22 states and he received nearly 700,000 votes, the most for an independent party candidate to the left of the Democrats since Henry Wallace's Progressive Party campaign of 1948.

This time Ralph is really running. Running with him is Winona LaDuke, a White Earth Anishinabe author and activist on environmental and indigenous people's issues, who has agreed to be the vice-presidential candidate. In the first eight weeks after announcing on February 21, 2000, Nader hit the road, stopping in almost every state to kick off ballot petition drives and raise money for local Green parties. These local fundraising events were in addition to fundraising directly for his campaign, where he aims to qualify for federal matching funds and raise at least $5 million. After eight weeks, the fundraising plan was on schedule, with $350,000 raised and ten of the needed twenty states over the qualifying threshold for matching funds. Ten staff had been hired for the Washington DC headquarters and ten field organizers were out organizing ballot petitioning drives. The campaign plan projects hiring fifteen more field organizers to complete the ballot qualification phase and move on to supporting state and local party organization, voter identification, and get out the vote operations. The Nader campaign is going for ballot lines in all 50 states. By the end of April, Nader was on in 15 states, including the high population states of New York, Florida, and California.

Nader centers his progressive populist message around anti-corporate and pro-democracy themes. "The unconstrained behavior of big business is subordinating our democracy to the control of a corporate plutocracy," Nader said in his announcement speech. "Moving on all fronts to advance narrow profit motives at the expense of civic values, large corporate lobbies and law firms have produced a commanding, multi-faceted and powerful juggernaut." Calling for a "new populism," Nader said the focus of his campaign was "to create fresh political movements that will displace the control of the Democratic and Republican parties, two apparently distinct political entities that feed from the same corporate trough."

In his stump speeches, Nader rails against a litany of abuses, linked to concentrated corporate power: corporate-managed trade and investment, corporate welfare, military bloat alongside cutbacks in public services and infrastructure, private appropriation of the common wealth of public lands and airwaves,

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environmental destruction, stupefying corporate media. He reels off alternatives, linking them all to a common theme of "deep democracy:" consumer and labor unions to counter corporate power, anti-trust enforcement, cooperatives, public enterprise, progressive and ecological tax reform, renewable energy, single-payer health care.

Nader is sometimes criticized for neglecting social issues like racial justice, gay liberation, and reproductive rights, or trying to subsume them under questions of class and corporate power. While sticking to a basic anti-corporate, pro-democracy message, the Nader campaign is well aware of these criticisms. Nader will run on the Green Platform and its support for affirmative action, gay rights, and choice. But the campaign is also making an effort to target messages to particular constituencies. For example, Nader did an interview for a magazine oriented to the HIV/AIDS community, calling for price constraints on AIDS drugs, an end to monopolies on drugs to bring prices down, and "If there's any opposition by the drug companies to this, government should say to them, 'If you're going to engage in profiteering, we'll make them ourselves — and more cheaply than you.'" "The U.S. could build a plant in Africa and for $300 million supply [AIDS drugs for] the whole continent," added Nader, whose Consumer Project on Technology has been a vital source of expertise for the AIDS Drugs for Africa campaign. Asked about the Vermont Supreme Court's decision upholding same-sex marriages, Nader said it "was right, a humane and touching decision with a very searching rationale — it's not only a matter of affinity, but of economics on health care and other issues, which makes it all the more needed."[1]

Blue-Green Coalition

FOCUSING ON ORGANIZED LABOR, NADER WENT TO DETROIT ON MAY DAY to lay out his program for labor law reforms: triple back pay to illegally locked-out workers, binding arbitration at union request when employers refuse to bargain, unemployment compensation for strikers, a ban on replacement workers, card-check recognition of unions, restoring the right of strikers to picket any place that does business with a struck employer, repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act. Campaign staff had originally scheduled an editorial board meeting with the area's largest circulation newspaper, the *Detroit Free Press*, a scab newspaper whose union workers are in their 58th month on strike against the *Free Press* and *Detroit News*. But once local labor activists objected, Nader cancelled the Free Press meeting and spoke to a labor rally that included many of the strikers. He also spoke on trade issues to a meeting of leaders of the United Auto Workers union, which has opposed the AFL-CIO endorsement of Gore, largely over trade issues.

Nader is no stranger to the labor movement, having been active in the movements to democratize and clean-up the Teamsters and Mine Workers unions and to pass the Occupational Safety and Health Act. Nader's ally in the latter movement, Tony Mazzochi, National Organizer of the Labor Party, will be one of the featured speakers at the Green Party convention in Denver, June 24-25. Building a Blue-Green coalition of blue collar workers and environmentalists is one of the constant themes in Nader's campaign.

Nader intends to leave a permanent institution in the wake of his campaign, a political party for the people that can take on the corporate oligarchy and its political representatives in the Democratic and Republican parties. The campaign has several benchmarks by which to measure success short of winning the office. One is 5% of the national vote which will qualify the Green Party for two streams of public funding in 2004, at least $2 million for its national convention and at least $10 million for its presidential campaign. If the Nader vote is on this scale, the Green Party will increase its number of states with permanent ballot status from the current 12 to over 40, thus giving independent progressives and radicals ready access to the ballot in future elections and the ability to change the range and tenor of political debate across the country. Saying he wants to see the Green Party expand ten-fold by every measure in this election, Nader is urging poeple to join and participate in the Green Party. He has repeatedly stated, in Labor Party as well as Green Party forums, that it will take 1 million people giving an average of $100 a year and 100 hours of volunteer time to have a third major party that represents the common people rather than the corporate rich. Nader campaign events are “hour raisers” as well as fund raisers where people pledge volunteer hours as well as monetary contributions.

The corporate media mostly ignored Nader in March and April. But pollsters began including Nader and the initial results showed the goals of the campaign were feasible. A March 30 Reuters/Zogby poll had Nader at 5.3%, more than the 3.3% received by Buchanan, who had had a year of media coverage for his campaign. Nader’s 5.3% was considerably more than the margin of difference between Bush at 41.7% and Gore at 40.2%. Zogby polled again and reported on April 10 that Nader was up to 5.7%, including 13% in “western states” and 9% in California. Zogby’s poll also showed that 51% wanted Nader in the presidential debates and 18.6% would “potentially vote for Nader.”

Interviewed on MSNBC on April 11 by Brian Williams, pollster John Zogby said he was amazed at Nader’s numbers with almost no media coverage. A few days later, Jeff Cohen’s April 16 column in the *Baltimore Sun*, “Nader Has the Numbers But Buchanan Has the Limelight,” noted how the corporate media still spoke of a three-way race. Although Nader and his associates had been at the center of organizing against corporate-managed trade and global financial exploitation in Seattle and Washington DC, it was Buchanan who was getting most of the corporate media time in Seattle and then Washington to explain the anti-globalization movement.

In April, private polling reportedly had Nader at near 10% in New York.[2] Another poll released April 26 by University of Cincinnati researchers found that among Ohio voters, Nader’s net favorability was 24 percent, beating Bush at 22 percent, Gore at negative 3 percent and Buchanan at negative 36 percent. Net favorability is the percent giving a candidate a favorable rating minus the percent giving an unfavorable rating.

As the experiences of the Ross Perot and Jesse Ventura campaigns indicate, getting into the presidential debates with Bush and Gore will be key to Nader’s media presence and ability to reach millions of voters with his message. The Presidential Debates Commission, a semi-official body controlled by the Democrats and Republicans, has set an exclusionary standard of an average of 15% support in five major polls chosen by the Commission in order to be included in their debates. The Nader campaign is pursuing a range of strategies to open up the debates, from litigation and alternative debates sponsored by major civic or media organizations that Bush and Gore cannot afford to ignore, to mass protests at exclusionary debate sites.

The Lesser Evil: How Much Evil Is Too Evil?

NADER'S CAMPAIGN IS BRINGING MORE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY to an independent progressive presidential run than Americans have seen in generations. It has the potential to gain a secure foothold in the electoral arena for an independent left. Yet many progressives still subscribe to the dubious proposition that it is better to support Democrats as the "lesser evil" than independent progressives "who can't win." With the labor, liberal, civil rights, environmental, and peace movements under spell of this approach for decades, the political spectrum has marched ever rightward, election after election. There comes a point, however, when progressives who continue to support the lesser evil must ask themselves, "How much evil am I willing to support?"

Al Gore may be the Democratic candidate who forces this question on the traditional popular constituencies of the Democrats. It is hard to find any redeeming liberal or progressive legacy in the Clinton/Gore record. During a period of income and wealth polarization not seen since the 1920s, the Clinton administration, in 1996, with Gore leading the charge at Cabinet meetings, decided to "reform" welfare by repealing the federal government's commitment to income assistance to poor mothers and their children, and imposing a five-year lifetime limit on benefits. Their support for the Telecommunications bill facilitated the consolidation of corporate monopolization of the media. Their support for the Financial Services Modernization Act repealed the Glass-Steagall barrier between commercial and investment banking, enabling financial capital to put people's savings at risk in speculative investments. They have toyed with partial privatization of Social Security that would allow the speculative investment of Social Security funds in the stock market. The big investors in Mexican, Russian, and Asian financial crises were bailed out with cash from U.S. taxpayers and from U.S.-backed IMF structural adjustment policies that squeezed even more out of the workers and peasants of these exploited countries. Anemic anti-trust enforcement helped fuel the biggest merger wave in history. Corporate managed trade was codified in the North American Free Trade Agreement and the World Trade Organization.

Militarism ran amok despite the end of the Cold War. U.S. military spending increased. A million Iraqis died from sanctions, with over 4,000 Iraqi children a month still dying. Just in 1999, they bombed Afghanistan, Sudan, Iraq, and Yugoslavia. Clinton/Gore supported counterinsurgency wars in several other countries, most notably Columbia and Mexico. They expanded NATO and transformed its stated mission from strictly defensive to "out of area" interventionist. They even revived funding for Reagan's fantasy of "Star Wars" missile defense.

They also militarized domestic policy by expanding police and prison funding, pushing the "war on drugs," and passing Crime and Terrorism bills that stiffened penalties to fill the new prisons, added 50 new death penalties, targeted youth, and eroded due process rights. The U.S. has surpassed Russia now having the highest incarceration rate in the world, with 2 million prisoners, 25% of all prisoners in the world.

Gore's strong suit is supposed to be the environment. Indeed, Clinton, who has little interest in environmental issues, let Gore take the lead on the administration's appointments and policies. The record is atrocious. After breaking Gore's 1992 campaign promise to stop a hazardous waste incinerator planned for East Liverpool, Ohio, the administration lined up with corporate polluters against environmentalists on issue after issue: genetically-modified organisms and food, subsidies for nuclear power, organic food standards, ozone-depleting chemicals, greenhouse gases, fuel efficiency standards, wetlands protection, the Everglades, the Redwoods, logging on public lands, oil development in Alaska and the Gulf of Mexico. Gore's former Senate staffers dominated the environmental appointments of the administration. Environmental activists were calling for the replacement of traditional "pollution control" that regulates the release of pollutants with "pollution prevention," which would phase out toxics by sunsetting technologies that use or produce toxics as products or by-products. But Gore's environmental appointees took the corporate environmental approach of "reforming" pollution control by replacing government bureaucracy with the market. So Gore's environmental legacy is tradeable pollution rights, which tend to shift the burden of pollution from rich to poor communities and countries, and prolong the lives of the most polluting facilities because it is usually far cheaper to buy rights to pollute than to retrofit them with cleaner technologies.

The signature approach of the Clinton/Gore administration has been Fake Left and Go Right: symbolism for the Left and substance for the Right. The administration's answer to racism is to highlight appointments for show, but to implement deeply conservative policies in practice that reinforce the racial and class hierarchy. However, Gore will quickly drop the symbolism of racial justice when it suits his political agenda. It was Al Gore, not the elder George Bush, who first raised the race-baiting specter of Willie Horton in 1988 while campaigning against Michael Dukakis and Jesse Jackson for the Super Tuesday primaries in the South. Willie Horton was used by Gore and then Bush to push a racially-biased, law-and-order agenda that was subsequently adopted. 12 years later, the U.S. prison population has tripled. U.S. rates of incarceration are now higher than they were in South Africa under the regime of apartheid and similarly racist. 70% of those arrested are white, but blacks account for more than 50% of those imprisoned. One-third of black men aged 20-29 are in jail, prison, on probation or parole.

The Clinton/Gore administration simply had no civil rights agenda, according to Lani Guinier,[3] who was dropped by Clinton and Gore as the appointee to head up the civil rights division at the Justice Department when the *Wall Street Journal* dubbed her the "Quota Queen" because she had argued that proportional representation was a better means of representing ethnic and political minorities than gerrymandering majority-minority districts. Gore went to the mat for the drug companies against South Africa when it started to make generic AIDS drugs to address the AIDS crisis in Africa. Currently Gore is defying demands by environmental and human rights groups that he use his family's longstanding ties and $500,000 holdings in Occidental Petroleum to stop oil drilling in Colombia on U'wa Indian lands, which is being conducted under the cover of Colombian military arms that has resulted in the deaths of a number of protesting U'wa people.

Court appointments are often the last line of defense for proponents of the lesser evil. But the Clinton-Gore administration has been as conservative as the Reagan and Bush administrations in their appointments. They simply avoided the political controversy of appointing liberal jurists. By mid-1996, 182 of 187 Clinton-Gore judicial nominees were confirmed without any Senate Republicans voting against confirmation. An analysis of 28,000 federal court decisions found that on civil liberties issues, Clinton appointees issued liberal decisions only 35% of the time, compared to 52% for Carter appointees, 39% for Ford appointees, 37% for Nixon appointees and 33% for Reagan-Bush appointees. On labor and econmic issues, Clinton's appointees issued liberal decisions 50% of the time, the same as for Reagan appointees. The Democrats will raise the specter of anti-abortion appointees but the pro-choice majority on the Supreme Court and the pro-choice majority of moderate Democrats and Republicans in the Senate are likely to hold in the next presidential term.[4]

Gore is not just a particularly bad Democrat. He is the logical result of lesser evilism. Not only has the Clinton-Gore administration implemented a conservative corporate agenda that Reagan and Bush could only dream about, but the potential liberal challengers to Gore like Jesse Jackson and Paul Wellstone never even mounted a challenge. Bill Bradley, the consummate centrist who, in the last election cycle, considered a run for the nomination in Perot's Reform Party, ended up as the standard bearer of the "left" in the Democratic Party. That is the result of settling for "the lesser evil," election after election. The left has lost its voice inside the Democratic Party because it tries to speak through surrogates, the more liberal corporate candidates. Over time, the left withers because it is not presenting its program to the public. The trade unions, civil rights groups, and peace and environmental groups that orient to the Democratic Party are the subordinate partners in coalition with the corporate forces that dominate the Democratic Party. They end up doing the leg work for the corporate agenda and giving it a liberal façade.

Populists, Socialists, and Independent Politics

MARXIAN SOCIALISTS HAVE LONG ARGUED FOR INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ACTION.} When the workers formed their own party and established their political class independence, it was considered the first step in building a socialist movement based in the working class, a social force with the potential size, weight, and power to effect fundamental change.

Nader and the Green Party are not a strictly workers' party. In outlook and composition, they are a cross-class coalition of "the people," the working class and the middle classes of self-employed professionals and small and medium business people, all allied against the corporate elite. In this respect, they are very much like the 19th century agrarian populists and their contemporary labor movements who saw themselves as representing the productive classes — independent farmers, sharecroppers, urban workers, small shopkeepers — against the parasitic class of owners of bank, railroad, and farm supply corporations. So how should socialists relate to the Green movement? Is class independence from the ruling class sufficient, or must it be a strictly worker's party?

Some socialists look at Nader and the Greens and find them wanting programmatically. The Socialist Party, for example, is running Dave McReynolds for President, who has often stated that the Socialists agree with the Greens on just about everything but socializing the Fortune 500. The McReynolds campaign expects to be on the ballot in about a dozen states. It will be doing good to receive 50,000 votes. The Nader campaign expects to be on the ballot in close to 50 states and is aiming for at least 6 million votes to reach the 5% benchmark. The question for socialists is whether it is more effective to be active in a very small educational campaign with a better platform or in a high-profile campaign with an imperfect platform that has the potential to break up the Democratic Party coalition and establish a major independent party on the left.

Many socialists have argued that political independence from the capitalist parties is the key consideration and that the program can be perfected as the movement develops. Commenting in 1886 on the United Labor Party campaign of the land value taxation advocate, Henry George, for New York City mayor, Engels said,

> The first great step of importance for every country entering into the movement is always for the organization of the workers as an independent political party, no matter how, so long as it is a distinct workers' party.... That the first program of the party is confused and highly deficient, that it has set up the banner of Henry George, these are inevitable evils but also transitory ones.[5]

Elsewhere, and in the same vein, Engels advised:

> What the Germans ought to do is...in the words of *The Communist Manifesto*, to represent the movement of the future in the movement of the present. But above all give the movement time to consolidate, do not make the inevitable confusion of the first start worse confounded by forcing down people's throats things which at present they cannot properly understand, but which they soon will learn.... A million or two of workingmen's votes next November for a bona fide workingmen's party is worth infinitely more at present than a hundred thousand votes for a doctrinally perfect platform.[6]

The Socialist Party's Eugene Debs took a similar approach to the Farmer-Labor Party movement of the early 1920s, arguing that socialists should work within the broader independent political movement:

> If a genuine labor party is organized at Chicago I shall not expect the platform to go to the limit of radical demands but shall be satisfied with a reasonable statement of labor's rights and interests as well as its duties and responsibilities, doubting not that with the progress of the party its platform will in due time embrace every essential feature of the working class program for deliverance from industrial servitude. The Socialist Party can, should, and I have no doubt will join such a party wholeheartedly, becoming an integral part of its structure, reserving, however, its autonomy unimpaired and using all its powers and functions in building up, equipping, promoting, and directing the general party.[7]

Ralph Nader is not the perfect candidate from a socialist viewpoint. His affinity for anti-trust enforcement and competitive markets seems blind to the nasty consequences for labor and the environment of cutthroat competition. But neither does he subscribe to the dogma about free markets and private enterprise that major party politicians ritualistically recite. He has an equal affinity for cooperatives and supports public enterprise when it seems a practical solution. He is a pragmatic reformer. The rumors about funding for Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch from right-wing protectionist textile manufacturer, Roger Milliken, have been flatly denied by its director, Lori Wallich.[8]

The Greens have their socialist wing. Joel Kovel challenged Nader in the New York and California Green primaries, running on an explicitly eco-socialist program. Though Nader won handily, his viability as a national candidate rather than programmatic issues was the reason. The debate within the Greens over the economic program between progressive populists and eco-socialists is ongoing and basically the same debate going on within the socialist movement between market and non-market visions of socialism.[9] More socialists should join this wide open debate where socialist options are being debated by a living movement and not just in theory. How can the Greens' commitment to social justice be reconciled with the exploitation of labor? How can the Greens' commitment to ecological sustainability be reconciled with the endless growth engendered by competitive private accumulation? Capitalism cannot win this argument unless the Greens abandon their values.

The Greens have not resolved their organizational differences. The Greens/Green Party USA (GPUSA) and the Association of State Green Parties (ASGP) did have direct negotiations in April for the first time, but made no progress over the main issue of contention between GPUSA's model of a membership party with nomination by convention and ASGP's traditional American party model based on party registrants and nomination by primary. But both groups have lined up behind the Nader campaign. With the potential to surpass the Debs' 6% vote in 1912, the Nader campaign and the Greens have become a movement in which socialists can practice what they preach about independent politics. Socialists will be more effective arguing their perspectives from inside than preaching at it from outside.

NOTES

1. Doug Ireland, "President Nader!", *POZ*, May 2000.

2. Bill Bradley, "Greening?", *New West Notes*, April 21, 2000.

3. Lani Guinier, *Lift Every Voice* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998).

4. John Nichols, "The Clinton Courts: Liberals Need Not Apply," *The Progressive*, September 1996.

5. Engels to Sorge, Nov. 29, 1886.

6. Engels to Wischnewetsky, December 28, 1886.

7. Eugene V. Debs, "The American Labor Party," *Socialist World*, January 1925.

8. The most recent allegation of Milliken funding for Nader work on trade was Ryan Lizza, "Silent Partner," *The New Republic*, January 10, 2000). Wallich's denial is in "Lori's War," *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 2000. Chip Berlet, a researcher and writer on right-wing movements, who has been cited as a source for Milliken's funding of Nader projects, told Walter Contreras Sheasby that he has no evidence of any such funding. Sheasby, who has been investigating the attacks on Nader, says "In 1996 many rumors about Nader's funding were spread by Robert Bartley, the publisher of the *Wall Street Journal*, who has a visceral hatred of Nader and his progressive organizations." Sheasby, "Critical Support for Nader, Without Left Paranoia and Disinformation," April 28, 2000.

9. A popular progressive populist book in Green circles is David Korten, *The Post-Corporate World: Life After Capitalism* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers; West Hartford: Kumarian Press, 1999). It argues for local worker/community "stakeholder" ownership within free markets as opposed to absentee ownership by finance capital. Eco-socialists and progressive populists debate economics in *Synthesis/Regeneration: A Magazine of Green Social Thought*, http://www.greens.org/s-r/.

An Exchange on the U.S. Labor Movement and Chinese Immigration

A Reply to Stanford Lyman

Andrew Gyory

AN IDEOLOGICAL COLD WAR HAS ERUPTED among historians of labor, immigration, and race. Some, such as David Roediger and Herbert Hill, stress how racist white workers have been in American history, and that race and "whiteness" drove their actions and formed the core of their identity. Other historians, such as Herbert Gutman, Bruce Laurie, and Eric Arnesen, acknowledge this racism, but argue that in certain instances white workers have overcome their prejudice and worked together with blacks and other minorities to promote their goals. This more nuanced approach reveals the complexities of racism across time and place and suggests that at key moments workers could separate racist thoughts from racist actions and advocate non-racist policies and solutions.[1]

In his article, "The 'Chinese Question' and American Labor Historians" (*New Politics*, Winter 2000), Stanford M. Lyman clearly follows the Roediger-Hill school. He emphasizes the anti-Chinese racism of white workers and echoes the standard interpretation of the origins of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882: that the national labor movement opposed Chinese immigration and spearheaded the effort to ban Chinese immigrants from the United States. Lyman spends the bulk of his article attacking my book, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act*. He calls my book "tendentious," "distorted," and "a true tragedy of scholarship." The real tragedy, however, is a reviewer rambling on for thirty-five pages without offering evidence challenging the facts, thesis, or conclusions on which the book is based. By engaging in a pseudo-intellectual hit and run, Lyman sideswipes history and disserves the scholarship he claims to support.[2]

It is not even clear that Lyman read my entire book — at one point he quotes a line from a brief synopsis I placed on Amazon.com rather

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than the sentence in the book's introduction on which it is based — but he has entirely misread it. The book's goal, which I state in the book's opening sentence, is: Why did the United States pass the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882? To answer this question, I needed to examine numerous subjects, including politics, race, class, immigration, labor, economics, diplomacy, culture, regionalism, industrialism, foreign policy, China, and the press from the 1860s to the early 1880s. And what I found was that the motive force behind the era's most racist legislation was not, as countless historians have argued, California, organized labor, or a general racist atmosphere, but national politicians who, in a period during which the two-party system had achieved near-perfect balance, seized the issue of Chinese exclusion in an effort to gain votes. Rather than confront such major problems as economic depression, rising unemployment, or class conflict, politicians played the race card. They demonized Chinese immigrants and claimed that their exclusion would benefit workers and protect the nation. Despite Lyman's lengthy review, he never explains my argument or confronts the massive documentation on which it is based. He also fails to mention any of the national politicians at the core of the book, such as James Blaine, William Evarts, or James Garfield.[3]

Instead, Lyman focuses on my treatment of organized labor and the working classes. He repeatedly misinforms readers that I have "freed the white workingman from the charge of anti-Chinese prejudice." This is false. I never state this or try to prove this. In fact, I give numerous examples of white working-class prejudice against the Chinese on both the East and West coasts. Virtually all white Americans in the nineteenth century held racist views, from the poorest class to the richest class. Even abolitionists voiced racist sentiments. The question, however, from the standpoint of public policy, is not how prejudiced people were but how they acted on this prejudice. Unlike historians who have focused on whiteness and working-class identity, I focus on politics and public affairs and trace the role that workers, unions, and working-class groups played in public discourse and in promoting national policy. And what I discovered is that despite their prejudice, most workers in the East did not advocate anti-Chinese immigration policies in the 1860s and 1870s. Just as abolitionists could surmount their prejudices and promote non-racist solutions — emancipation and civil rights — so could workers. Why is this so difficult to accept? "Racism and Chinese exclusion were separable issues," I argue in my book, "and eastern workers consistently separated them." In his desperate attempt to indict white workers and the national labor movement for the Chinese Exclusion Act, Lyman is unable to acknowledge this simple dichotomy, and he presents no evidence to refute it.[4]

DURING RECONSTRUCTION AND THE GILDED AGE, white workers outside of California made a vital distinction between immigration, which they supported, and importation, which they opposed. They consistently welcomed free immigrants "from every clime," country, and continent, but just as consistently denounced laborers imported from abroad — that is, brought in under contract or obligation — especially when they were brought in during labor disputes. Workers first voiced this pro-immigration/anti-importation stance in 1864 when Congress legalized imported contract labor in an effort to ease the manpower shortage in the North caused by the Civil War. A key event in my book (and in American history) took place six years later in June 1870 when a shoe manufacturer in North Adams, Massachusetts, brought in seventy-five Chinese laborers from San Francisco to break a strike by the Knights of St. Crispin. This event received national attention and galvanized working-class protest throughout the Northeast and Midwest. Many historians have erroneously claimed that this event launched workers on their crusade for Chinese exclusion. As I document meticulously, however, workers urged a ban not on Chinese immigration, but on imported contract labor. As I demonstrate throughout my book, a ban on imported contract labor remained foremost on the working-class agenda during Reconstruction and beyond, and workers denounced such importation regardless of the nation of origin, whether from Canada, Prussia, England, Scotland, Sweden, Norway, Italy, or China. Like countless scholars before him, Lyman fails to acknowledge and accept the distinction between immigration and importation that workers so carefully made. Nor does he understand that workers had legitimate reasons to make this distinction. Many were immigrants themselves — from Ireland, Germany, and elsewhere — with friends, relatives, and compatriots from abroad hoping to come to America. Workers recognized that sanctions against one group of immigrants (such as the Chinese) could easily lead to sanctions against other groups of immigrants (such as Europeans).[5]

Lyman claims that I "mak[e] 19th-century Chinese immigration to the United States appear to be but one more instance of the nefarious and multifaceted coolie trade," and that my "argument gives substance to . . . the belief that virtually every Chinese who set foot on America's shores was an involuntary, 'imported contract laborer.'" Had Lyman read my book carefully, he would have noticed that I do not state that Chinese immigrants came to the U.S. via the "coolie trade," a term that refers to the infamous system of transporting laborers from China to Latin America under slave-like conditions in the mid-nineteenth century. I actually take great pains to define the term "coolie," a word that had numerous connotations and usages in the nineteenth century (and, because of this, a word I always place in quotes). I also cite various articles, studies, and government reports issued during the 1860s and 1870s that gave conflicting accounts of how Chinese came to America — from contract to non-contract, from free to unfree — as well as the numerous rumors and anecdotes supplementing these reports that created an atmosphere of uncertainty and ambiguity regarding the methods of Chinese immigration. Chinese immigrants, I explain, came to the United States in a variety of ways: many arrived on their own to work in the gold fields and industries of California, others were recruited to work on the transcontinental railroad, and some arrived under contract. Lyman himself elaborates on these methods, noting that some Chinese came to America by "incurring a debt" on the "credit-ticket" system, as imported laborers "inveigled, shanghaied, or kidnapped" (in Lyman's exact words), and by "'sign[ing] a contract with either the Chinese merchants or foreign agents, who,'" according to historian Liping Zhu, whom Lyman quotes directly, "'paid all expenses for transit to the United States in exchange for their labor for a certain period, which varied from two to ten years.'" Lyman thus argues that some Chinese laborers were "imported" and arrived under "contract" — precisely the charge white workers (along with government officials and other Americans) made in the 1870s, and what they adamantly opposed. "From the beginning," Lyman continues in his quote from Zhu, "the majority of Chinese pioneers to the American West were free." A minority, this implies, were not "free." Whether they were "free" or not, however, matters far less than the fact that some arrived under contract or obligation. White workers feared that imported contract laborers — *not immigrants* — from China or elsewhere endangered their livelihood, and incidents of such importation in the 1860s and 1870s, coupled with repeated threats by employers and manufacturers to import foreign laborers, legitimized such fears. And yet Lyman concludes, with the enormous condescension of history, that "white workers . . . should have been able to figure out for themselves" the "truth" that Chinese labor posed them no threat. What's ironic is that most workers *did* figure this out and thus advocated a ban on imported contract labor rather than on Chinese immigration.[6]

IN HIS FEEBLE POLEMIC, Lyman makes so many mistakes and indulges in so many historical fallacies it is hard to know which to highlight. When he comes across a statement he doesn't like, he simply rejects it and tells the reader that it has no support. For example, he quotes from my book a viciously racist *New York Tribune* article written by John Swinton in response to the North Adams incident in 1870. Denouncing the Chinese as "inferior," "depraved," and "debased," Swinton urged immediate and total exclusion. "His anti-Chinese screed," Lyman quotes me as writing, "proved an ugly and ironic segue to his brilliant career: ugly because of its virulent racism; ironic because workers, for whom he intended it, largely dismissed his argument and disregarded his remedy." Lyman continues that "Gyory's interpretation of this key event [is] offered without evidence to back it up." Precisely what evidence Lyman claims is lacking is unclear. That Swinton's article was anti-Chinese and virulently racist is fairly obvious. That Swinton later had a "brilliant career" as editor of a prominent labor newspaper is noted and rather well-known among historians. I presume, therefore, that what Lyman claims is not backed up is the part that workers largely dismissed Swinton's argument and disregarded his remedy of Chinese exclusion. Here is where I question whether Lyman actually read my book. The chapter in which "this event" — Swinton's article — takes place provides dozens of examples of workers dismissing his anti-Chinese effusions ("In many things their customs are worthy of imitation," observed Crispin leader Charles McLean of Boston) and disregarding his remedy of exclusion ("To the Chinaman as emigrant there are no objections," declared tailor William Cashman of New York, to which fellow tailor Robert Blissert added, "The Chinaman is as welcome to me as men from Ireland, or Scotland, or England"). At rally after rally — nine that I document — as well as numerous labor conventions, working-class meetings, interviews, and speeches during the summer of 1870 that I quote and cite, workers in the East voiced this identical pro-immigration/anti-importation stance. (This material appears on pages 41-47 of my book. The references appear on pages 274-279.) I invite readers to examine this chapter and to judge for themselves the veracity of Lyman's charge that I don't offer evidence to "back it up."[7]

Despite some 298 footnotes, Lyman presents virtually no evidence to challenge my thesis. Rather, he relies on secondary comments by other historians — some of whom he misinterprets, others who are factually wrong. "Whereas Gyory insists it is the politicians who took the lead and the unions that lagged behind in the opposition to Chinese immigration during the pre-exclusion years," Lyman writes, "[historian David] Montgomery offers an important instance in New York

City when that order was reversed: 'Sensing that its opposition to black enfranchisement . . . was costing more votes than it was winning, . . . the Tweed Ring switched its target to the Chinese. In 1870 it *joined the unions* in a huge rally against the immigration of 'coolie labor' to the United States.'" Had Lyman bothered to examine Montgomery's source for this statement, he would have found that it was pages 225-226 of Iver Bernstein's *The New York City Draft Riots: Their Significance for American Society and Politics in the Age of the Civil War*. Bernstein, however, never mentioned that the rally opposed the "immigration of 'coolie labor' to the United States." Rather, he wrote that speakers at the rally denounced their *importation*. Bernstein used the term "importation" three times — a fact Lyman ought to know since he himself cites this passage in a footnote. The careful and close reading of sources is any scholar's primal imperative.[8]

A more preposterous example of Lyman's shoddy use of sources can be found in quoting historians he knows are wrong. Repeating his effort to place workers at the forefront of the exclusion movement, Lyman writes: "it might well be remembered that no less a figure than Selig Perlman had pointed out that 'The National Labor Union came out against Chinese immigration in 1869, when the issue was brought home to the Eastern wage earners following the importation by a shoe manufacturer in North Adams, Massachusetts, of Chinese strike breakers." First, as I note in my book, the National Labor Union did not come out against Chinese immigration in 1869. Second, the North Adams incident took place a full year later in 1870 — not 1869, as Perlman misstates and Lyman well knows. By using inaccurate secondary sources — rather than original evidence — Lyman distorts the historical record.[9]

Along with attacking me for what I wrote, Lyman attacks me for what I didn't write, specifically a history of organized labor's attitude toward Chinese immigration from 1882, after the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed, to 1943, when it was repealed. "Gyory has not attended to this profoundly important question," Lyman observes. "His investigation ends in 1882, 61 years short of where it should have gone."[10] While I am flattered that Lyman wishes I had written a longer book, his criticism is bizarre. The goal of my book was to examine the origins of a specific law — the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 — and part of this examination included tracing the role organized labor played in its enactment. What happened after 1882, however, is irrelevant to the law's passage. History does not run backwards: what happens *after* an event takes place cannot change or influence the original event.

It is a familiar ruse of reviewers to attack an author for not writing the book the reviewer wanted to read. Lyman goes a step further, however, and actually attempts to write this book himself. To undercut my argument that organized labor played little role in securing the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, he spends a major part of his review — some twelve pages — recounting the racist, anti-Chinese views of three prominent labor leaders: Samuel Gompers, Adolph Strasser, and Terence V. Powderly. Gompers, he notes,

> appears briefly in [my] book on three occasions: during a strike by New York City cigar makers in 1877; as a supporter for the Greenback Party in the same period; and as a contributor to the debates over the organizational structure of the newly

> formed Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Union [FOTLU] . . . in 1881 (that was to become the American Federation of Labor in 1886). Although the Chinese question figures in each of these events, a reader of Gyory's book would never learn from reading it that Gompers was perhaps the most important of the advocates of Chinese exclusion and author of some of the most racist demagoguery presented during the anti-Chinese movement.

Quite to the contrary, I note "Gompers's racism and deep-seated anti-Chinese proclivities." I also highlight how he "recounted with pride in his autobiography forty years later" that the FOTLU in 1881 "'was the first national organization which demanded the exclusion of coolies from the United States.'" I don't elaborate on Gompers's "racist demagoguery" because it came much later, in the 1890s and 1900s, long after the first Chinese Exclusion Act was passed and when opposition to Chinese immigration had become widespread and national. Prior to 1881 Gompers expressed no interest in Chinese exclusion. During the 1877 cigar makers' strike (an event I cover in detail), Gompers and other labor leaders denounced the threatened importation of Chinese strikebreakers — much as they had seven years earlier in response to the North Adams incident — but did not denounce Chinese immigration. (Several Chinese immigrants even joined the cigar makers' strike.) Lyman knows this, and cites three quotes of Gompers opposing importation, *not* immigration. Lyman offers no evidence of Gompers urging Chinese exclusion prior to 1881. Instead, he repeats many of the AFL leader's racist, pro-exclusion statements voiced in the 1890s and 1900s. What Gompers advocated years later, however, reveals nothing about what he advocated in the 1870s and had no bearing on the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act.[11]

As president of the Cigar Makers' International Union, Adolph Strasser was a more prominent figure in the labor movement than Gompers in the late 1870s and consequently plays a more important role in my book. Strasser directed the cigar makers' strike in 1877, testified before Congress about Chinese labor in 1878, and lobbied Congress for labor legislation in 1879. In all his statements, Strasser was crystal clear: he wanted a ban on importation but not on immigration. He stated this directly to a congressional committee in 1878. Lyman offers no evidence that Strasser urged a ban on Chinese immigration. The historical record speaks for itself.[12]

Powderly, like Gompers, became viciously anti-Chinese in the 1880s and 1890s, and Lyman recycles many well-known quotes by these two labor leaders urging reenactment of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1892 and 1902.[13] Lyman uses these quotes to argue that since Powderly, Gompers, and the rest of the labor movement opposed Chinese immigration at the turn of the century, they therefore opposed it in the 1860s and 1870s. Such an argument, however, is profoundly ahistorical and precludes the fact that people can change. What someone believes at one time does not mean he or she believed it at *all* times. For example, just because most northerners *after* the Civil War believed that slavery was wrong does not mean they believed that *before* the Civil War. Because most white Americans today believe that the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s was justified does not mean they supported it at the time. People, even labor leaders, can change, and just because labor leaders favored Chinese exclusion in the 1890s and 1900s — long after the first exclusion act passed — does not mean they favored it in the 1870s. History is the process of change, a process

Lyman fails to recognize. In his static approach to history, he misuses evidence to distort my book and skew the past.

Part of this distortion includes reading things into my book that I never wrote. "Should Gyory succeed in his endeavor," he observes, "he will . . . absolve [the American labor movement] of charges that its organizational practices restricted African Americans, Hispanics, and women."[14] Nothing could be further from the truth. Showing that organized labor played little role in securing the Chinese Exclusion Act has no direct bearing on labor's treatment of other groups at other times. Such claims display a distressing ignorance of history, historical connections, and historical causation.

It is difficult to determine what is most repugnant in Lyman's review, his outright misstatements or his implications that I belittle the significance of the Chinese Exclusion Act. "Gyory, who . . . seeks to separate the thoughts and deeds of the rank and file from those of the trade union leadership, omits the latter from his investigation." What book did Lyman read? While I do indeed separate the rank and file from the trade union leadership — as any historian studying labor (or any group) must seek to do — I hardly "omit the latter" from my investigation. From William Sylvis, president of the National Labor Union and the Iron Molders' International Union, to Samuel P. Cummings, leader of the Knights of St. Crispin, to Alexander Troup, secretary of the National Typographical Union, to Robert Blissert, founder of the New York Central Labor Union, to John Jarrett, president of both the FOTLU and Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers, to Sam Goldwater, president of the Chicago Trade and Labor Council, to Adolph Strasser, Samuel Gompers, Henry Lucker, Richard Trevellick, Peter McGuire, and many others, I investigate the thoughts and deeds of literally dozens of trade union leaders. That Lyman claims I "omit" them shows incredibly sloppy reading and provides yet another example of his shooting wildly without ammunition.[15]

In a final and disturbing effort to discredit my book, Lyman quotes a moving passage from Lisa Lowe's *Immigrant Acts: On Asian Cultural Politics* on the lasting impact of the Chinese Exclusion Act: "'A national memory haunts the conceptions of the Asian-American . . . in which the Asian is always seen as . . . the 'foreigner within,' even when born in the United States and the descendant of generations born here before.'" To this Lyman adds, "Gyory's book does nothing to dispel this national memory." This may be Lyman's most offensive statement of all. The Chinese Exclusion Act, as I state clearly, was the most racist law passed after the Civil War. It excluded millions of Chinese from ever coming to the United States and set the precedent for future anti-immigration legislation against other Asians in the early 1900s and against Europeans in the 1920s. "The law's legacy," I write, "in the form of future restrictions and anti-Asian racism, lingers to this day. Like the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 remains one of the most infamous and tragic statutes in American history. It must also remain one of the most ironic. No national sentiment arose to demand it, no broad effort emerged to prevent it. The Chinese Exclusion Act was a tool shaped and wielded by politicians who, in an era of burgeoning class conflict and razor-sharp electoral margins, championed an issue of paltry national importance in the false name of the working classes in the hopes of gaining a decisive handful of votes. . . . More than a century after its passage, the Chinese Exclusion Act still haunts the nation's treatment of immigrants and immigration."[16]

The first step toward "dispelling" this national memory is to confront it squarely with evidence and honesty rather than to mislead readers with gratuitous attacks and baseless charges. My book is ultimately a book about power, and during the 1870s the American labor movement wielded precious little of it on a national level. If it had, organized labor would have won enactment and enforcement of laws workers actually advocated, such as a general eight-hour workday, a federal bureau of labor statistics, inspection of factories and mines, and a ban on imported contract labor. Congress responded to none of these demands during the decade, as politicians chose instead to manipulate the issue of Chinese immigration, an issue of little importance to most workers.[17] Politics and the pursuit of power remain at the core of the Chinese Exclusion Act. Lyman presents no evidence to the contrary. How ironic that he placed his review in a journal entitled *New Politics*. He offers little that is new and says nothing about politics. As the ideological Cold War among scholars of labor, immigration, and race heats up, I urge Lyman and his supporters to begin marshalling facts rather than fantasy, and evidence rather than invective.

NOTES

1. David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991); Herbert Hill, "Anti-Oriental Agitation and the Rise of Working-Class Racism," *Transaction* 10 (Jan./Feb. 1973), 43-54; Herbert Hill, "Race and Ethnicity in Organized Labor: The Historical Sources of Resistance to Affirmative Action," *Journal of Intergroup Relations* 12 (Winter 1984), 5-49; Herbert Hill, "Race, Ethnicity, and Organized Labor: The Opposition to Affirmative Action," *New Politics* 1 (Winter 1987), 31-82; Herbert G. Gutman, "The Negro and the United Mine Workers, The Career and Letters of Richard L. Davis and Something of Their Meaning, 1890-1900," in Julius Jacobson, ed., *The Negro and the American Labor Movement* (New York, 1968), 49-127; Bruce Laurie, "'The Fair Field' of the 'Middle Ground': Abolitionism, Labor Reform, and the Making of an Anti-Slavery Bloc in Antebellum Massachusetts," in Eric Arnesen, Julie Greene, and Bruce Laurie, eds., *Labor Histories: Class, Politics, and the Working-Class Experience* (Champaign, Ill.: Illinois University Press, 1998); Eric Arnesen, *Waterfront Workers of New Orleans: Race, Class and Politics, 1863-1923* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

2. Stanford M. Lyman, "The 'Chinese Question' and American Labor Historians," *New Politics* (Winter 2000), 113-48; Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1998). The quotes are from Lyman, "The 'Chinese Question' and American Labor Historians," 117, 120, 139.

3. Lyman, "The 'Chinese Question' and American Labor Historians," 145; Gyory, *Closing the Gate*, 2. See also chapter 1.

4. Lyman, "The 'Chinese Question' and American Labor Historians," 129; Gyory, *Closing the Gate*, 69. For examples of working-class prejudice against the Chinese, see *ibid*., 87, 96-97, 116-17, 170-71, 176-77, 180-82, 219-21, 245-46. For similar claims by Lyman that I have denied such prejudice, see Lyman, "The 'Chinese Question' and American Labor Historians," 114, 115, 123, 131, 137.

5. Gyory, *Closing the Gate*, chapters 2-4, especially 19-23, 39-47, 65-66. On historians who have misinterpreted working-class response to the North Adams incident and pinpointed 1870 as the year workers launched their movement for Chinese exclu-

sion, see *ibid*., 269 (16n), 275-76 (17n).

6. Lyman, “The ‘Chinese Question’ and American Labor Historians,” 117, 124, 125, 127; Liping Zhu, *A Chinaman’s Chance: The Chinese on the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier* (Niwat, Colo.: University Press of Colorado, 1997), quoted in *ibid*., 126; Gyory, *Closing the Gate*, 32-33, 62-70, 177-80.

7. Lyman, “The ‘Chinese Question’ and American Labor Historians,” 119-20; Gyory, *Closing the Gate*, chapter 3, especially 41-47. On Swinton, see *ibid*., 44-45. For the quotes by McLean, Cashman, and Blissert, see *ibid*., 42-43, 44, 45.

8. Lyman, “The ‘Chinese Question’ and American Labor Historians,” 131; David Montgomery, *Citizen Worker: The Experience of Workers in the United States with Democracy and the Free Market during the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), quoted in *ibid*., 131. (The emphasis is by Lyman.) Iver Bernstein, *The New York City Draft Riots: Their Significance for American Society and Politics in the Age of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 225-27. Lyman cites this passage from Bernstein in Stanford M. Lyman, “Notes to Stanford Lyman Article,” *New Politics* (Winter 2000), 5 (58n).

9. Lyman, “The ‘Chinese Question’ and American Labor Historians,” 131; Selig Perlman, *A History of Trade Unionism in the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1922), quoted in *ibid*. On the National Labor Union convention of 1869, see Gyory, *Closing the Gate*, 35-36.

10. Lyman, “The ‘Chinese Question’ and American Labor Historians,” 117.

11. *Ibid*., 133-45. The quote is from 133. On the three Gompers quotes cited by Lyman, see *ibid*., 133-34. On the cigar makers’ strike, see Gyory, *Closing the Gate*, 97-100. The quotes are from *ibid*., 220, 310 (23n).

12. Lyman, “The ‘Chinese Question’ and American Labor Historians,” 139-42. On Strasser’s role in the cigar makers’ strike, see Gyory, *Closing the Gate*, 97, 99. On his testimony before Congress, see *ibid*., 131-34. On his lobbying Congress, see *ibid*., 163.

13. Lyman, “The ‘Chinese Question’ and American Labor Historians,” 133-39, 142-45.

14. *Ibid*., 115.

15. *Ibid*., 137; Gyory, *Closing the Gate*, 21-23, 29-30, 36, 41-42, 43-44, 45-47, 97-99, 124, 131-34, 163, 183, 220, 246.

16. Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996), quoted in Lyman, “The ‘Chinese Question’ and American Labor Historians,” 147; Gyory, *Closing the Gate*, 258, 259.

17. Three years after passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act, organized labor finally won a ban on imported contract labor, which Congress enacted in 1885.

Engels Was Right! Organized Labor's Opposition to Chinese in the U.S.

Stanford M. Lyman Responds

The most fundamental prejudices reside in the belief of not having any prejudices.

Pierre-Andre Targuieff,
Les fins de l'antiracism (1995), p. 197.

*. . . [T]he true credit for the agitation against Oriental Immigration should go where it belongs — to the pioneers of the trade union movement in San Francisco, Dennis Kearney, Frank Rooney, John O. Walsh, John I. Nolan, and many others of that day who in and out of season preached the go*spel of exclusion of Orientals.

Proceedings of the Forty-third Annual Convention of the
California State Federation of Labor, Long Beach,
California, September 21-25, 1942, p. 226.

THERE ARE FIVE MAJOR POINTS TO GYORY'S RESPONSE to my analysis of his book[1]: [1] That my essay is part of an "ideological cold war [that] has erupted among historians of labor, immigration, and race"; [2] that the East Coast white workingmen's point of view on the coming of Chinese to the United States was limited to an opposition to "imported" as opposed to "immigrant" arrivals; [3] that the "motive force" behind the Chinese Exclusion Act was the opportunism of a few "national politicians" who seized upon the "race card" in "an effort to gain votes"; [4] that a true understanding of "race prejudice" is not demonstrated by showing "how prejudiced people were", but rather on "how they acted on this prejudice"; and [5] that "what happened after 1882 is irrelevant to the [Chinese Exclusion] law's passage." In this brief rejoinder, I shall address each of these points.

The "Cold War" in American Labor History

THAT THERE MIGHT BE A "COLD WAR" IN CURRENT AMERICAN LABOR HISTORY

STANFORD M. LYMAN *is Robert J. Morrow Eminent Scholar and Professor of Social Science at Florida Atlantic University. Author of numerous articles and books, his most recent book is* Postmodernism and a Sociology of the Absurd And Other Essays on the "Nouvelle Vague" in American Social Science.

is not without some significance. But, the history of a struggle to understand the role of race and labor conflicts in American society is not new and antedates the current debate by 200 years. Indeed, it is part of the deliberations over and investigations of "American exceptionalism," i.e., the extent to which America is "different" from Europe and not merely an extension of the cultures, conflicts, and casuistries that arose on that side of the Atlantic.[2] One element of the debate over this "difference," one that has been given increasing attention of late, is a consideration of the role of "race," "race relations," and "race conflicts" in shaping American institutions, laws, customs, and ways of life.[3] Whether "race" distinctions — defined rather broadly to include divisions among "whites" and "non-whites," "Anglos" and "non-Anglos," " European settlers" and pre-Columbian "Native Americans (Indians)", "Europeans" and "Africans," and "Europeans" and "Asians" — have been more significant than "class," "gender," or "sexual preference" in defining the rights, opportunities, and life-chances of the peoples coming to or already settled in the United States, is, of course, still a matter in dispute, but there is more and more evidence and interpretation in favor of assigning race a, if not the, foremost place.[4]

Of all American institutions where an order based on race and color would predominate, none emerged more clearly than those governing marriage and work. Space does not permit me to discuss the former, but it should be noted that at one time 39 States of the United States forbade marriage across the "color line," of which 13 included provisions barring the marriage of whites to "Mongolians." [5] My concern here, however, must be limited to the world of unionized work, where, despite what Messrs. Gyory, Laurie, Arnesen, and the late Professor Gutman seek to have us believe, there has been erected an only occasionally breached wall of separation, exclusion, and eviction directed against non-white, non-Anglo male and female laborers.[6] Among those so treated have been Chinese workingmen and women, who not only were barred from membership in most of the unions organized in the heyday of burgeoning trade-union organization — the notable exception being the International Workers of the World — but also excluded by law from coming to the United States and denied the right to naturalization from 1882 to 1943. The harshness of their situation — later to be reinforced by the treatment accorded to Japanese and other Asian peoples coming to America — was in no significant way mitigated by the attitudes or actions of the mainstream elements of organized labor.

Indeed, it was no less keen an observer of labor matters than Friedrich Engels (1820-1895), who, answering International Workingmen's Association general secretary Friedrich Adolf Sorge's query as to why there was no large socialist party in the United States, pointed to how "American conditions involve very great and peculiar difficulties for a steady development of a workers' party." Among these difficulties, Engels emphasized the importance of:

> ...immigration, which divides the workers into two groups: the native-born and the foreigners, and the latter into (1) the Irish, (2) the Germans, (3) the many small groups, each of which understands only itself: Czechs, Poles, Italians, Scandinavians, etc. And then the Negroes. To form a single party out of these requires quite unusually powerful incentives. Often there is a sudden violent élan, but the bourgeois need only wait passively and the dissimilar elements of the working class fall apart again.[7]

Engels' interpretation of the ethnoracial impediment to the development of a class-based proletariat was echoed for many decades thereafter — and not only in analyses by adherents of Marxist thought. Most notable in fact is the perspective taken by the twentieth century's foremost sociologist of race and ethnic relations, Robert E. Park (1864-1944), who not only led a team of researchers on a survey of the Chinese and Japanese situation on the Pacific coast[8] — calling attention to the restrictions holding ghettoized Chinese Americans back from full-fledged participation in American society[9] — but who also reframed his prophecy of the inevitable assimilation of every minority race in America[10] so that it could be fitted into a vision of the kinds of discontents that would accompany the coming of a globalized cosmopolitan capitalism: "That means," he observed in 1939, "that race conflicts in the modern world, which is already or presently will be a single great society, will be more and more in the future confused with, and eventually superseded by, the conflicts of classes."[11] The problem with Park's prophecy, however, is that the much-hoped-for future that he warned about has not yet come to pass. Race conflicts — including struggles over the still-unresolved "Chinese question" — still occur and promise to continue into the new cybernetic age. Class conflicts have not yet superseded all others. "Race," Jerry Kang informs us in a path-breaking essay on the cyberspace revolution, "continues to be a fundamental axis of social, economic, cultural and political organization…affect[ing] both the symbolic and material realms of our lives, shaping our self-conceptions, and altering our life chances."[12] Indeed, so prevalent are "race" considerations in such current unresolved issues as school desegregation, the extension of civil rights, and disputes over affirmative action programs, restructuring voting districts, the propriety of the new "multiculturalism," and the appropriate classifications to be used in the census of 2000 that the thesis recently advanced by Charles W. Mills — viz., that there exists at the core of American political philosophy and praxis a "racial contract" by which those who can be categorized as "white" are privileged with respect to all matters related to "non-whites" (who, quite obviously, are not consenting parties to the contract)[13] — seems more than merely plausible. Indeed, in my opinion, Mills has provided the foundational frame of reference for the investigations of "whiteness" carried out by Ignatiev, Roediger, Hill, and Tchen. By the same token, Gyory and perhaps all those on his "side" in the "cold war" of which he speaks, seem to be seeking a rhetorical and casuistic way around Engels' dictum.

"Imported" vs. "Immigrant" Chinese

GYORY'S THESIS DEPENDS MOST HEAVILY ON THE DISTINCTION between "imported," i.e., "contracted" and "immigrant" or "uncontracted" labor. The former is also conflated with "coolie" labor, but only when applied to Chinese or other Asian workers. The term "coolie" has denotative and connotative meanings, but, although Gyory is careful to let his readers know about this, the actual usages are usually connotative and pejorative. Although Gyory tries to make as much as he can out of the "import"/"immigrant" distinction, when it comes to action — and note how Gyory wants his readers to pay more attention to actions and less to words when it comes to analyzing nineteenth-century white workingmen — it has no effect. For example, after devoting seven pages (pp. 39-46) to quoting white workingmen's statements in behalf of limiting the National Labor Union's opposition to Chinese to those who are "imported," Gyory is forced to concede the point: "In the end, the NLU's resolution failed to make any distinction between immigration and importation." (p.46). And, Gyory undermines the carefully made distinction between the terms "coolie" and "contract laborer" –-a distinction that, if upheld, might have protected all those Chinese workers who had freely entered into contracts — when he asks, "But were all Chinese who signed contracts 'coolies' and 'almost slaves'? Could an impoverished Chinese man sign a contract and not be a 'coolie'?" and then answers, "Possibly, probably, but no one knew for sure." (p. 33). Such being the case, his entire argument rests on a distinction that neither he himself, nor the white workingmen who espoused it, can put into practical use or public policy. Gyory's claim that "a ban on imported contract labor remained foremost on the working-class agenda during Reconstruction and beyond" comes to nothing when he is forced to admit that the Chinese Exclusion Act, whose origin he is supposed to be explaining, in fact banned all Chinese laborers from coming to America for ten years — regardless of the method by which they attempted to enter the United States.

Those Pesky Politicians

IN HIS REPLY TO MY ESSAY, GYORY INSISTS that the "Chinese Exclusion Act was a tool shaped and wielded by politicians who, in an era of burgeoning class conflict and razor-sharp electoral margins, championed an issue of paltry national importance in the false name of the working classes in the hopes of gaining a decisive handful of votes." But one must wonder whose votes were being sought? Surely the white working classes — who, unlike the Chinese, were classified as "free white persons" and thus eligible for both naturalization and the franchise — comprised a significant and goodly portion of that "decisive handful of votes" electing the congressmen and senators who devised and enacted the Chinese Exclusion Act. Further, if, as Gyory contends, "politics and the pursuit of power remain at the core of the Chinese Exclusion Act," and that, in the years preceding the enactment of that law, the forces of labor had little influence on legislation, how is it that at no time from 1882 until 1943, during which decades organized labor did gain enough influence to carry some weight with both elected and appointed officials, neither labor's spokesmen nor its rank-and-file sought repeal of the infamous act? If, as Gyory claims, the exclusion law was "of paltry national importance" how is it that, once he had enough clout with the administrations in Washington D. C., Samuel Gompers did not ask that such defenders of the civil rights of Chinese as Colonel Frederick A. Bee, missionary Sarah Baldwin, erstwhile labor union advocate Sigismund Danielewicz, or Federal District Judge Ogden Hoffman be appointed as immigration commissioners? If, as Gyory writes, (p. 247), "Workers in the East maintained a conscious distance from exclusion; although many supported it, they did not embrace it fully," their less-than-encompassing embrace — e.g., what Gyory notes as their failure to "react with glee to its passage"; and their "words express[ing] a certain discomfort with exclusion" — is hardly sufficient evidence to absolve them from having played an important role in its enactment. Their failure to oppose it, to rally against its passage, to fight for its repeal, to declare their solidarity with their Chinese brother and sister workers is mute testimony to the perspicacity of Engels' commentary on the ethnoracial limits of class consciousness in America.

The Real Nature of Race Prejudice: Against Geo-Temporal Splitting!

It seems that Gyory and I subscribe to the same measuring rod of race prejudice: It is better attested to by deeds than by words. However, it is worth noting that although Dr. Gyory believes that "Virtually all white Americans in the nineteenth century held racist views, from the poorest class to the richest class," he holds that "[r]acism and Chinese exclusion were separable issues…and eastern workers consistently separated them." Indeed, he goes on to assert that "white workers had figured out that 'Chinese labor' posed no threat" to them, and that because "the question, … from the standpoint of public policy, is not how prejudiced people were but how they acted on this prejudice," his conclusion that "most workers in the East did not advocate anti-Chinese immigration policies in the 1860s and 1870s" is testimony to their ability to rise above their race prejudices and act in accordance with their class orientation. Presumably, then, he is willing to concede that most white workers in the West, (where most of the Chinese immigrants to America had settled in the years from 1847 to 1882) did advocate anti-Chinese immigration policies during the period in question. But he places these white worker Sinophobes beyond the scope of his historical investigation: In effect, the western white workers don't figure into an assessment of the origins of or the blame for the Chinese Exclusion Act, a law, he freely admits, whose "legacy in the form of future restrictions and anti-Asian racism, lingers to this day, …[and] remains one of the most infamous and tragic statutes in American history." Moreover, the clearly racist Sinophobic vitriol, as well as the additional racist policies pursued by such labor leaders as Samuel Gompers and Terence Powderly are also exempted from having any place in Gyory's approach to the study of labor history because they took place after 1882. Thus, by eliminating those members of the working class rank and file and leadership who espoused racist views, Gyory can rejoice in the much vaunted tolerance that he finds in those who confined their opposition to Chinese to those who could be considered "coolies."

Gyory's argument can be restated: Strongly class conscious white workers in the eastern regions of the United States — in stunning contrast to their unredeemably Sinophobic brothers in the West — were, somehow, between 1870 and 1882, able to surmount their well-established racial prejudices and opposed, unsuccessfully, as it happened, the importation of Chinese "coolies" (whom, unfortunately, they were unable to distinguish from Chinese "immigrants" toward whom they harbored no objections).This period of tolerance was followed by a six-decade long era (1882-1943)during which Sinophobic hostility overcame whatever positive feelings toward Chinese workers had existed, as leaders of organized labor, without any effective opposition from the rank and file, saw to it that ever more draconian measures were added to the Exclusion Act and that no Chinese worker was admitted to an AFL local. Not to worry, however, for anything that happened after 1882 is to be regarded as "irrelevant" to understanding the law's origins. Only by using this carefully crafted geo-temporal parameter can Gyory convert his investigation into another example of the Gutman-Laurie-Arnesen perspective on labor history, i.e., one that shows, as Gyory says in his reply to my essay, "that in certain instances white workers have overcome their prejudice and worked together with blacks and other minorities to promote their goals." The slicing and dicing of time, space, and happenings is thus turned against Engels' pessimistic pronouncement on the fate of labor solidarity.

By contrast, in my essay, I suggested, in accord with the separate researches on this topic by Tchen, Roediger, Ignatiev, Kwong, and Hill, that the historical problem that Professor Gutman bequeathed to Gyory might better be approached by exploring the peculiar position that Irish workers occupied in nineteenth-century America, focusing on how their doubtful racial identity and their Catholicism might have been a strong impetus leading them to seek an unambiguous identification as "whites". Their path to "whiteness" led them to dissociate themselves from blacks and Asians, potential class brothers to them, but unacceptable if they wished to be welcome as a part of the white Protestant mainstream.

Gyory's argument lacks the kind of evidence needed to make it adequate to the ideological position he wishes to advance. His claims about how white workers rose above their race prejudices would have been more credible had he been able to show that any of the following events took place:

• if — when Chinese workers struck the Transcontinental Railway demanding among other things wages equal to those paid to white laborers doing the same job — the white workers had joined their "brother-workers" and walked off the job arm-in-arm with them.
• if — when Chinese shoemakers went on strike against their Chinatown employers — the white strikebreakers brought in to break the strike would have refused to become "scabs" and joined the Chinese protesters.
• if — when the Board of Supervisors of the city of San Francisco enacted the "cubic air" and "queue-cutting" ordinances, statutes directed against the Chinatown Chinese — white workers would have joined with their brothers and sisters in-labor, sitting in the jail, as the arrested Chinese did, until the law was declared unconstitutional.
• if — when, on November 8, 1877, Samuel Gompers, President of New York Union No. 144, addressing a mass meeting of cigarmakers at Cooper Union, replying to the previous day's New York World's report that Straiton and Storm, a cigarmaking firm, had requested that 300 Chinese strikebreakers be brought to New York City, stated that "he desired that a warning should be given that if the manufacturers imported any large number [of Chinese] to New York City they would be responsible for any violent action that might be taken to protect their wives and children and provide them with bread,"[15] — instead of being greeted by applause from those assembled, he had been shouted down by white cigarmakers urging that the Chinese be invited to join the strikers and become part of the union.
• if — during any of the more than fifty riots and lynchings of Chinese that took place between 1847 and 1905 — white workingmen had charged forward, linked arms with the hapless and much-beleaguered Chinese workers and fought off the angry and murderous mobs.

But none of these events happened. Yes, some Eastern white workingmen did, in some instances, write letters of complaint to the editors of labor journals and newspapers, and a few gave ineffective speeches favoring only the exclusion of Chinese contract workers, but as Gyory is at the end forced to admit, those forces within the labor movement favoring total exclusion, together with all the other Sinophobic elements in America, won out in 1882. And, although he doesn't want to admit the fact, the anti-Chinese elements in the labor movement would retain their control — indeed, as late as 1942 demand credit for their exclusionary efforts[16]— over the Chinese immigrant situation for more than sixty years after the original law was enacted. Those elements, both before and after 1882, played a very important part in American labor history. Candor requires that their story be told.

NOTES

1. My essay, "The 'Chinese Question' and American Labor Historians," *New Politics*, vii:4, #28, (Winter, 2000), pp. 113-148, includes a critical discussion of Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

2. For two very different examinations of this question, see Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: a Double-Edged Sword*, (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1996; and Deborah L Madsen, *American Exceptionalism*, (Jacksonville: University Press of Mississippi, 1998). See also Jacqueline Jones, *American Work: Four Centuries of Black and White Labor*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1998).

3. In this regard, my own discipline, sociology, has been remiss, while legal studies have exposed much of the institutionalized racism in America. See three essays by Stanford M. Lyman: "Race Relations as Social Process: Sociology's Resistance to a Civil Rights Orientation," *in Race in America: The Struggle for Equality*, ed. by Herbert Hill and James E. Jones, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), pp. 370-401; "Asians, Blacks, Hispanics, Amerinds: Confronting Vestiges of Slavery," in *Rethinking Today's Minorities*, ed. by Vincent N. Parrillo, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), pp. 63-86; "The Race Question and Liberalism: Casuistries in American Constitutional Law," *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, V (Winter, 1991), pp. 183-248.

4. See, e.g., Thomas Powell, *The Persistence of Racism in America*, (Lanham, MD.: Littlefield Adams Quality Paperbooks, 1993); Paul E. Peterson, ed., *Classifying by Race*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995); and Joseph Tilden Rhea, *Race Pride and the American Identity*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

5. See Andrew D. Weinberger, "A Reappraisal of the Constitutionality of 'Miscegenation Statutes'," *Cornell Law Quarterly*, XLII (1957), pp. 208 ff. Reprinted as "Appendix G" in Ashley Montagu, *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race*, 4th edn., (Cleveland: Meridian Books-World, 1965), pp. 402-424. See also Robert J. Sickels, *Race, Marriage, and the Law*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1972); and Paul R. Spickard, *Mixed Blood: Intermarriage and Ethnic Identity in Twentieth Century America*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989). See also Gary B. Nash, *Forbidden Love: The Secret History of Mixed-Race America*, (New York: Henry Holt, 1999).

6. A documentation of these exclusionary and discriminatory treatments is to be found in four decades of Herbert Hill's writings on race and labor.

7. Friedrich Engels, "[Why There Is No Large Socialist Party in America]: Engels to Friedrich A. Sorge, London, December 2, 1893," in *Marx and Engels: Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, ed. by Lewis S. Feuer, (Garden City: Anchor Books — Doubleday and Co., 1959), pp. 457-458. Quoted material from p. 458.

8. The Pacific Coast Survey is published in *The Survey Graphic*, LVI: 3 (May 1,

1926), pp. 133-221.

9. Winifred Raushenbush, “The Great Wall of Chinatown: How the Chinese Mind Their Own Business Behind It,” *The Survey Graphic*, op. cit., pp. 154-158, 221.

10. Robert E. Park, “Our Racial Frontier on the Pacific,” *The Survey Graphic*, op. cit., pp. 192-196.

11. Robert E. Park, “The Nature of Race Relations,” in Edgar T. Thompson, ed., *Race Relations and the Race Problem: A Definition and an Analysis*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1939), pp. 3-45. Quoted material from p. 45.

12. Jerry Kang, “Cyber-Race,” *Harvard Law Review*, CXIII: 5 (March, 2000), pp. 1130-1208. Quoted material from p. 1138.

13. Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

14. “Constitution of the State of California,” 1887 edn., in James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, (New York: Classics of Liberty Library, 1993 [1888]), I, pp. 709-750. Art. XIX entitled “Chinese” is on pp. 744-745.

15. *New York World*, November 9, 1877. Reprinted in The Samuel Gompers Papers, Vol. I: The Making of a Union Leader, 1850-1886, ed. by Stuart B. Kaufman, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), p. 114.

16. See, e.g., the resolution of the California State Federation of Labor — printed as an epigraph at the head of this paper — and quoted in Herbert Hill, “Chinese Immigrant Workers and the Contemporary Labor Movement,” *New Politics*, VII:4, # 28, (Winter, 2000), pp. 153-154n.

The Mob and Labor-Management Corruption in the Garment Industry

Herbert Hill

On April 28, 1998, a federal grand jury issued indictments against members and associates of organized crime groups operating in New York's garment industry.[1] Among these were members of the Gambino and Lucchesi Mafia families engaged in illegal activities including the buying and selling of labor peace. Previous efforts such as "Operation Detroit" and "Operation Cleveland," both undercover operations jointly conducted by local police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the 1970's, failed to eliminate widespread criminal activities in the garment center. From 1979 to 1982, Manhattan State Senator Franz S. Leichter released three staff reports documenting the proliferation of sweatshops and the power of gangsters over the garment industry, reports that were all but ignored by law enforcement agencies.[2] Recent investigations jointly conducted by the Division of Labor Racketeering of the U.S. Department of Labor, the FBI and the New York City Police Department that resulted in criminal indictments against organized crime figures, reveal that the long history of corruption in the garment industry and its labor unions has not yet come to an end.

Labor racketeering in New York's garment industry began as early as 1910 soon after the bitter cloakmakers' strike of that year. As a consequence of the brutality of many employers, with their gunmen, and their use of police and anti-labor politicians, the leaders of the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union, (ILGWU) began to use the services of professional gangsters on a regular basis, not only against employers, but later also against dissident members, and to settle internal disputes. Jenna Weissman Joselit, wrote in her study of the Jewish underworld "Between 1915 and 1930, racketeers went from being employees of garment manufacturers and needle trade unions to being their employers, from 'mere hirelings' to 'robber barons'; during the 1920's Jewish labor racketeers came into their own."[3] Among those active in the garment center during this period were Arnold Rothstein, Louis "Lepke" Buchalter and Jake "Gurrah" Shapiro, among other fabled figures in the annals of organized crime.

After the Cloakmakers' Strike of 1926 with its violence and use of gangsters on both sides, organized crime intensified efforts to dominate the garment industry, and by World War II, mobsters such as Thomas "Three Fingers Brown" Lucchese, Carlo Gambino, Abe Chait and Harry Strasser became increasingly

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active in garment industry operations. These activities often involved the ILGWU and were to continue for many decades. According to testimony before a committee of the U.S. Senate investigating corruption in labor unions in 1957 (McClellan Committee), David Dubinsky, president of the ILGWU from 1932 until he retired in 1966, employed the services of well-known mobsters in union organizing activities in Virginia during the 1950's. He is quoted as saying "There's some times we hire certain people to do special jobs for us but we don't let them get in the inside of the organization."[4]

Dubinsky was of course being disingenuous, as he could not ignore the fact that truck drivers' Local 102 of the ILGWU, for example, had been under mob influence for many years. In 1969, Sam Berger, who had been the long-time manager of Local 102, was sentenced to five years in federal prison for participating in the underworld's plunder of union pension funds.[5] The power of organized crime brought into the industry decades earlier continued to grow, and the underworld "fixed" ILGWU contracts, obtained protection for non-union companies, determined a "hard" or "soft" enforcement of contracts, and in conjunction with employers and the union, ensured the silence of dissidents.[6]*

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*According to Burton H. Hall, an attorney who frequently represented workers in civil rights and union democracy litigation, "One of the most notable features of ILGWU elections, however, is not contained explicitly in its constitution: that is the use by ILGWU officials of hired thugs to intimidate the membership. This extra-constitutional feature takes, however, a variety of forms. For example, when the 8,000-member Cutters' Local 10 held its election of officers in February 1968 and the newly-formed Independent Cutters' Club opposed the incumbents, one of the Independents attempted to distribute leaflets outside the election place. Abe Dolgen, then Assistant Manager of the local (he has since become Manager) walked up accompanied by a well-known gangland figure and said to the member, "If you distribute those leaflets here, I'll have you beaten up." The member looked at Dolgen, then at the gangster, and stopped distributing leaflets. A few minutes later the threat was extended by William Weiss, then a business agent and now Assistant Manager: as the price of 'peace,' Weiss demanded that the member turn over *all* his leaflets. The member surrendered those that were in his possession; then Weiss called over two young thugs who had been stationed nearby and had them accompany the member to the room used by the Independents as their campaign headquarters, where the two thugs forcibly confiscated all the campaign material. In Local 10's 1971 election, the practice was continued. Thugs were brought into union meetings to intimidate oppositionists – most notably at the nomination meeting and at the installation meeting immediately following the election – and, with Local 10 Business Agent Bernard Zionsky directing them, were stationed in seats next to and directly behind the leading oppositionists. Their purpose was not only to intimidate but also to harass physically the oppositionist members. Thus, at the installation meeting, when oppositionist Eugene Libow stood up to speak, the thug stationed next to him wrapped his legs around Libow's and actually held on while Libow struggled toward the speakers' platform. Meanwhile, an oppositionist member speaking on the speakers' platform was physically assaulted by Local 10's sergeant-at-arms. The thug who had wrapped his legs about Libow's later explained his reasons: "I do," he said, "what I'm paid for." Similar techniques were used in the 15,000-member Knitgood Workers' Local 155 in New York, where an opposition rank and file group was formed just before the February 1971 election." Burton H. Hall, "The ILGWU and the Labor Department" in *Autocracy and Insurgency in Organized Labor*, edited by Burton H. Hall, New Brunswick, Transaction Books, 1972, pp. 292-293.

During the years of Dubinsky's control of the ILGWU, the organization became rigidly bureaucratic, and every expression of internal union democracy was suppressed. Such an organizational atmosphere generated widespread corruption in the day-to-day operations of the union.[7] According to several investigative reports, "the practice of payoffs is almost institutionalized in some ILGWU locals. It operates on a two-tier system, small handouts for little favors, large payments for binding arrangements," and investigators claimed that some of the money "eventually gets upstairs." The smaller payments to business agents who conveniently ignore minor contract violations and who punish "workers who try to report such infractions."[8] According to a former undercover law enforcement agent in the garment district, "the business agents come cheap. You can buy some of them for $50."[9]

Larger payments were often given to union officials for "special considerations" such as reduced Health and Welfare Fund payments, protection from organizing campaigns, and getting "safe" workers placed in specific shops. Federal law enforcement sources explained that manufacturers who seek these favors "must have the right connections in the mob" and "knowing the right people is often the difference between a successful business and another empty loft." Investigative reporter Alan Richardson wrote that such large cash transactions "could only be arranged by a high-level figure in the Mafia; the kind of underworld executive who could reach a well-placed official in the union."[10]

In 1962 a congressional investigation revealed the effects of such practices, for example, the Fast Service Shipping Terminal organized by Local 102 of the ILGWU where the company manager was also the union shop steward. According to detailed sworn testimony, although a union shop contract required ILGWU membership for all workers, fewer than half the full-time work-force belonged to the union. Non-union workers earned between twenty and twenty-five dollars a week less than union members doing identical jobs and did not receive fringe benefits. The failure of the ILGWU to enforce contracts and the "special arrangements" it made with certain favored employers were documented and made part of the record.[11]*

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*The ILGWU leadership was disturbed by the public exposure of its corrupt practices and often distorted the history of the congressional investigation. Gus Tyler, assistant president of the union, wrote, that Adam Clayton Powell, chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor was "riding a little wave of anti-Semitism" and that the union was exonerated. According to Tyler, "There was no case. There was nothing…. We won the round. We won the war." (Gus Tyler, "The Intellectuals and the ILGWU" is *Creators and Disturbers, Reminiscences by Jewish Intellectuals of New York,* edited by Bernard Rosenberg and Ernest Goldstein, New York, Columbia University Press, 1982, pp.155-75). The official record directly contradicts Tyler's claim as the union was not exonerated. Documentation in congressional committee files, together with interviews with former congressional staff members by the author, revealed that the ILGWU used its considerable political influence at the highest levels of government to stop the hearings. An announcement was made at the last session, on September 21, 1962 that "the subcommittee recessed, to reconvene subject to call." But the hearings were never reconvened and there is no final report. (See, *Hearings before the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Investigation of the Garment Industry,* Committee on Education and Labor, U.S. House of Representatives, 87th Congress, second session, September 21, 1962, p.266).

In 1973, indictments were issued against Albert Altholtz, manager of ILGWU local 30, Sidney Tannenbaum, an official of the Coat and Suit Employers Association and Jack Hirsch, an attorney active in the garment center. The latter reportedly "often served as the conduit between the union's health and welfare fund and the association." Altholtz pleaded guilty to accepting illegal payments from employers and Tannenbaum and Hirsch pleaded guilty to giving illegal payments to Samuel Stuttman, an officer of the ILGWU Cloak Joint Board, who immediately retired when the indictments were issued. Hirsch was reported to have paid Stuttman $8,000 in four years, usually in installments of about $200. According to court records the payoffs were delivered in cash in an envelope also containing the employer's health and welfare benefit payments to the union and were made with the "general purpose of maintaining a favorable relationship between the Association and the Cloak Joint Board."[12] This brief account of union corruption, much condensed, reveals an important aspect of the history of the ILGWU that has been ignored by students of the labor movement.

Crime and the Sweatshop System

IN MY TESTIMONY of August 17, 1962 before a subcommittee of the Committee on Education and Labor of the U.S. House of Representatives, regarding racial discrimination and corruption in the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, I stated:

> [E]veryone connected with the industry knows of shops that do not get organized because they have bought protection from union organizing campaigns; and they know of contracts not enforced because union business agents are regularly taking money from employers. There is an atmosphere of venality and corruption that permeates the industry. Workers who take home $49.00 a week tell about the greed of union business agents or of the ILGWU manager who places bets of thousands of dollars a day on basketball games among the "bookies" operating in the Seventh Avenue barber shops, but they feel powerless to protest against conditions. They know all too well what happens to "troublemakers." The real corruption, the real dry rot, however, is to be found in the discriminatory racial practices which victimize tens of thousands of Negro and Puerto Rican wage earners and their families.[13]

Such conditions continue to be a characteristic of the New York garment industry forty years later. This is amply demonstrated by documentation in recent federal court records. The only changes are that the ILGWU is now the senior partner in UNITE and that "the Negro and Puerto Rican wage earners" have been replaced by Chinese and Latino immigrant workers.[14] Furthermore there is reason to believe that the corruption is now even more organized and extensive than it was in the 1960's.

The following account is reprinted verbatim from an investigative report in the form of an affidavit to the United States District Court, Southern District of New York, that is part of the official record in federal litigation against organized crime in the New York garment center. Because of space limitations some inessential material is omitted (indicated by ellipsis), as are footnotes within the affidavit.

JAMES VANDERBERG, being duly sworn, deposes and states:

1. I am a Special Agent with the United States Department of Labor, Office of Labor Racketeering....

I am currently assigned to an investigation, in conjunction with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the New York City Police Department, involving the control and influence of organized crime in the New York City Garment Center....

3.Based upon the facts set forth in this affidavit, there is probable cause to believe that there exists a scheme involving Irwin Schlacter, representatives and employees of Local 23-25, [ILGWU] and others known and unknown, to perpetuate the influence of organized crime in the garment industry in New York City through illicit labor peace deals, which constitutes the commission of the following offenses....

Factual Basis

5. I have personally participated in an investigation into the activities of the La Cosa Nostra (“LCN”) Organized Crime Families in the New York City Garment Center (There are five La Costa Nostra - “LCN” - families centered in New York: the Luchese Family; the Gambino Family; the Genovese Family; the Colombo Family; and the Bonanno Family). I have spoken with other agents participating in this investigation, and am familiar with information that has been developed during the course of that investigation including the structure, the methods, and the unlawful activities of the LCN in the Garment Center.

6. The facts comprising the basis for this affidavit are derived from the following sources:

(a) information provided to Special Agents of DOL OLR and other law enforcement officers by confidential sources;
(b) physical surveillance conducted by other law enforcement officers;
(c) independent investigation by myself and by other law enforcement officers; and
(d) interceptions conducted pursuant to electronic surveillance orders.

7. Unless otherwise noted, whenever I set forth a statement by a confidential source of information, the person to whom that confidential source spoke was either myself or another law enforcement officer who communicated such information to me. Unless otherwise noted, all statements set forth herein that are attributed to confidential sources of information or other witnesses are stated only in substance and in part....

A. The Garment Center

8. The “Garment Center” is a colloquial term used to describe the garment manufacturing and delivery industry in the greater metropolitan New York City area. The Garment Center is located principally between 7th and 9th Avenues and 30th and 39th Streets in Manhattan. In addition, scattered throughout the greater metropolitan New York City area are numerous businesses related to the Garment Center. The Garment Center is a vertically integrated industry composed of fashion designers, contractors used to cut and sew clothing, warehouses used for storage, and trucking companies responsible for delivering both raw materials and finished products.

9. An integral component of the Garment Center is the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (“ILGWU”), which recently merged with the Amalgamated Clothing and Textiles Workers Union to form a new entity known as the

Union of Needle Trade and Industrial Textile Employees ("UNITE"). Locals of UNITE represent Garment Center employees at all levels of the garment, manufacturing process.

B. Organized Crime Influence in the Garment Center

10. A cooperating witness ("CW-1"), formerly a high ranking member of the Luchese Family, stated that the Luchese Family has historically controlled the ILGWU. CW-1 has been providing information to the Government for approximately the past four years. CW-1 has since pled guilty in the Eastern District of New York to a RICO violation, including predicate acts of murder and extortion. The information from CW-1 set forth herein has been extensively corroborated by other sources....

11. A second cooperating witness, Alphonse D'Arco, also a former high-ranking member of the Luchese Organized Crime Family, likewise has stated that the Luchese Family has historically controlled the ILGWU. D'Arco began to cooperate in September 1991 and has since pled guilty in the Southern District of New York to a RICO violation, including predicate acts of murder. D'Arco has entered into a cooperation agreement with the Government and has testified in no less than nine federal and state trials involving racketeering activity. D'Arco has said that since approximately the 1950's, the Luchese Family has controlled the Garment Center through the Family's influence over the ILGWU.

12. According to CW-1, until recently, when a company is targeted for labor peace, Sidney Lieberman, a longtime Luchese Family associate who owned several Garment Center companies, would contact Irwin Schlacter. Schlacter is an attorney who represents various companies in the Garment Center and whose offices are located in New York, New York. Lieberman would provide Schlacter with the name and address of the targeted company. Schlacter, in turn, would forward the company name to Edgar Romney, an ILGWU official. Romney would then send an ILGWU organizer to the targeted company and threaten unionization. At that point, either Lieberman or Schlacter would work out a deal with the targeted company in which an illegal payment would be made in exchange for labor peace.

13. D'Arco has also indicated that, as recently as September 1991 when D'Arco began to cooperate, Lieberman was the "strong-arm" of the Luchese Family in the Garment Center. Specifically, D'Arco stated that if anyone involved with the Garment Center had labor or union problems, or if issues arose regarding jurisdictional disputes among Garment Center companies, Lieberman was contacted and advised of the situation. Lieberman, through his LCN connections and control over the ILGWU, would ensure labor peace for a fee....

16. Lieberman was arrested in the fall of 1993 and charged in the Eastern District of New York with, among other things, racketeering and extortion under the Hobbs Act. These charges stemmed from Lieberman's involvement with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Local 851, at JFK Airport. In March 1994, Lieberman pled guilty to a RICO conspiracy and, in August 1994, received a sentence of 53 months.

C. Electronic Interceptions Relating to Illicit Deals Between Schlacter, Organized Crime, and Garment Center Companies Involving Union Issues

17. During the course of the instant investigation, the FBI and DOL OLR has conducted electronic surveillance, which consisted of the interception of oral communications and the interception of visual non-verbal conduct by means of closed

circuit television cameras, in certain areas of Schlacter's law offices. Information obtained by interceptions conducted pursuant to the electronic surveillance orders reveals that Schlacter has been responsible for overseeing the illicit deals of the Organized Crime Families in the Garment District. Some of the pertinent conversations are summarized below.

18. On May 8, 1996, at approximately 9:05 a.m., a conversation was intercepted within the Schlacter's law firm involving Irwin Schlacter and an unidentified male ("UM-1"). It appears from the conversation that UM-1 is a business owner involved in the Garment Center. UM-1 discussed with Schlacter a debt that is owed to UM-1. During the course of this conversation, Schlacter told UM-1 that he (Schlacter) will take care of UM-l's union-related problems. Schlacter instructed UM-1 to pay a retainer to Schlacter. Schlacter further explained that by making payments in the form of a retainer he (Schlacter) would be able to track the payments and ensure that he (Schlacter) could not be later accused of stealing any money intended for labor peace deals....

32. Local 23-25 is a local of UNITE and represents employees throughout the Garment Center. As previously stated, Romney is the Manager of Local 23-25....

36. On May 3, 1996, at approximately 8:14 am, a conversation was intercepted involving Irwin Schlacter and Fred Menuau. Menuau is an organizer for Local 23-25. During this meeting, Menuau and Schlacter discussed companies the union was looking into. Schlacter told Menuau that he went to see Lieberman in prison the prior day and discussed a problem with a Garment Center trucking company owner. Schlacter further told Menuau that he (Schlacter) needed to sit down with "Edgar" to discuss a couple of firms connected to the mafia. From the context of the conversation, it appears that Schlacter's reference to "Edgar" is a reference to Edgar Romney....

42. According to CW-4, approximately twice per year, Julio Ballester, a business agent for Local 23-25, went to CW-4's business to discuss becoming union. CW-4 advised that each time Ballester came, CW-4 would contact Stuart who in turn would assure CW-4 that he would take care of the union.

43. Agents of the FBI and OLR interviewed Ballester about his employment at Local 23-25. Ballester advised that he was a business agent for Local 23-25 from 1990 through 1995. Ballester informed that the managers of Local 23-25, one being Romney, would on occasion direct him to conduct investigations into Garment Center companies that were targets for unionization. Ballester stated that each time he went to these companies, he wrote a report which was maintained at Local 23-25.

44. According to a confidential source ("CS"), Exact Change, a Garment Center company, was recently targeted by Local 23-25 to become union. However, Exact Change pays Joseph Ianacci for labor peace. CS stated that in or about September 1996 Romney canceled a strike against Exact Change at the bequest of Ianacci. CS advised that the "strike" file on Exact Change is maintained at 275 7th Avenue, New York, NY. The CS has been involved in the Garment District for many years and has provided reliable and corroborated information in the past....

Conclusion

53. Based on the information obtained, there is probable cause to believe that, after Schlacter provides Romney or other union representatives, with the names of Garment Center companies targeted by Organized Crime, Romney directs Local 23-25 business agents and organizers to go to the aforementioned companies in order to put pressure on companies with the threat of unionization or

> strikes and thereafter withdrawing the threat when an agreement with an organized Crime family is made, thereby facilitating Organized Crime control of Garment Center companies.... [15]

End of quotation from affidavit

IN A RELATED 1998 CASE INVOLVING RACKETEERING AND EXTORTION in the garment center, a federal grand jury issued the following indictment which stated in part:

> 24. A confidential source ("CS"), who has been involved in the Garment Center for over twenty years, has provided reliable information concerning the Garment Center, which in all material respects corroborates the information provided by CW-1 and D'Arco. The CS has provided information on a weekly basis since late January 1996, and last reported to the Government on or about March 20, 1996. Since late January 1996 CS has stated that following Lieberman's incarceration, SCHLACTER assumed Lieberman's role as a liaison between the LCN and the Garment Center. An associate of an LCN family, who is involved in the Garment Center, told the CS that SCHLACTER, following Lieberman's incarceration, is now the primary representative of the LCN in the Garment Center with respect to labor peace arrangement's and other organized crime-related matters....
>
> 26. According to the LCN family associate, as related to the CS, JOSEPH C. GALLO, a caporegime in the Gambino Family, meets SCHLACTER in his office to discuss Gambino Family interests in the Garment Center. In addition, the LCN family associate has told the CS that EDGAR ROMNEY, a union official, regularly meets SCHLACTER at SCHLACTER'S office to discuss illicit labor peace deals.
>
> 28. The LCN family associate recently told the CS that he has been meeting with SCHLACTER at SCHLACTER'S offices to discuss the status of an illicit labor peace deal involving a particular Garment Center company. According to the LCN family associate, the owner of the company had arranged a deal with organized crime associates whereby he could operate his company as a "50-50" company. In other words, the owner could do 50% of the company's contracting work with non-union employees. The net effect of this arrangement is a substantial savings in labor costs. As consideration for this deal, the company's owner was required to use an LCN-controlled trucking company.
>
> 29. SCHLACTER, at the request of the LCN family associate, has contacted, EDGAR ROMNEY, the union official. According to the LCN family associate, as related to the CS, ROMNEY will contact the owner of the company referred to in ¶ 28, *supra,* and inform him that his original labor peace deal is still in effect, but that the owner no longer has to deal exclusively with the LCN-controlled trucking company referred to in ¶ 28, *supra*. ROMNEY will then "suggest" to the owner that he begin dealing with a trucking company partially owned by the LCN family associate. The LCN family associate will pay SCHLACTER a fee for his efforts vis-à-vis this illicit labor peace deal.
>
> 30. The LCN family associate recently told the CS that on March 4, 1996, the LCN family associate met SCHLACTER at SCHLACTER'S office to get an update on the trucking deal referred to in ¶ 29, *supra*. SCHLACTER told the LCN family associate that the deal is on hold. SCHLATER explained to the LCN family associate that ROMNEY is nervous about setting up any new labor peace deals. Apparently, ROMNEY believes that he is the target of a federal investiga-

tion involving the Garment Center. According to the CS, regardless of ROMNEY'S fears concerning a federal investigation all current labor, peace deals will remain in effect, and meetings concerning these deals will continue to be held at SCHLACTER"S offices....[16]

End of quotation from indictment

AS A RESULT OF THIS CASE AND OTHER LITIGATION, several important organized crime figures operating in the garment industry were given jail sentences, [17] however, union officials seem to enjoy a strange immunity although directly involved in corrupt activity. In a September 26, 1996 letter to a federal judge regarding a union business agent who pleaded guilty to taking bribes from employers, Max Zimny, General Counsel of UNITE stated that it was the policy of UNITE and Local 23-25 "to conduct a full investigation into this matter so as to cleanse their ranks of any wrong doing and to fully protect the interests of the workers they represent."[18] It is not known if UNITE and local 23-25 have conducted any investigation of the unlawful practices revealed in the documents quoted above, but as of this writing (March, 2000) Edgar Romney continues to hold his positions both with the international union and Local 23-25. Even absent an indictment or a conviction there is clear evidence of a pattern of corruption. The inaction by the union leadership indicates a tolerant acceptance of corruption that has a long history within the ILGWU, a history that suggests that the practices revealed here are not limited to Local 23-25.[19]

Local 23-25, A Crippled Union

THE HISTORY OF LOCAL 23-25 PROVIDES A SIGNIFICANT EXAMPLE of how bureaucratic control and corruption cripples a union. Formed in 1963 as the result of a merger between two local unions with declining membership and resources, Shelley Appleton, Dubinsky's son-law, who had never been a garment worker (he was a lawyer previously made a vice-president of the ILGWU) was appointed manager of the merged local unions.[20] When Local 23-25 began to reverse its declining membership by organizing large numbers of Chinese workers in the early 1970's, union corruption was already pervasive, and in large measure was responsible for the union's inability to function effectively on behalf of its members.

In 1979, Frank B. Mercurio, Regional Director of the Employment Standards Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor, reported that wages in Chinatown factories ranged from $1.50 to $2.50 an hour for a ten to twelve hour day, usually with sixty hour work-weeks. This was the pattern despite the fact that these shops were organized by the ILGWU and that the federal minimum wage at that time was $2.90 per hour. Mercurio stated that the ILGWU did not enforce its contracts,[21] and that there were many other problems, including "The failure to keep records of daily and weekly hours worked; failure to keep proper production records; the absence of addresses, ages or Social Security numbers, and undated time cards." In addition, said Mercurio "several employers allegedly punched their workers' time cards in and out."[22]

In 1982, the Leichter Report, a detailed study entitled "Sweatshops to Shakedowns: Organized Crime in New York's Garment Industry," confirmed similar widespread conditions, including inaccurate or non-existent time clocks in garment factories, and failure of employers to pay workers the union minimum wage of $4.50 an hour for sewing machine operator. Many employers, according to the report, did not even pay workers the prevailing federal minimum wage.[23]

The many violations of federal and state labor laws found in Chinatown garment factories included the use of child labor. After an investigation, the Labor Department found that children whose ages ranged from twelve to fourteen were working in Chinatown shops and that they were not placed on payrolls but paid in cash.[24] One Chinese garment worker interviewed by the author said that she started to work in a sweatshop when she was fourteen years old. The issue of child labor received widespread publicity when thirteen year old Mary Goon was killed when she fell six floors down an empty elevator shaft after leaving a garment work-shop. All five factories in the building where the accident occurred had been organized by the ILGWU. The dangerous state of the elevator had resulted in three citations for safety violations before the tragedy, yet neither the union nor any other agency had made any effort to obtain compliance with minimal legal standards.[25] Months after Mary Goon's death in February 1979, children were still found in Chinatown factories. A reporter from *Women's Wear Daily* found "a half-dozen shops" with "children playing in the factories, sitting on their mothers laps at the sewing machine or actually working."[26]

The response of the union leadership to these problems revealed their lack of concern for the working conditions of their members in Chinatown factories. Before Jay Mazur became president of the ILGWU and later UNITE, he was manager of local 23-25 and he frequently tried to minimize reports of labor abuses in Chinatown factories. In response to a report critical of labor conditions he called it "a gross exaggeration to say most of the buildings were unsafe, or firetraps."[27] In regard to the presence of a young girl whom reporters found snipping loose threads on shirts, he replied:

> I mind that you are picking on somebody who is just picking thread. She is violating the agreement (union contract) but try to understand what is happening here. She walks in (to the factory) and picks some thread to do something, it is almost like an activity.[28]

Mazur repeatedly denied, in defiance of extensive evidence, that there was much child labor in the Chinatown shops organized by the ILGWU.

For decades, the lack of contract enforcement by the ILGWU has been a major problem for workers throughout the industry, especially in Chinatown and it is directly related to union corruption. Payoffs from employers to ILGWU business agents in the Chinatown area has been described as a "public secret." One former garment worker interviewed by reporters claims to have seen union business agents accept bribes to overlook contract violations.[29] An employer explained that "I had to pay off business agents when I started, and my father did the same before me."[30] A Chinese garment worker interviewed by the author stated "There is no question about it — even the so-called best ones receive gifts and so on from employers." She again confirmed the "public secret" by stating "everybody knows that — *everybody!* It's very common to hear among the workers, 'the union helps the boss, not the workers, very common."[31]

A SIGNIFICANT ASPECT OF THE FUNCTIONING OF LOCAL 23-25 is its restrictions upon the participation of workers in their own shop's union activities. According to a knowledgeable Chinese garment worker who was a shop chairlady, most shops in Chinatown factories operating with union contracts do not have chairladies although required to do so by the union agreement and the women who do serve in this capacity "are friends of bosses or of the union business agents who pick them." She charged that requests for the election of chairladies by workers were repeatedly refused by Jay Mazur when he was manager of Local 23-25 and that this policy has been maintained by the union since that time. This worker also reported that Mazur rejected the proposal "that the shop chairladies' newsletter be written by the chairladies themselves" instead of by the paid union staff person who is in charge of the newsletter. These views were echoed by other Chinese garment workers who expressed their disgust with the leadership of local 23-25.*

The union leadership actively suppresses any effort of workers to become active on their own behalf and to be involved in local union operations, whether on the level of policy or even in routine organizational functions. Significantly, the leadership of Local 23-25 refuse requests from their members to have union contracts translated into Chinese and are also very reluctant to give union members copies in English of the labor — management agreement under which they work. Furthermore, when workers complain about wages or shop conditions, they are frequently threatened by either the boss or the union representative. Many have been warned, "you better keep quiet, shut up or you will be without a job, or else something else will happen to you."[32]

Community leaders have told the press that "they have long ago given up on the union's promise to improve the wages and working conditions of Chinatown workers." They charge that "the union fails to police the dangerous sweatshops that have proliferated in the area and has allowed corruption to taint its ranks."[33] According to a leading community activist in Chinatown, who had been a member of local 23-25, "workers work long hours but live in poverty, work conditions are crowded, dirty, extremely unsanitary, fire hazards in very old buildings...."[34] All the continuing evidence indicates that this is an accurate description of conditions for the members of Local 23-25 at the end of the twentieth century. It should be noted that these workers who earn substandard wages pay monthly dues to Local 23-25 of $18.00 after an initiation fee of $35.00.[35]

A Criminal Alliance

NOT ONLY DOES THE INTERNAL CORRUPTION OF THE UNION in the New York garment industry and its connections with organized crime prevent it from functioning as

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*It is interesting to note that the current treatment of Chinese women in the ILGWU is similar to that experienced by Puerto Rican women more than fifty years ago. According to Altagracia Ortiz in her study "Puerto Rican Women in the Garment Industry of New York City, 1920-1980", "Puerto Rican women could expect to be accepted as members of the union, [ILGWU] but they could not look forward to its protection or expect full participation within its ranks," in *Puerto Rican Women and Work,* edited by Altagracia Ortiz, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1996, p.59. See also Herbert Hill, "Guardians of the Sweatshops: The Trade Unions, Racism, and the Garment Industry," in *Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans, Studies In History and Society*, edited by Adalberto Lopez and James Petras, New York, John Wiley, 1974, pp. 384-416.

an effective instrument on behalf of workers, but as it collaborates with employers and the underworld it plays a major role in maintaining the sweatshop system. The crucial role of the union in this regard was demonstrated in the 1982 strike which the ILGWU leadership publicized as a great victory for workers, when in fact its main purpose was to force the Chinese contractors to submit to the practices and control of the Greater Blouse, Skirt and Undergarment Association. Every three years Local 23-25 negotiates an agreement with the Association, which represents the unionized contractors including the Chinese contractors, (whether they want this "representation" or not), and the 1982 agreement forced the Chinatown contractors to make additional concessions to the large white-owned garment companies.

In 1976, the Chinese Garment Makers Association was formed and this weak group of Chinatown contractors filed an unsuccessful lawsuit attacking the Association for its "secret agreements" with the jobbers who provide work for Chinatown shops.[36] By 1982, Chinatown contractors had attained a numerical majority in the Association and resented the all-white leadership of the Association with its close ties to the manufacturers who control their supply of work and to the underworld dominated trucking companies upon which they are dependent and to which they must pay extortionate fees. When the Chinese contractors resisted compliance with the Association's practices and tried to mount an attack against them, a strike called by the ILGWU forced them to accept the Association's terms. The contractors' association had long been dominated by organized crime and it exists as much to control Chinatown contractors (and others as well), as to "represent" them. A form of market control has been established with the direct participation of the union.

An additional factor in this history is that over a period of many years, organized crime groups have been investing in "legitimate business," and have extensive interests in many garment companies. Evidence of this development comes from several sources including the Pennsylvania Crime Commission when it reported in 1980 and again in 1981 that numerous garment operations in Northeastern Pennsylvania and New York were controlled by criminal interests.[37] Such activity has increased in recent years and at the beginning of a new century, the alliance between the manufacturers, the union and organized crime dominates the garment industry.

Emergence of New Leadership

WHEN THE ILGWU AND THE AMALGAMATED CLOTHING AND TEXTILE WORKERS UNION merged in 1995, the aging leaders of the Amalgamated retired with their "golden parachutes" and the ILGWU group gained control of the united organization. Jay Mazur, president of the ILGWU became president of UNITE, Edgar Romney, remained as head of its largest unit, Local 23-25 and became executive vice-president of the international union, while Gus Tyler the assistant president retained his position, as did Max Zimny, the union's general counsel. These and others who presided over the operations of the ILGWU for decades are now in control of UNITE. It is not surprising that recent criminal court records reveal that it is business as usual in "New York, the sweatshop capital of the America."[38]

A final word about the future of UNITE. Conflict within the leadership has been a characteristic of the internal life of the union since the merger of the two organizations. It may be anticipated that in the near future the old ILGWU group currently in control will be challenged by an emerging leadership based in the southern textile industry, where despite intense opposition from employers, the union has been growing in contrast to the stagnation and corruption of the New York garment locals. Perhaps a new leadership, prepared to break with old corrupt arrangements, willing to share organizational power with racial minorities and women, and committed to internal democracy, will transform the union and struggle for a better life for all of its members.

NOTES

1. *United States v. Joseph Defede, Daniel Rizzo, Michael Vuolo, Oscar Ansourian, Sidney Lieberman, Irwin Schlacter, and John Murno*, Indictment No. 98 (R. 373 S.D.N.Y. 1998)

2. New York State Senator Franz S. Leichter, "The Return of the Sweatshops: A Call For State Action," October, 1979, "The Return of The Sweatshops, Part II," February 26, 1981, "Sweatshops to Shakedowns: Organized Crime In New York's Garment Industry" Part III, March 1982.

3. Jenna Weissman Joselit, *Our Gang, Jewish Crime and the New York Jewish Community, 1900-1940*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1982, pp. 117-118.

4. *The McClellan Committee Hearings — 1957*, Report of the Senate Select Committee on Improper Activities in the Labor-Management Field, Bureau of National Affairs, Washington, D.C., 1958, Account of Proceedings, August 1, 1957, pp.204-205.

5. Jonathan Kwitny, *Vicious Circles*, *The Mafia In The Marketplace*, New York, W.W. Norton, 1979, pp. 238.

6. Joselit, op.cit., Kwitny, op. cit., For information on organized crime in the garment industry and the union see Albert Fried, *The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Gangster in America*, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980, p. 140, Peter Mass, *The Valachi Papers*, New York, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1968, p. 166-169, John Hutchinson, *The Imperfect Union, History of Corruption in American Trade Unions*, New York, E.P. Dutton, 1972, pp. 86-92., Don Hogan and Peter Braestrup, "Dress Union Shares Blame for Rackets," *New York Herald-Tribune*, June 30, 1958, p. 1., Pennsylvania Crime Commission, Annual Report 1980 and Annual Report 1981, Ralph Blumenthal, "When the Mob Delivers the Goods," *The New York Times Magazine*, July 26, 1992, pp. 23-24, Richard Bernstein, "Government Papers Offer Rare Details of the Mob Grip on a Union," *The New York Times*, November 2, 1994, p. A18, and State Senator Franz S. Leichter, "Sweatshops to Shakedowns: Organized Crime in New York's Garment Industry," Part III of "Return of the Sweatshop," New York, March 1982.

7. See especially, Burton Hall, "The ILGWU and the Labor Department," in *Autocracy and Insurgency in Organized Labor*, edited by Burton Hall, New Brunswick, Transaction Books, 1972, pp. 284-295, Robert Fitch, "Look Behind the Union Label," *Village Voice*, January 20, 1998, p. 34, and "Sewing Suspicious," *Village Voice*, April 14, 1998, p. 36. See also Diane B. Henriques, "Garment Union Battles Its Own Workers," *The New York Times*, April 27, 1998, p. 1.

8. Allen F. Richardson, with Thomas Moran and Tony DeStefano, "How Mob Plays Tag With the Union Label," *Women's Wear Daily*, August 30, 1977, p. 8.

9. Harold Whellan, an informant for the government in "Operation Detroit," code name of joint strike force of the FBI and the New York Police Department in 1973, quoted in Ibid.

10. Ibid

11. See *Hearings before the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Investigation of the Garment Industry*, Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives, 87th Congress, second session, New York, August 23, 1962, testimony of Fred Heinken and

Louis D'Amato, freight handlers (pp. 118-133) and Jack Borofsky, president and James Crombie, manager of Fast Service Shipping Terminal (pp. 133-166).

12. Information and quotations taken from court records reported by Allen F. Richardson, Supra, note 8, pp.8-9.

13. For the author's testimony before the hearings see *Congressional Record-House*, January 31, 1963, pp. 1496-99. A revised version under the title "The ILGWU Today — The Decay of a Labor Union," appeared in *New Politics*. Summer, 1962, pp. 3-14. Gus Tyler, assistant president of the union replied in the Fall, 1962 issue and the author's rebuttal entitled "The ILGWU — Fact and Fiction, A Reply to Gus Tyler" was published in the Winter 1963 issue of *New Politics* pp. 7-27. The entire debate appears *in Autocracy and Insurgency in Organized Labor*, edited by Burton H. Hall, New Brunswick, Transaction Books, 1972, pp. 147-200.

14. For data on the abandonment of garment work by Jews and Italians, then later by African-Americans and Puerto Ricans, who have now been replaced by Chinese labor, See Herbert Hill, "Chinese Immigrant Workers and the Contemporary Labor Movement, From Exclusion to Race and Gender Discrimination," *New Politics*, Winter 2000, pp. 149-165. See also Altagracia Ortiz, "Puerto Rican Women in the Garment Industry of New York City, 1920 — 1980," in *Puerto Rican Women and Work*, edited by Altagracia Ortiz, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1996, pp. 55-81.

15. *United States of America v. The Premises Known and Described As the Office of Local 23-25, UNITE, AFL-CIO, located at 275 7th Avenue, 10th and 11th Floor New York, N.Y. 10001*. United States District Court, Southern District of New York. Affidavit In Support of Search Warrant, April 3, 1997.

16. Supra, note 1

17. See Al Guart, "Feds Bust Mob Boss; Garment Center Rackets Unraveling, FBI Claims," *New York Post*, April 29, 1998, p.5, Sharon Edelson and Arthur Friedman, "Probe into Mob Might Also Aim at Apparel Union," *Women's Wear Daily*, April 30, 1998, p.1. See also Selwyn Raab, "Police Say Their Chinatown Sting Ties Mob to the Garment Industry, " *New York Times*, March 20 1990, p.A1.

18. Max Zimny, General Counsel, UNITE, to Judge Denny Chin, United States District Court, Southern District of New York, September 26, 1996.

19. See information given in sources provided in notes 2 through 7.

20. *Report* of the General Executive Board to the 32nd Convention of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, May 12, 1965, Miami Beach, Florida, p. 122.

21. Quoted by Allen R. Richardson, "U.S. Cracks Down on 85 Chinatown Firms," *Women's Wear Daily*, October 19, 1979, p. 11

22. Ibid

23. Supra, note 2, Part III, p. 41.

24. Supra note 21, Ibid.

25. Tony DeStefano and Allen F. Richardson, "Chinatown Sweatshops: ILGWU Called Lax and Corrupt" *Women's Wear Daily*, May 21, 1979, p. 1.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid. According to an interview by the author with a Chinatown community activist who is a member of Local 23-25 and requested anonymity, seventy-five percent of Chinatown loft buildings predate 1901. They were described as old and dilapidated, having no heat or hot water, with unsafe stairs and elevators and cracked ceilings and walls. My informant stated that owners rarely invest in repair. An inspection of several buildings on Canal Street and adjacent side streets confirm the report of these conditions. April 1995.

28. Quoted in Supra, note 25.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Interview with Chinese garment worker, member of Local 23-25, who requested anonymity. March 1994.

32. Interview with Local 23-25 activist who requested anonymity, April 1994.

33. Supra, note 25.

34. Ibid.

35. Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act, Form L M-2, Local 23-25, UNITE, April 2, 1997

36. Leichter Report, Part III, pp. 40-41.

37. Pennsylvania Crime Commission, "A Decade of Organized Crime," Annual Report, 1980, and Annual Report, 1981, Leichter Report, Part III, p. 5-29. See also Maas, op. cit.

38. The charge that New York had become the "sweatshop capital of America," was made by New York State Senator Franz S. Leichter at a press conference on the corner of Canal and Allen Streets in New York's Chinatown on February 27, 1982, when he released his investigative report "Sweatshops To Shakedowns: Organized Crime in New York's Garment Industry," (Part III of "The Return of the Sweatshop"). Part II of the report released on February 26, 1981 concluded that, "But it is New York City which is the 'sweatshop capital' of the country, and sweatshops are New York's fastest growing industry.... The result is that in excess of 50,000 New Yorkers work in a form of peonage and under often hazardous conditions, without the benefits of wage and safety laws — a form of labor exploitation which we thought had been outlawed for more than 50 years." p. 31

Stirring Things Up, Or *Reeding* Black Politics

Barry Goldberg

IN 1996, A GLOBAL TELEVISION AUDIENCE OF THREE BILLION VIEWERS sat glued to their television sets as Muhammed Ali raised his trembling arm and lit the 170 foot high Olympic torch to climax the opening ceremonies in Atlanta, Georgia. The former Gold Medalist and Heavyweight Champion of the World had triumphed once again. But this time he had not defeated a powerful contender in the ring, he had shown the willpower to push his own failing body to complete a mundane task. His vulnerability provided the perfect human touch to an all too familiar — but apparently popular — mechanized corporate spectacle. Like the young quick, agile, and strong Cassius Clay who brought home the gold from the 1960 Rome Olympics, the frail boxer, suffering from years of blows to the head, had become, in the words of one newspaper, "an American hero."

But without discounting the genuine human feeling behind the outpouring of respect, as Mike Marqusee reminds us in his overlooked history of Ali and his times, the three billion viewers had also witnessed carefully orchestrated political theater.* As the torch blazed the spectacle's organizers played the concluding cadences of Martin Luther King's 1963 March on Washington Address. Atlanta, the South, and the entire nation, the spectacle suggested, had triumphed over its racist past. The once reviled heavyweight champ who had the audacity to rub elbows with Malcolm X, join the Nation of Islam, and refuse to register for the military draft during the Vietnam War, had, in Marqusee's words, "had his political teeth extracted." For the moment, the society of the corporate spectacle had transformed a living reminder of black resistance to racism and imperialism into a poster boy for an allegedly egalitarian New World Order. A ceremony the following week "complete[d] this train of symbolic transformations." During half-time at the basketball final, the former Francoist Olympic head Juan Antonio Samaranch presented Ali with a new gold medal. Three decades earlier he had hurled the original into the Ohio River to protest "the gap between Olympic ideals and American realities." Ali's subsequent vilification in the American press was not forgotten. Who could recall the furor when the newly crowned world champion visited Miami's black ghetto and told startled sports press, "I know where I'm going, and I know the truth, and I don't have to be what you want me to be. I'm free to be what I want"? Thirty years later, Ali could still dominate the stage, but he no longer controlled the script.

Adolph Reed's recent collection of essays, *Stirrings in the Jug: Black Poli-*

*Mike Marqusee *Redemption Song* Verso, London, N.Y. 1999

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*tics in the Post Segregation Era** never mentions Muhammad Ali or the Atlanta Olympiad. Nonetheless, this collection of mostly previously published explorations of black politics since the overthrow of legalized white supremacy is an indispensable guide to the racial politics of Atlanta's Olympiad. Reed delineates the aspects of post-segregation racial politics that set the stage for Ali's political vulnerability and rehabilitation by the powers that be. In fact, as he notes in an autobiographical aside in the introduction, Atlanta was his first "natural laboratory" to study black politics in the new era of voting rights. As a graduate student in Atlanta, he observed Andrew Young's election to Congress and Maynard Jackson's election as Atlanta's first black mayor. Cooperating with "whites' absolute prerogative for defining policy objectives" meant "acquiescence to policy agendas that unfailingly reproduced, and as likely as not intensified, a pattern of racial inequality." In Atlanta, and elsewhere, black politicians and activists were being "integrated into the semi-formalized regime of 'cooperative' racial subordination." Victories of black politicians and the containment of a political program to advance the interests of the majority of the black electorate could coexist. It was here that he also saw how the politics of black authenticity could lead to symbolic inclusion and political impotence. Playing their own "race card," the rhetoric of racial solidarity masked the emerging biracial politics of inequality. In other words, the political rehabilitation of Muhammad Ali was a symbolic gesture that masked the inegalitarian consequences of economic boosterism of the Olympics' local sponsors. Though a very much living and complex human being, Ali became another prisoner of what Reed aptly calls "totemic nostalgia" that appeals to racial unity but suppresses historical consciousness. Indeed, Reed argues that African Americans have not simply been victims of whitewashed history, but architects of an easily coopted cultural politics that can win center stage in media events and put black faces in city hall, but leaves social inequality intact. And not only have radicals failed to stop this new regime, they have failed to understand it, and, Reed alleges, therefore abetted it.

Not surprisingly, Reed's unrelenting critique of black political thought and practice has angered many. His publisher's blurb even advertises the fact that some of his critics have been "less [than] polite" in response to "his bare-knuckled approach to political analysis." Though he "decided to repair to the university for reflection and study" he remains an activist who uses words as weapons. He saw the academy as a place "to prepare in concert with like-minded others to meet the new situation," but when writing about those who are of a different mind, he doesn't mince words. He would rather antagonize an adversary than risk losing an argument. Reed's combative style grabbed the most public attention with his 1995 polemic "The Current Crisis of the Black Intellectual." Henry Louis Gates and Cornel West were singled out for extensive criticism, with sharp shorter barbs hurled at Robin D. G. Kelley, Michael Eric Dyson, and bell hooks. As Manning Marable noted in a sharp rebuttal in this journal, his substantive criticisms of these liberal and left intellectuals crossed over into "a series of mean-spirited criticisms against those characterized as 'the children of Booker T. Washington.'" Marable could not resist a few personal barbs of his own. He wrote that although "Reed identifies himself with the radical left," he "all too often seems to behave" like "the middle class Negroes" of the Midwestern industrial town of his youth. They engaged in "hundreds of petty quarrels . . . animated by jealousy and a desire for influence within the white elite." In sum, Marable argues, Reed is guilty of the very behavior he attributes to other black "public intellectuals." Furthermore, says Marable, Reed's rhetorical allegiance to the interests of working-class black Americans may simply mask the fact that "the virtue of being further to the left of anyone else may mean that one is really outside the real experiences of one's own people."

THE PUBLICATION OF REED'S NEW BOOK PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY to step back from the exchange of personal attacks and assess Reed's strengths and weaknesses as a political analyst as well as polemicist. Admittedly, the two are not easy to separate. Who else but Reed would have the political audacity and intellectual conviction to write: "From Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton to William Julius Wilson to Cornel West and Henry Louis Gates Jr. to Louis Farrakhan, the posture of being the authentic racial voice unaccountable to any black constituency necessarily reprises [Booker T.] Washington's role as collective racial proxy designated by white elites"? Rather than aiding his argument that "the dominant politics of racial advancement has always rested on a nonparticipatory, undemocratic foundation of elite custodianship," such indiscriminate shotgun blasts undermine the credibility of a political thinker and activist who is making a vital contribution to democratic renewal.

Reed is asking (and going a long way to answering) the crucial questions that triggered his initial move into the academy and "ultimately frame" the essays that comprise the book:

> What are the forces — both internal and external — most significant in shaping black political life? How should we account for the decline of left critical political tendencies in black politics, for their failure even to secure institutional niches? To what extent have the interpretations and strategies associated with those tendencies contributed to their failure? How should an autonomous left critique interpret and respond to the dynamics actually operating in mundane black politics, for example, to the rise of officialdom and the collapse of the "nationalist"/"integrationist" dichotomy that had been the conceptual foundation of black power radicalism's analysis and judgment inside Afro-American political activity?

And perhaps, most important, even if we do not accept his choice of targets, we cannot ignore his convincing challenge to the politics of "racial authenticity and other forms of organicist mythology." Racial solidarity must be a "democratic and participatory" achievement, not a manipulative rhetorical gambit. Encouraging and responding to a variety of black interests is "the cornerstone of credibility for the notion of black politics." Sensing radical skepticism, he adds, "It may seem odd to argue for grounding a radical program for reorganization of black politics on what might be viewed as liberal formalism. However, this recommendation is a response to the century-long hegemony in which even radicals have adopted a form of politics and a program defined by petit-bourgeois class interests as the natural expression of black Americans' collective political aspirations."

To drive home the point, he adds, "Ironic though it may seem to many on the left, cultivating a liberal democratic, popular politics is also the clearest and likeliest way to redirect the focus of black political debate along more substantive lines by making its class content explicit." Anticipating the complaints of critics, Reed argues,

> Especially now, as the forces of reactionary counterattack are recomposing and mobilizing across the national political landscape and the objective basis for the politics of generic racial advancement recedes into the historical rearview mirror, we need to generate an approach to black politics that pivots on the fulcrum of Marx's famous heuristic: Who benefits? Who doesn't? Who loses? Politics can be created only by going to basics and building it from the bottom up, around the specific groups of black individuals in specific places and specific social circumstances.

"Black Power" needs to be replaced by blacks' powers. Racial and class reactionaries can only be defeated by "developing a critical democratic political culture."

THERE ARE, OF COURSE, INHERENT ADVANTAGES AND PITFALLS to an essay collection and *Stirrings in the Jug* is no exception. Readers have an opportunity to revisit work they have already read. They can also discover previously published work that had never come to their attention. And, even if the essays are not arranged chronologically, all readers can assess the author's development. As we shall see, Reed has been remarkably consistent over the past decade; nonetheless, like all first class political intellectuals he adjusts his voice to a shifting audience. At moments, one reads dry if astute reviews of the scholarly literature. At other times, he includes autobiographical reflections. Sometimes the boundaries between genres dissolve and we are pulled along by passionate, engaged, intellectual rigor. This is the case with "The Allure of Malcolm X and the Changing Character of Black Politics," the last essay in the volume but, perhaps, the most accessible introduction to his thought. Yet, offsetting the thrill of watching an argument deepen as it is deployed in different contexts, there is an unavoidable tendency to repetition. Each essay, initially conceived as a complete work that had to stand on its own and win a new audience, presents or recycles arguments that appear elsewhere. It was wonderful to have these essays conveniently bound together, but long before I finished the book, I wished Reed had had the time and put in the effort to have written a book length essay. But for the time being, we'll have to make do with this collection. It is essential reading, but, unfortunately, less than the sum of its parts.

Reed's introduction goes a long way to suggest the book gestating in and between the separate essays. Reed seeks to explain how the very real successes of the civil rights era lead to a shift in black politics that instead of energizing continuing egalitarian reforms, led to "demobilization." Black electoral power and governance did not advance the interests of most black Americans. Rather than belaboring the conservative assault and liberal capitulation, he argues that black Americans and the democratic left need to engage in a rigorous critique of our own political assumptions and practices. His answer: the varied interests of black Americans have been silenced by the longing for collective identity and an authentic, singular black voice. As he puts it, "the dominant politics of generic racial advancement," whatever its virtues and gains in the heyday of Jim Crow "has always rested on a nonparticipatory, undemocratic foundation of elite custodianship. " What needs to be explained is less white racism and capital's defense of the existing distribution of wealth, but the weakness of the politics, theory, and culture of black resistance.

Reed's analysis of black urban regimes, his scathing attack on Jesse Jackson's self-centered presidential campaigns, and his sharp critique of

"Malcolmania" offer readers the opportunity to see the empirical basis and political ramifications of his dissent from black political practice and culture. Yet, in many respects, the oldest essay, "The 'Black Revolution' and the Reconstruction of Domination," is the most revealing. Initially written in the late 1970s "as the post-segregation regime was consolidating" (with a Southern racial liberal "peanut farmer" in the White House), Reed revised it in the early 1980s while a "teflon-coated" reactionary was consolidating a "new politics of inequality." It's a thrilling, heady read in spite of the somber Continental theory that drives the political analysis. Reed applies the "negative" dialectic of the Frankfurt School to examine how "while U.S. radicals in the late 1960s fantasized about a 'new man' in the abstract, capital was in the process of concretely putting the finishing touches on its new individual." In a caustic dismissal of naïve and radical visions, he continues, "Beneath the current black-female-student-chicano-gay-elderly-youth-disabled, ad nauseum, 'struggles' lies a simple truth: There is no coherent opposition to the present administrative apparatus, at least not from the left." While some of the most noted critics of "mass society," C. Wright Mills and Herbert Marcuse saw the insurgencies of "the sixties" as emancipatory cracks in the system of domination, Reed, in its aftermath, sees the emergence of more pervasive, if flexible, control. He writes, "[B]lack radical protests and the system's adjustments have served as catalysts in universalizing one-dimensionality and in moving into a new era of monopoly capital." Reed acknowledges that the end of segregation did remove "a fetter restricting the possibility of emancipation," but, he quickly adds, the elimination of "extraordinary subjugation" did not lead to "equality." In fact, he asserts, "the civil rights ideology fit very well with the goals of monopoly capitalism." Its "egalitarian ideology coincided with corporate liberalism's cultural program of homogenization." Blacks would now be viewed as "one unit of labor equivalent to any other." Furthermore, the "rights revolution" did not lead to a democratic political culture. Instead, according to Reed, "The civil rights and voting rights legislation officially defined new terms for the management of blacks and an expanded managerial role for the elite." Rather than managing the "extraordinary subjugation" it offered "an expanded [and increasingly remunerative] role for the [black] elite." In other words, "Black control was by no means equivalent to popular democratization."

Reed, however, does more than employ European critical theory to explain the emergence of more "rational" modes of racial domination under late capitalism; he also highlights the theoretical limits of black radicalism. Voices did challenge the emerging institutional accommodations of the civil rights establishment, but dissenters invoked images of racial solidarity and pristine cultural identity. Like the more conservative leadership, they operated on the assumption of a homogeneity of interests and often advocated the retrieval of allegedly authentic "black culture" rather than developing concrete programmatic alternatives. This led to an impoverished political language. "Truth," Reed laments, "became a function of the speaker's 'blackness': that is, validity claims were to be resolved not through discourse but by the claimant's manipulation of certain banal symbols of legitimacy."

This symbolic racial politics did not lead to challenges but the consolidation of the elite's power. "In practice, [racial] unity, meant collective acceptance of a set of demands to be lobbied for by a leadership elite before the corporate and state apparatus." Rather than enjoying a new "new birth of freedom," African

Americans confronted "a new mode of domination based on domesticating negativity by organizing spaces in which it could be stressed legitimately." Like ethnic European workers who won a semblance of "industrial democracy" and underwent "Americanization" a generation earlier, the black freedom struggle had won an incomplete, if not hollow, victory. "One-dimensionality itself has been 'humanized' by the cultivation of commodified facsimiles of diversity." In "good times" black Americans were disempowered junior partners in a Democratic coalition that sponsored state-centered growth politics, not a redistribution of wealth and power. In bad times, the politics of racial identity could not stop Reaganite reaction with its emphasis on privatized capital accumulation and its assault on the minimal attempts to allocate opportunity to the deserving black middle class.

This is a "pessimism of the intellect" with a vengeance. Reed, himself, advises the reader that he understated the significance of the defeat of de jure white supremacy. In the remaining essays, Reed avoids such an adherence to the overt application of critical theory. But if he is less prone to sweeping pronouncements regarding late capitalism's "one-dimensional" prison house, his essential line of argument has not changed. The subsequent essays delineate in more detail the continuing weakness of urban black governance, the dangerous mystifications of racial authenticity, the clichéd invocations of the memory of heroic role models, and disempowering redefinitions of resistance by the "cultural studies" crowd. Yet, even in this bleak portrait of the political landscape, Reed's critique is infused with political will. Black politics must be rebuilt from the bottom up. The "first step . . . must entail breaking the elite hegemony over ideas in the black community. The spoken-for must come to master political speech and to articulate their own interests." Contesting the "elite's program, as well as its authoritarian legitimations" would generate "political controversy within the black community." It "would lead to recognition of the diversity of interest configurations among blacks." While anathema to the narrow interests of "race leaders," increased participation would result in a "formulation of collective agendas whose adherents may or may not be coterminous with the boundaries of racial identification." In sum, without strong democracy within the race, there is no chance for racial democracy in the polity.

TAKEN ON ITS OWN TERMS, REED'S BOOK IS BEST UNDERSTOOD as his contribution to "developing a critical democratic black political culture." The power of negative thinking — even name-calling — is needed for positive change. We need to understand what the title of another essay refers to as "Sources of Political Demobilization " before we can mobilize a new struggle for equality. In that essay, as well as in the others, Reed stresses three main developments undermining the reemergence of emancipatory politics. The first, is the political incorporation of what Martin Kilson called the "new black political class" and their ideological acceptance of post-Keynesian growth politics. The second is the smothering mystifications of "underclass ideology," including neoliberal capitulation to the conventional wisdom blaming the poor. Finally, there are the evasions of what passes for radical analysis and politics.

Reed's critique of the black incorporation into the administration of racial subordination is simultaneously temperate and devastating. Though not afraid to skewer black urban regimes for their failure to defend the interests of their base electoral constituencies, even when Reed "names names" he refrains from personal animus. Indeed, to label them "race traitors" explicitly or implicitly would be antithetical to his theoretical and political agenda. Rather, he seeks to identify and explain the "structural origins and constraints" of these regimes. His analysis challenges mainstream scholars and political pundits (as well as the politicians themselves) who view the rise of black office holding as the "fulfillment of democratic promise" or, somewhat more modestly, the most recent case of "ethnic succession." But Reed's focus on the political process also challenges the left's "problematic tendencies to trivialize and simultaneously demonize the exercise of public authority." Electoral politics and public administration can deflect radical sentiments because the political process is not a sham. Descending from the rarified heights of the Frankfurt School theory, Reed, the student of actually existing politics, pays attention to "the mundane operations of the political system, the microprocesses through which it legitimizes the prevailing political order by delivering palpable benefits to people, in the process propagating specific constructions of what reasonable expectations and limits are." Black voting and electoral victories have provided "real benefits[:] . . . summer jobs for their children . . . zoning variances . . . parks and libraries." Explicitly criticizing his comrades, he observes, "These accomplishments are often dismissed in some quarters on the left as trivial and as evidence of co-optation. Certainly, such characterizations are true 'in the last analysis,' but we don't live and can't do effective politics 'in the last analysis.' For these accomplishments to function effectively as means of co-optation, for example, the fruits of incorporation cannot be so trivial for those who partake or expect to be able to partake of them." In other words, a "one-dimensional man" is constructed in a multidimensional society, in the historically structured but politically contingent racialized urban political economy.

As Reed makes clear, black electoral victories did not result from the eradication of racial division, as much as from the changing spatial ecology of race in America's metropolitan areas. While the black population grew and whites left for the publicly subsidized suburbs, political jurisdictions remained fixed. As manufacturing left for the whiter and cheaper hinterlands, as well as to overseas export platforms, jobs and incomes for black residents fell, along with tax revenues. But cities were not simply left to blacks; they were in the process of being reconstructed by "pro-growth " coalitions comprised of the business elite, politicians, middle class reformers, planners, and builders. Urban removal and development would build the new corporate city on the ruins of the declining white ethnic working class city. But could it be built on the basis of a growing black "reserve army of labor?" Yes, but, as Reed explains, it required the help of the emerging black political elite. The pro-growth coalition did not alter its political agenda, but it did bring in black faces, who often first became visible in civil rights and community mobilizations and later in the public agencies and NGOs of the "war on poverty." New urban leaders such as Andrew Young, Maynard Jackson, Colemen Young, Marion Barry did facilitate change. The middle class received jobs, and urban law enforcement was integrated and less gratuitously violent, no small accomplishment. Nonetheless, the results were far less substantial than even moderate visions of "black power" had originally envisioned. "The problem is not that black regimes are led by inept, uncaring, or mean-spirited elitists, " Reed explains. They remain "more attentive and liberal" than average politicians. But they have bought into the personal networks and ideological constraints that wed improving economic conditions to the use of public resources to stimulate private economic interests. Integrating Atlanta's police force was a real accomplishment, but it was also deployed to rid the streets of riffraff so Andrew Young could foster an urban "renaissance." No less than the Reaganites in Washington and various state houses, urban black regimes accepted "trickle down" economics. And given their own improving class position, they expressed "a narrow conception of black interest." But the paradox is they are tied to a broader electoral constituency whose interests they can not possibly serve. In 1977, Maynard Jackson fired 2000 black sanitation workers though he accepted the legitimacy of their demands. Young had previously supported a regressive sales tax. Rather than leading a frank debate about political programs and their consequences, urban black political leaders are left spouting a "racially evocative discourse."

Reed is not an "impossibilist" expecting more than can be attained through "mundane politics." He may not have abandoned his emancipatory desires, but he is not asking black politicians to be midwives to municipal biracial socialist democracy. Capital will press its demands and many whites will continue to challenge modest reallocation of resources as "reverse racism." But, Reed argues, we can ask the elemental political question, "[D]oes the 'really existing' black regime maximize the options open to it?" We can only find the "left of the possible" by contesting the "mobilization of bias" that demands a "pro-business climate."

While the powers of the state were mobilized to assure profitable investment opportunities, the working and non-working poor were left to fend for themselves. The invention of the "underclass" rationalized market inequalities, social inequities, the deindustrialization of the city, and the transparent failure of government policy by attributing persistent poverty to the attitudinal failures of the poor. Under the guise of hard-nosed journalism and social scientific precision, Reed exposes the recycling of the "Victorian convention" that "social position flows naturally from the intrinsic qualities of class." As Reed points out, the "underclass" is a convenient journalistic and sociological fiction. It labels disparate individuals by a set of unrelated attributes that mark behaviors that violate "fundamental American values" but "do not tell us very much about a distinct, discernable population." What is important is its ideological allure. For one thing, no one bothers to listen to them. Banished from the civic conversation, they are made objects of the polity, a social problem, rather than advocates of their interests. While blaming the black poor for their circumstances has an obvious appeal to most whites, Reed notes "it is attractive to many petit bourgeois blacks because it flatters their success by comparison and, through the insipid role model rhetoric, allows fawning over the allegedly special role of the middle class." Moreover, it "affirms an ensemble of racial and class prejudices." Rather than discovering people characterized by attitudes that reproduce unacceptable behavior, "underclass ideology, categorizes the meaning of behavior on the basis of class and racial presumptions." As Reed sarcastically observes:

> An eighteen-year-old drug courier with a monogrammed BMW is pathological; an arbitrageur who strays too far onto the wrong side of legality is too clever for his own good — the stuff of tragedy. Dependency on Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) breeds sloth and pathology; dependency on defense contracts,

agricultural price supports, tax abatements, or Federal Housing Authority (FHA) loans does a patriotic service for the country, incubates family values and so forth.

FOR THOSE WHO NEED A MORE ACADEMIC EXPLANATION, he continues,

> The point here is that the behavioral tendencies supposedly characterizing the underclass exist generally throughout the society. Drug use, divorce, educational underattainment, laziness, and empty consumerism exists no less in upper-status suburbs than in inner-city Bantustans. The difference lies not in the behavior but in the social position of those exhibiting it. Middle-class and upper-middle-class people have access to social resources — including the good will of social norms — that provide them safety nets along the way.

In addition, Reed stresses the gendered dynamics of a critique that focuses on "maternal behavior." Often ignoring the finding that rates of black teen pregnancy have been declining, stereotypes reign.

Whatever one may think of the behaviors attributed to the "underclass," they are not sufficient to explain poverty. Moreover, Reed reminds us, we cannot let dehumanizing, "lurid" descriptions go uncontested. We must keep the focus on "the sources of poverty in the operations of the American political and economic system." Reed declares, "I do not want to hear another word about drugs or crime without hearing about decent jobs, adequate housing, and egalitarian education in the same breath." Nor, he reminds us, should we be lured by versions of "self help" masked by the rhetoric of empowerment: "It is absurd to present neighborhood and church initiatives as appropriate responses to the effects of government-supported disinvestment."

But most important, Reed emphasizes, African Americans are not demanding more than other citizens, but are seeking the same right to lay claim to the nation's resources in pursuit of their safety and happiness:

> We cannot afford to concede the important ground of black people's equal proprietorship of public institutions with all other citizens; affirming the legitimacy of black Americans' demands on the state — on an equal basis with those who receive defense contracts, home ownership subsidies, investment tax credits, flood protection, and a host of other benefits from government — is also affirming black Americans' equal membership in the polity.

Conservatives and liberals have failed to eliminate racial inequality, but they've covered their tracks with the comfortable myth and ideology of the "underclass." Confronted with the anomaly that progress has coexisted with persistent racial inequalities, "the vital center" went back to business as usual by blaming the victims of American democracy. But, as Reed reminds us, a different anomaly bedevils radicals who presume that "oppression breeds political resistance." Those on the left may criticize the conventional wisdom, and people do voice their anger in a variety of ways. Reed contends not only has the left lost, it has proven incapable of transforming dissent into effective "political resistance." As much as left and nationalist dissenters noted the limits of "incorporation" that followed the Voting Rights Act, they failed to fully appreciate or analyze the "new possibilities, concrete objectives and incentives for political action, and new more complex relations with mainstream political institutions, particularly government and the Democratic party at all levels." Black politicians got votes, got offices, and became responsible for the "nuts and bolts" of policy. Their electoral base viewed them "as a de facto challenge to racial subordination," but tied as they were to the politics of growth in an age of fiscal retrenchment, their job became "managing systematic racial subordination." "Incrementalism" was the order of the day, but it was always too little, too late for most of their working class constituents. But a real challenge to racial subordination never emerged. As a trope of radical will, "Black Power" could be inspirational, and it struck fear into many, but by tying politics to claims of racial authenticity it could not engage in meaingful programmatic debate. Reed notes that when the National Black Political Association was formed it sought to formulate a "generically black agenda" under the rubric of "unity without uniformity." But the black community did not have homogeneous interests, sentimental rather than substantial solidarity could not shape a political agenda. For those repelled by "incrementalism," theoretical militancy only led to practical disengagement. Their radical "ideological turn was an imposition on — rather than a product of — the analysis of the forces animating black American politics." Like blacks, white progressives kept waiting for "the great black hope," a true embodiment of the black people who also agreed with their interracial vision. According to Reed, the dismal state of both black and white radicalism became apparent in the Jesse Jackson phenomenon and, following the resulting disillusionment, the pseudo-politics surrounding the cinematic resurrection of Malcolm X.

REED'S ASSESSMENT OF JACKSON'S "campaign to be appointed National Black Leader" received full-length treatment in his first book. He makes a briefer, but still important appearance in this collection. Jackson's 1983 Southern tour enabled him to present himself as "an activist-outsider with a mobilized popular base." No better or worse than aspiring white politicians, Reed argues that Jackson mastered the political role of "consummate insider as outsider." Since the early 1970s, Jackson "had been incorporated into the inner circles of race relations management." Indeed, in 1972 he had flirted with Richard Nixon and as head of Operation PUSH he had negotiated covenants with employers and administered public grants and contracts. Playing up on his relations with Martin Luther King, and being abetted by mass media coverage, Jackson "evoked images of civil rights activism's heroic phase" even though he had become a player in the far less heroic post-segregation politics of racial management. He benefited from "germinal black impatience with incumbent leadership," but he offered no real alternative. He drew on "local activists and fringe politicos" as he came to "embody and authorize a redemptive movement." But between 1984 and his second bid in 1988, Jackson had parlayed his appeal as an outsider to become the most prominent of the insiders.

In his second presidential run he could count on the early support of black politicians who manipulated longings for insurgent opposition. After two campaigns, he had won the "respect" of the party establishment, but little else. "In the process he has helped diminish black Americans' autonomous significance in the party by insisting that their preferences be channeled through him," Reed angrily concludes. His cult of personality enabled the emergent "New Democrats" to mobilize the white electorate around an increasingly conservative agenda, while Jackson left his supporters with less clout than ever. Reaganism was followed by Clintonism, with its calls for "personal responsibility" and the end of "welfare as we know it"— but racial subordination as Jackson became a frequent visitor to the White House.

As a living "race leader," Jackson could only wear King's mantle by delivering the goods. And as the "Rainbow Coalition" faded from view with Jackson's narrowed personal agenda, the dangers of waiting for "The Great Black Hope" became apparent: tying the struggle for equality to the coattails of an individual "cut political action loose from its moorings in practical activities and reconfigured it as existential drama." The cast of available characters is not restricted to the living. "It is perhaps instructive," Reed suggests, "that Malcolmania grew at the same time as Jackson's attempt to embody the Black Leader myth appear[ed] to be running out of steam." The symbolically living dead can "quite literally do no wrong." The historic Malcolm, could of course, make real mistakes. For example, Reed points out that his frequent metaphorical contrast between the virtuous and downtrodden "field Negro" and the subservient, pampered "house Negroes" may have pointed to social divisions in the black community, past and present, but it misrepresented the slave experience and fostered an intraracial version of identity politics. Now only poor black folk were authentic representatives of the race. The "talented tenth" were now suspected of race treason. Moreover, this authentic racial representative was male. Racial identity and militancy was embodied in fearless male bodies.

Still, whatever his flaws, the living Malcolm was certainly of far greater political stature than his reusable clone. In Reed's youth, Malcolm "was an interlocutor with current orthodoxy, expressing forbidden thoughts hidden in the black silence of our time; he energized us by playing the dozens (a black narrative form of expose, with humor) on the official narratives of race and power under which we strained." The Malcolm who appealed to a younger Reed and his peers "was moving inside the history course . . . Malcolm's appeal grew largely from the way he counterpunched in very concrete terms against the changing elements of that reality." "Malcolmania," is not a usable past, but an abusable past. Youth are "offered a frozen icon to be revered, a reification of other peoples memories." His image and carefully selected words serve as a badge of racial authenticity in the marketplace of political ideas and baseball caps. Rather than introducing a new generation to the arts of historical analysis and political controversy, Malcolm had become little more than "a decontextualized, hollow thing," a reusable container for competing political and fashion products. Malcolm earned his name recognition by responding to the Birmingham bombing, the assassination of John Kennedy, the living political theater of civil disobedience, liberal invocations of the American creed, and the failings of the Nation of Islam. Above all Reed stresses, he never had to address the problems of post-segregation black politics. Assassins gunned him down a half-year before the Watts uprising, before a major city elected a black mayor, and a quarter century before a multiethnic uprising ripped a city with a black mayor, Los Angeles, apart. Not a "prince," Reed reminds us, Malcolm "was just like the rest of us: a regular person saddled with imperfect knowledge, human frailties, and conflicting imperatives but nonetheless trying to make sense of his very specific history, trying unsuccessfully to transcend it, and struggling to push it in a humane direction."

Coming from Reed, it is a remarkable compliment. It no doubt reflects Reed's memory of Malcolm's role in his own personal political development. Whatever his mistakes, Malcolm expanded the range of political debate in the freedom movement. Whether he, or any national "leader," can genuinely speak for the "grass roots," his "message to the grassroots" jarred the civil rights' establishment and resonated among men and women whose anger and aspirations had not found an official voice and were groping to find their own. As I have noted, Reed is often far less charitable to living aspirants to racial leadership or toward the theory and practice of black political intellectuals. His own attempts to map the social world are often framed as a critique of others' efforts at the same task. In a sense, this tendency to find fault in the practices and ideas of others is a virtue. He stirs things up, forcing us to reassess our theory and practice. But Reed's argumentative posture, which brings back memories of debates in shrinking political groups and graduate seminars, has its dangers. Few contemporary writers possess his talents as a polemicist with substance. He can dissect an opponent's argument with a fine scalpel. Occasionally, however, he draws blood — unnecessarily, and precludes the dialogue he hopes to advance.

BUT THE MOST SERIOUS SHORTCOMING OF REED'S COLLECTION is the absence of any discussion of the variegated worlds and interests and voices of black Americans who have been misrepresented and ill-served by so many race leaders. Have they been duped? How have they responded to calls for racial solidarity, and why? How does the process of political mobilization sift the priorities of their ethnoracial, class, religious, and gendered selves? It is, after all, Reed who bolsters his critique of the politics of racial leadership by quoting the late Ralph Ellison's criticism of the tendency "to see segregation as an opaque steel jug with the Negroes inside waiting for some black messiah to come along and blow the cork." And after segregation's demise it is certainly not the task of radical democrats to find a political superman with charisma and the program to liberate the masses. Reed is correct: "The challenge for those of us who strive to advance emancipatory and egalitarian interests in black political life, as well as within the society at large, is to look within the jug, examine its varied contents, and pour them freely into the world." But Reed himself does not do that. His essays convincingly demonstrate that conservatives and liberals who invented the "underclass" have filled the "jug" with ideological demons and sealed it more securely. Members of the new black middle and political class have stuck their own heads out of the jug, but in their own way, have stopped it from "pouring freely." Militant nationalists and Marxists seek to displace accomodationist race leaders at the opening of the jug. The rest are spoken for, about, and to; they are not listened to, or talked with. His analysis of black politics in the post-segregation era helps explain how the steel jug has been stopped up and, therefore, why its contents remain imprisoned. But we never get to see the "stirrings in the jug."

Reed is undoubtedly correct that to give voice to the relatively politically inarticulate is risky business. Ethnographers and cultural critics can turn their unruly subjects into objects for the faddish theoretical "jugs" of the academic career ladder. Mechanisms for democratic participation and debate are essential if discontent and emancipatory desires are to assume political meaning, but are those who have attempted to make the jug less opaque part of the problem. Has, as Reed alleges, "oppositional politics [become] little more than a pose livening up the march through the tenure tracks"? In particular, is Reed's paragraph-long dismissal of scholars who have explored the "weapons of the weak" as intellectually sloppy and politically treacherous as he claims? According to

Reed,

> The discourse of cultural politics does not differentiate between public, collective activity explicitly challenging patterns of political and social hierarchy and typically surreptitious, often privatistic practices of "everyday resistance" — the mechanisms through which subordinates construct moments of dignity and autonomy and enhance their options within relations of oppression without attacking them head on . . . Participating in youth fads (from zoot suits in the 1940s to hip-hop today), maintaining fraternal organizations, vesting hopes in prayer or root doctors, and even quilt making thus become indistinguishable from slave revolts, activism in Reconstruction governments, the Montgomery bus boycott, grassroots campaigns for voter registration, and labor unions or welfare rights agitation as politically meaningful forms of "resistance."

Reed has raised a crucial problem. The discovery of the "infrapolitics" arose as the left confronted the weakness of the politically powerless. Reed argues that many on the left have become so marginalized that they no longer know the meaning of resistance. "Political resistance" according to Reed, "constitutes an explicit challenge to power relations as they are enforced and mediated through the state apparatus and that is understood as such by those against whom it is aimed." Not only "in the final analysis," but in everyday life, little else matters to Reed. Yet to dismiss inquiry into the contested terrain of the plantation, kitchen, factory, recording studio, and street is shortsighted. Underlying such studies is not a compensatory and demobilizing tendency to make black women's quilts and Ida Wells Barnetts editorials, or a work song and a union meeting "indistinguishable" as it is to identify their relationship. To pour the contents of the jug out into the world is to understand how the participatory politics that Reed celebrates during Reconstruction and the Civil Rights movement arose. It was not the product of a racial messiah, but of the shared and divergent experiences of millions of black men and women. The historians, like Robin D.G. Kelley, who have rewritten African American history, have taken Ellison to heart.

Kelley shares Reed's critique of underclass ideology, he emphasizes the gap between race leaders and the black working class, and he shares Reed's interpretation of the political economy of late capitalism. But unlike Reed, Kelley does not see zoot suits and hip-hop as part of the problem. He doesn't reduce politics to culture, style, and commodified identity, nor does he deny the misogyny, shallowness, and acquisitiveness of hip hop artists/entrepreneurs. He seeks to identify the powers of the weak that past and future political projects will mobilize as well as transcend. The jug has never flowed freely, but it has always flowed.

We need Reed's unwavering critical voice. We should appreciate his willingness to antagonize. But one wonders if he needs to look inside the jug again. He may see a few more allies in the academy and in the 'hood than he has up until now. He won't find "princes," but in his own words, "people . . . who strive to influence their own history." They need his criticism — and his appreciation.

A Debate on Sociobiology and Rape

Craig T. Palmer and Lynn Chancer

A debate between Craig T. Palmer, co-author of *A Natural History of Rape* (MIT Press, 2000) and Lynn Chancer, author of *Reconcilable Differences* (University of California Press, 1998) took place on March 28, 2000, on a Talk City program run by NetLibrary. We are re-printing this debate because Thorndike and Palmer's book has received extensive publicity due to its controversial evolutionary psychological thesis about the socio-biological origins of rape, and to its publication by a well-respected press.

Even more important to note by way of introduction though, is that socio-biological arguments about inequalities have resurfaced in the 1980s and 1990s. Charles Murray and Richard J. Herrnstein's *The Bell Curve* sought to explain race and class inequities in terms of innate differences of intelligence as measured by IQ tests. Moreover, after *A Natural History of Rape* was published, a lead article in *The New York Times Magazine* by Andrew Sullivan, April 2, 2000) asserted that differing testosterone levels explain a wide range of seemingly culturally-caused variations in behaviors between women and men. Sullivan, a *New Republic* editor, wrote: "I don't think it's an accident that in the last decade there has been a growing focus on a muscular male physique in our popular culture, a boom in crass men's magazines, an explosion in violent computer games or a professional wrestler who has become governor. These are indications of a cultural displacement, of a world in which the power of testosterone is ignored or attacked. Our main task in the gender wars of the new century may not be how to bring women fully into our society, but how to keep men from seceding from it,how to reroute testosterone for constructive ends, rather than ignore it for political point-making."

Given that socio-biological arguments remain alive and well in American culture, however debatable, *New Politics* believes readers will be interested in evaluating this exchange between Watkins and Chancer for themselves.

netLibrary is pleased to welcome you to an interactive discussion with Craig Palmer, co-author [with Randy Thornhill] of *A Natural History of Rape*, and Professor Lynn Chancer for a discussion on this controversial book. They will be answering questions posed by on-line audience guests.

Guest: How did you and Randy Thornhill ever come up with the idea to research this topic?

Craig Palmer: Dr. Thornhill started to research this subject in the 1970s as a result of his work on the scorpion flies. I became interested in this subject during graduate school in the mid-1980s. I had learned the basics of evolutionary theory and knew they applied to human sexual behavior. It wasn't until someone in the neighborhood was both raped and murdered that I could see that the evolutionary approach provides more accurate information on the causes of rape that could then be used to prevent this horrible crime. In the mid 1990s, Dr. Thornhill and I decided to collaborate on this particular book.

Guest: Is the belief that rapists desire power over their victim an extension of your biological explanation for rape?

Craig Palmer: We see that the evidence supports the notion that violence, power, and control in rape are often the means to the end of sexual access. There may be cases in which there is a desire for power and control in addition to the desire for sex.

Lynn Chancer: One of my problems with *A Natural History of Rape* is that the distinction being made between violence being the means to the end of sexual access seems to be unclear. And it seems to me that rape is about sexualized violence.

Guest: What could possibly be natural about rape?

Craig Palmer: The biggest problem that people have with the book is that people seem to commit what's known as the naturalistic fallacy, and that is to say that something is natural is to imply that it's good or acceptable. By natural, we only mean that it is part of the natural living world. It is an act that living things do. We do not imply at all that it is acceptable, good, or justifiable.

Lynn Chancer: I think that in answer to the question, there is much more of a problem with the contention about nature than just this naturalistic fallacy. The problem is that the line between "nature" and "culture" is so blurred as to render this book's assertion of certain phenomena, like rape, to be natural as a highly suspect one. So much in contemporary culture creates conditions conducive to sexual violence that it is difficult, if not impossible, to separate the "cultural" from the "natural."

Guest: What do the women in your life think about this work?

Craig Palmer: They're in complete agreement and support and think it's very important.

Lynn Chancer: Many women I know, as well as many men, disagree with the claims of this book, because they understand that feminist progress on the issue of rape has helped, rather than hindered, the problem.

Guest: Do you think that serial rapists can ever be stopped? It seems to me that you are now giving them an excuse with this.

Craig Palmer: Once again, there is nothing in our book that in any way excuses the behavior. We emphasize in our book that rapists should be punished, and punished severely. The question of whether a given rapist can ever be influenced through punishment or other means, to the point where it is acceptable to let them out, probably varies from individual to individual. The goal of the book is to start to increase knowledge about what factors do influence the likelihood of any male committing rape.

Lynn Chancer: A problem so far in this debate is that we have not stated what the argument of the book actually is. Thus, so far, we are only dealing with whether the authors believe, or believe that others believe, in a naturalistic fallacy. The authors need not see rape as a good thing; what they are arguing is that rape should be seen as sexual, not violent, and as an evolutionary adaptation. Because of this argument, my fear is that the book draws attention away from widespread cultural factors, which create dominance and subordinate relations between men and women, and focus, instead, too much on individual biological causes. I do not see why changing cultural conditions conducive to the eroticization of violence ought not to be the main focus of the effort to prevent rape.

Craig Palmer: Just to clarify a few points. First, we don't say that rape is sex and not violence. You have to distinguish between the goal and the means. Violence is involved; violence with the threat of violence is involved in rape. We do not deny that. Secondly, we do not argue that rape is an evolutionary adaptation. I have argued for over 12 years that rape is not an adaptation; it is only a byproduct of other adaptations. And finally, we make it very clear in the book that we include cultural influences and, indeed, we emphasize that changing aspects of culture will be the best way to prevent rape. Cultural behavior is still biological; the word biological just means "living." The emphasis on the book is to reintroduce evolutionary biological considerations, and to argue, in conclusion, that to better prevent rape, evolutionary arguments need to be considered. The policy implications of the book are that more attention needs to be paid to psychological evolutionary factors in both women and men.

Lynn Chancer: This seems to be the point of the book insofar as the authors argue that feminists have emphasized an interpretation of rape as violent and culturally caused, rather than as sexually motivated. As a result of the authors' desire to shift this emphasis, they state in the conclusion of the book, for example, that women ought to pay more attention to how they dress, and men ought to be made more aware of their evolutionary motivations. This seems to focus the discussion on the level of the adaptive needs of individuals, and away from the societal-wide factors that lead to situations where men frequently pursue dominant/subordinate relations, and women find themselves blamed for their own victimization. I will let other people ask questions, but I would also like to come back to the question of whether the argument made in *A Natural History of Rape* is accurate, according to other social/scientific research on rape.

Guest: Ms. Chancer, can you respect Mr. Palmer's scientific methodology at all?

Lynn Chancer: In reading *A Natural History of Rape* I had difficulties with the methodology, though, in general, I am not opposed to exploring biological interactions on human behavior. Some of the book's analogies with scorpion flies were not persuasive for me. And the evidence given for the book's overall arguments felt scanty and as though they did not adequately deal with counter-arguments.

Craig Palmer: There are roughly 600 citations of other research in the book and I'm not sure if it can be described as "scanty." We also devote several chapters to the counter-arguments and look at them in great detail.

Lynn Chancer: It seemed to me that most of the counter-arguments presented and the research cited was supportive of the author's claims. For example, in a book called *Understanding Sexual Violence*, by Diana Scully, Scully found, based on interviews with over 100 convicted rapists, that the vast majority of rapists had committed other violent crimes in addition to rape. I am not sure how the thesis of *A Natural History of Rape* would explain this particular discrepancy.

Guest: So according to your book, rape is always sexual in nature and sometimes about control, so therefore punishment for the crime of rape is ineffective, because we have to teach males about their "primitive" nature and how to control it?

Craig Palmer: As I stated before and as is emphasized in the book, we favor punishment as one of the more effective tools in preventing this crime.

Guest: Isn't it true that you never asked a human or studied humans in this so-called "research?" How can you compare scorpion flies to a human life and a human-functioning brain? Isn't that an insult to a "man's" intelligence?

Craig Palmer: First of all, as is common in many scientific books, we surveyed the existing literature which included over 600 citations and examined whether the existing published literature on rape, whether it fit the existing social science theory on rape or the evolutionary approach. First of all, we don't make the argument that because rape in scorpion flies seems to be an adaptation, therefore human rape seems to be an adaptation. Instead, we point out that the existing evidence of rape, in a wide number of species, fits evolutionary predictions.

Lynn Chancer: I did find that the book was insulting to men, and tended to be based on the kind of crassly essentialistic argument of which feminists themselves were sometimes accused about men being unable to control their supposedly biological instincts. Another counter-argument that I did not feel was considered in this book is the kind of argument that comes out of a work like Bernard Lefkowitz's *Our Guys*. It is a detailed study of the town of Glen Ridge, New Jersey, where a gang rape took place, led by the captains of a high school football team. What Lefkowitz carefully shows is that numerous social institutions within the town of Glen Ridge, from family to police to teachers in early childhood, positively reinforced misogynistic behaviors, which eventually culminated in the rape of a mentally retarded young girl. Why this is an important counter-example is because unlike the contentions of *A Natural History of Rape, Our Guys* were considered the heroes of their town, and did not suffer in any way from lack of sexual access to women. On the contrary, their rape seemed to reinforce and has been reinforced by a whole cultural history of "boys will be boys" attitudes that are not easily encompassed by evolutionary arguments like the ones that this book presents.

Guest: Craig, how is it that you think rape is not an adaptation, but a by-product of adaptations? Can you expand on that?

Craig Palmer: My position has been that there was not selection for rape, per se. Instead, there was selection for many differences in sexuality between males and females. These differences include: Males being less discriminating partners than females, and males being more interested in impersonal sex than females. And these differences have created a situation in which most males have some sexual interest in most females, but most females are not sexually interested in most males. Rape may simply be one of the side effects or byproducts of those evolved differences that create that situation.

Lynn Chancer: I'm not sure how we can know for sure that most females are not interested in sex as much as are males. Again, cultural arguments are so overlapping with biological ones at the level of causation as to render the two effectively indistinguishable. There is plenty of evidence of double standards of sexuality for women, which have led to women's desires being overladen with social controls in such a way that the differences just referred to may be as much socially caused as evolutionarily definitive.

Guest: How can the criminal justice system (a social and cultural entity) sanction an act that you say is evolutionary in origin?

Craig Palmer: Everything living is evolutionary in origin. We are perfectly free to fight against evolved natural things. An example being diseases. And it's important to remember that everything biological is a result of genes and the environment and, therefore, changing either genes or the environment can change anything biological. And the environment includes other people, social and cultural factors.

Lynn Chancer: But your argument does assert an evolutionary inclination to rape on the part of males as a group. It, therefore, can set up a slippery slope toward post facto justification, or at least toward an expectation, as though "natural", that men can be expected to rape. However, how can we possibly explain the fact that most men do NOT rape? And that most men do not rape across varied categories of class and race?

Craig Palmer: As is clearly stated in the book, this inclination to rape only occurs when men develop in certain environments. We mention many of these in the book and, ironically, many of the ones we mention in the book are the same ones that Dr. Chancer has emphasized. This points to the importance of realizing that an evolutionary approach in no way engineers or de-emphasizes the importance of other people—what you call as "culture."

Guest: Mr. Palmer, has the controversy around your book affected the larger cultural discussion of rape positively or negatively?

Craig Palmer: That is hard to answer. I think, eventually, it will have a very positive effect. If only because people will start to re-examine the possible causes of rape instead of simply accepting the popular social science slogans about rape that have been so dominant the last quarter of the century.

Guest: 99 percent of the population can control themselves. Don't you think this new book is an excuse?

Craig Palmer: Just the opposite of excusing any behavior. I would say that increased knowledge about the causes of behavior creates a situation in which people can be held more responsible for their action.

Lynn Chancer: I think that the book puts forth an interpretation of rape which is its claim to novelty. This claim is that increased knowledge about the causes of behavior would include many men raping because of lack of access to sexual partners. I am concerned that this is not clear-cut knowledge at all. Again, let me cite a potential counter-example. Returning to Scully's interviews with 114 convicted rapists, almost half of the rapists were either married or cohabiting at the time of their offenses. Diana Russell has also discussed the problem of rape in marriage; thus social policy regarding rape has to explain the large number of rapes that are committed by men who do have access to sexual partners. This lends more credence than the authors admit to the interpretation of sexualized violence as an important cause of rape. A potential problem with this book is that it may deflect attention from the issue of violence by going to the other extreme of reintroducing sex as a factor.

Craig Palmer: Twice now, Dr. Chancer has misportrayed what we say in the book in regards to the "Mate Deprivation Hypothesis." We do not argue that men only or even primarily rape when they do not have sexual access to women. In fact, on page 68 of the book, we clearly say that the evidence rejects that simplistic explanation.

Guest: You say by-products of adaptations are about sex and selection? Where does this come from? Rape is about power not sex!

Craig Palmer: The whole theory concerning living things being bundles of adaptations and their by-products is the cornerstone of evolutionary theory. Anyone interested in this theory should start with the book *Adaptation and Natural Selection* by George Williams.

Lynn Chancer: I was wondering if I could ask Professor Palmer why he thinks interest in evolutionary interpretation and arguments that are ranging now from the sociology of beauty to the Bell curve to the evolutionary theories of rape come to the surface at certain moments rather than others. Socio-biological arguments of all kinds seem to have generated a lot of interest, and media interest, of late.

Craig Palmer: First, *The Bell Curve* is not a socio-biological book. Second, as far as if there is some connection between our book and the millennium? What is happening is sociobiology formulated in the 1960 and the 1970s and because of the same type of misunderstandings like we've been discussing tonight, sociobiology changed its name and retreated from the mass media attention. It is now in the 1990s and is re-emerging under the name of Evolutionary Psychology. Our book is only one of several dozens of books being published this year from this perspective, and the reason is that during the last quarter of a century, this approach has been very successful in explaining non-human behavior. It's now being applied to human behavior as well. And obviously, that's when the controversy starts, because many people are still not comfortable in seeing themselves as a product of evolution.

Lynn Chancer: There are different forms of evolutionary theory, and many evolutionary psychologists do not agree with some of the claims made in *A Natural History of Rape*. But another interpretation of why socio-biological theories rise to the surface in the '80s and '90s may have to do with complex forms of what Susan Faludi called "backlash" against the enormity of social and cultural changes augured by contemporary feminism. Falling back on evolutionary arguments, however well intended by the authors of this book, could have the effect of deflecting attention from societal changes to adjustments on the basis of biological claims which are not clearly "biological" anyway.

Guest: Then what changes to the environment do we need to do?

Craig Palmer: I'd say the biggest change from what we suggest in the book, from what has been suggested in the past several decades, is that in order to prevent rape, we need to deal with the sexual motivation of rape and how it is involved in rape, instead of trying to deny that such sexual motivation is involved.

Lynn Chancer: I do not believe that denying sexual motivation is necessitated by a feminist position, which does not presume that men are biologically motivated to rape. Rather, fears about sexuality that many women, as well as men, have been taught to feel, need to be placed in a larger context of open discussion. And political changes that would range from socialization and psychological patterns in childhood, to mass media images, to how we treat children in school, to the still very sexist toys that we give to children, to social policy that exists in the criminal justice system, and in law.

netLibrary: We are almost out of time this evening. Thank you, Craig and Lynn, for joining us. Do you have any last comments to leave our audience with?

Craig Palmer: I'd just like to thank Dr. Chancer for one of the few polite and intelligent discussions I've had about the book.

Lynn Chancer: Thanks to Dr. Palmer as well.

netLibrary: Thank you for joining us tonight and especially to our guests, Craig Palmer and Lynn Chancer. Craig Palmer's book, *A Natural History of Rape* and Lynn Chancer's book, *Reconcilable Differences*: *Confronting Beauty, Pornography and the Future of Feminism* are both available as eBooks at netLibrary.

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The Politics of Richard Rorty

Alan Johnson

> *I think the left should get back into the business of piecemeal reform within the framework of a market economy. This was the business the American left was in during the first two-thirds of the century.*
>
> Richard Rorty[1]

> *It is the latest in a series of attempts over the decades to create a social-democratic wing of Establishment liberalism with a "Fabian" perspective, inoffensively socialistic in tendency and impeccably respectable in style — the "court socialist" in the palace of power. Such is the vision: so far all these attempts have come to nothing.*
>
> Hal Draper [2]

Introduction

RICHARD RORTY, PROFESSOR OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY, author of *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1980) and *Contingency, Irony, Solidarity* (1989) is probably the most widely read philosopher in the world. *Achieving Our Country* (1998) and *Philosophy and Social Hope* (1999) mark a political turn in his writing. [3] He has called for a new social-democratic American left and raged at the cruelties and obscenities of contemporary global capitalism: "if the formation of hereditary castes continues unimpeded, and if the pressures of globalization creates such castes not only in the United States but in all the old democracies we shall end up in an Orwellian world." Rorty has written with passion about the corruption of the political process: "we are living in a second gilded age: even Mark Twain might have been startled by the shamelessness with which our politicians now sell themselves." But he despairs of an academe-bound "cultural left" which doodles with Derridean readings while Rome burns. He yearns for a left that will fight for real rather than linguistic reforms, a left which will not be satisfied with exercises in deconstruction but gets in the ring. He is not part of the "anti-PC" brigade. He reminds us that "The reformist American left of the first two-thirds of the century accomplished quite a lot. But most of the direct beneficiaries of its initiatives were white males." But he thinks the new American left should be centred on a revived trade union move-

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ment and built by a fight for concrete reforms on campaign finances, universal health care and the equalisation of opportunities in primary and secondary education. A moratorium should be called on "Theory." His political books are selling in goodly numbers. A chord has plainly been struck.

Rorty's political writings are a portent of the radicalization of American liberalism in response to the social and economic polarization of American society, the decay of its democratic institutions, and the selling of the Democratic party to capital.[4] "Only in recent years," he said in *Dissent* in 1996, has it again become politically possible for "mayors, governors and sheriffs to send in their men to break strikers' skulls." [5] And while this "brutal struggle" of the corporations against their workers is ignored by a "gently bribed" political class the economy passes "out of the hands of the control of the American government and thus out of the control of American voters."[6] This "radical Rorty" believes trade unions are the best "model of Americans getting together and changing society from the bottom up — forcing it to become more decent, more democratic, more humane" and reminds his readers that social justice in America "has owed much more to civil disobedience than to the use of the ballot."[7] He views the one per cent who own forty per cent of the wealth as an "enemy within," the new economic royalists. And these facts contradict "America" which (uniquely for this anti-essentialist philosopher) has a "whole point" and that is "to be the world's first classless society."[8]

However there is another Richard Rorty. This "realist Rorty" is embarrassed at all this up-and-at-em radicalism and prefers a cautious program of "piecemeal reforms within the framework of a free market economy." He believes the free market is "indispensable" and looks to the state to redistribute the profits of the corporations. This Rorty thinks the sentimental education of the rich, not the self-activity of the poor, is the road to human brotherhood. In this essay I try to explain this chronic oscillation in Rorty's politics. I begin by outlining his critique of the academic "cultural left" and his call for us to return to the older traditions of a "reformist left" which flourished in America until about 1964. I then argue there are problems with the history, political economy and philosophy which underpin Rorty's argument. First, Rorty's is a false or prosthetic history which in the manner of the film *Forrest Gump*, mixes memory and desire to obscure the real dynamics of the American left in the twentieth century. Second, Rorty ignores the new political economy of reformism in a global capitalist economy which renders his political and economic program utopian. Third, his voluntarist philosophy in its Emersonian voluntarism, its hostility to structural analysis, and its injunction to replace the quest for knowledge with the sentiment of hope underpins the utopian nature of his politics. The paper ends with trying to map a way beyond ungrounded hope and spectorial despair. There is a third American left of long pedigree, which I follow Hal Draper in calling left-oppositionism. This left, albeit small, has a pretty good record of avoiding despair and delusion and may be undergoing something of a revival today.

Back to the Future: Rorty's call for a New Deal Left

RORTY ARGUES THAT AMERICA HAS A "CULTURAL LEFT" which reads books like Frederick Jameson's *Postmodernism: the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* and so is able to discuss the meaning of Vincent Van Gogh's and Andy Warhol's representations of shoes but does not read books like *Which Side Are You On?* by Thomas Geoghegan and so knows little about union-busting. This cultural left by and large ignores economics and trade unions and is ignorant of social policy. It proposes no new laws. It rejects (mere) reformism as not only futile but complicit with a discourse of power. It has spooked itself with fear about an all-powerful and inescapable "system" defined in culturalist terms. It is "absurdly over-philosophised."[9] It thinks any opposition will be inevitably absorbed or crushed. It has nightmares about "dominant ideologies," "hegemonic discourses," "phallologocentrism," and the ubiquity of "power." These theoretical nightmares do for the cultural left exactly what the story of "Yakkub" did for Elijah Muhammad: end social hope and the will to engage. Rorty follows Todd Gitlin in judging the politics of identity, while absolutely positive in ending economic determinism and helping the victims of "socially accepted sadism," to have hardened until it has no place for Whitman's "common dreams." To the extent this has led to separatism it has been "a political disaster." The up-shot is that the cultural left is "unable to engage in national politics."

It is tempting to read Rorty's critique of the cultural left as a reprise of Hal Draper's warning in 1965 in *New Politics*, about left-wing "disafilliationism," which he defined as "the pseudo-radical type...who rejects society *tout court*."[10] Certainly the nihilism of this kind of left, its politically useless unconscious, its refusal to engage in the political institutions of the society and fight for reforms, and the self-paralyzing "theory" which sustains its abstention can be seen today in some, especially academic, places. But the instinct to cheer Rorty on should be tempered. Rorty can sound very like those whom Jesse Lemisch has called "angry white men on the left." His failure to distinguish the spectorial academic left from the more general phenomenon of the new social movements; his tendency to counterpose economics to culture and trade unions to groups organised on the basis of their identity; his implicit blaming of the desperate state of the left on identity politics, makes for a blunderbuss of a polemic which, as Martin Duberman has pointed out, sends the message "Shut Up!" to a far wider group of people. In Rorty this wider message is sometimes explicit:

> It seems to me the politics of difference grows out of the notion that there is something called the White Male Anglo-Saxon Heterosexist culture which was (a) a pretty lousy culture and (b) has insisted that everyone become a member of it. I find this an unrecognizable description. It wasn't a bad culture at all.[11]

No left will develop in the 21st century which speaks like this and no left would deserve to. We would be better off seeing struggles around culture and the personal as universalist as well as struggles around economics for both stem from unmet human need. The radicalized enlightenment, surely, will shatter social relations of oppression as well as exploitation or it will shatter neither.[12]

National Pride

RORTY'S CRITIQUE OF THE CULTURAL LEFT IS DEPENDENT ON THE WRITINGS of the late Irving Howe to whom *Achieving Our Country* is dedicated and whom Rorty has called his "hero." Rorty is especially influenced by that bit of Howe's argument (other bits Rorty ignores completely, as we will see) which attributed the loss of social hope among many New Leftists to the social theory of Herbert Marcuse. In his 1965 collection *Beyond The New Left* Howe wrote:

> ...if you hold a version of Marcuse's ideas and believe liberalism is exhausted or corrupt or inseparable from "racist imperialism"; if you further conclude that no major social class within society can be expected significantly to transform it; you then have no serious alternative to either...withdrawal or...guerrilla raids.[13]

And Rorty takes directly from Howe the idea that the left must work with the grain of the American "national myth." Rorty glosses this as the rediscovery of pride in national identity. He repeats Howe's warning that to see one's country as "Amerika" and incapable of change can paralyse social hope and produce a retreat to self and lifestyle. This national myth, said Howe constructed "the native citizen blessed with freedom by God" and could be seen in the self-image of the strikers of the 1890s: "Americans (or Americans-in-the-making) [who] should stand up as free men and resist exploitation."[14] The "old reformist left" which was able to feel this national pride Rorty defines as "all those Americans who, between 1900 and 1964, struggled within the framework of constitutional democracy to protect the weak from the strong." He sees the period from the New Deal to 1964 as a golden age of the American left when an intellectual-labor alliance took great strides toward the classless society. Bell and Schlesinger, Galbraith and Reuther, FDR and LBJ helped America to fulfil its "whole point." And then came the Fall. The New Left of the 1960's, although Rorty credits it for ending the war in Vietnam and preventing America from becoming "a garrison state," also "unthinkingly destroyed an alliance that had been central to American leftist politics."[15] The New Left were "the people — mostly students — who decided, around 1964, that it was no longer possible to work for social justice within the system." This decision is blamed by Rorty for much that has gone wrong with the American left in the last twenty five years from "inward looking academic politics" to the collapse of union power and the hardening of hereditary economic castes. To reverse these trends Rorty urges progressives to recreate the old alliance between intellectuals and labor which "centers on the struggle to prevent the rich from ripping off the rest of the country."[16] This remains "the best model available for the American left in the coming century."[17] Rorty calls on his readers to pick up a baton which was passed from Herbert Croly to Lyndon Johnson, a baton dropped by the New Left as it raged against the Vietnam war and by LBJ as he waged that war.

I NOW ARGUE THERE ARE THREE SETS OF CLOSELY RELATED PROBLEMS with Rorty's politics: the history is false, the economic and political program is utopian and the sunny philosophy is voluntarist.

False History

Achieving our Country CONSTRUCTS A PROSTHETIC MEMORY OF THE PAST which separates desire from history, wish from reality. This is fitting for a philosopher who refuses the label, but shares many of the ideas of post-modernism. Rejecting the idea that we can access, or at least approximate, reality by enquiry, a reality against which we can assess our claims, Rorty thinks that "rational and non-rational methods of changing peoples minds" are equivalent.[18] Anyone who thinks that sentimental manipulation may be the "best weapon we have" should be read with great caution when he is writing history for a political purpose.[19] That history-writing is likely to be — if it is judged this will gain the desired sentimental effect — prosthetic, false, sad and sentimental, employing the looser rules of the literary mode. And boy, can Rorty write poor history; glib, superficial and sentimental, full of little heroes and villains. Here are Rorty's thoughts on the historic divide of the left between reformism and revolutionism which took the institutional form of the Second and Third Internationals. "Had Kerensky managed to ship Lenin back to Zurich...[then] the contrast between genuine revolutionary leftists and wishy-washy liberal reformers would never have taken hold."[20] The false and prosthetic memory here "forgets" the Great Betrayal of August 1914, the barbarism of the Somme, the social-democrat Noske sending out the Friekorps and Rosa Luxemburg's battered body in the lock of the Landwehr canal. I think this kind of false memory also shapes Rorty's story about a Golden Age of the left from the 1940s to 1964 and the Fall thereafter into spectorial irrelevance. Rorty ignores (a) the nature and limits of permeationism (b) the reasons for the failure of liberalism in the 1960's, not least the long-term transformation of U.S. liberalism, and (c) the causes of radicalism in the 1960's. The result is an account of the American left's past, present and future which brackets out pretty much all the most salient dynamics.

The Nature and Limits of Permeationism ignored

RORTY'S ACCOUNT OF THE REFORMIST LEFT IS NOT SO MUCH ROSE-TINTED as plain false. More accurate is Julius Jacobson's survey of a decade earlier of "the history of more than half a century of the left wooing the Democratic party" which he concluded was "one of total failure." That failure has been three-fold. First, the left has failed to seriously influence the party from within, to prevent its Trumanization after thirteen years of FDR, to stop its promotion of US imperialism under Kennedy and Johnson or its embrace of new right social and economic policy under Clinton. Second, the orientation has exacted a price on the left. The collapse of liberalism and the resulting isolation of the New Left in the 1960s was a fruit of the "ongoing mythology and self-destructive effort of viewing the Democratic party as the arena of hope."[21] Hal Draper used the term "permeationist left" in 1965 in *New Politics* to explain why one part of Rorty's reformist left, Hubert Humphrey and LBJ, ganged up on the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party at the 1964 convention of the Democratic party, and why the other parts, Bayard Rustin, Walter Reuther, Michael Harrington supported them. Draper argued the episode was the fruit of the strategy of "permeationism" which he defined as "adapt[ing] to the ruling powers and infiltrat[ing] their centers of influence with the aim of some day getting to the very levers of decision-making — becoming a part of the Establishment in order to manipulate the reins to the left." Such permeationism, Draper argued, had to view independent rebellious forces like the MFDP in 1964 as threats to the permeationist strategy.[22] In similar vein in 1988 Julius Jacobson pointed out that the tremendous potential of the Rainbow Coalition came to nothing in part because the Democratic Party orientation dictated the "retreat, submission and the containment of radicalism."[23]

Rorty brackets out this long-standing historical and structural weakness of permeationism. He sees only one-off mistakes and simply dusts off the realignment strategy of Irving Howe and Michael Harrington of the 1960's and 1970's. In 1966 Harrington attacked the nihilism of the New Left and called for the construction of a "new political majority" around the "liberal wing" of the consensus which built the welfare state. [24] And Howe argued that "the necessary social and economic reforms can be achieved through a reactivated coalition of liberal-left-labor forces."[25] Few listened while the Movement was on the rise and the "Liberals" were bombing Vietnam but as the New Left plunged into crisis Howe-Harrington found an audience. Thousands of ex-New Leftists entered the reform wing of the Democratic party after 1972 with Howe and Harrington playing an important co-ordinating role. The Democratic Socialist Organising Committee (DSOC) aimed to be the social-democratic core of a liberal coalition which would move the Democrats to the left. In fact Howe and Harrington had brought the New Left "home" to the Democrats just as the Democrats were packing up and moving to the right, ditching labor and civil rights organizations and tearing up commitments to the Great Society. But — willed ignorance being a powerful thing — this did not stop more and more ex-New Leftists signing on to the DSOC strategy, putting into practice exactly what Rorty calls for today. In 1982 the New American Movement (NAM) joined DSOC and formed the Democratic Socialists of America on the basis that "the "left-wing of realism is found today in the Democratic Party."[26] Journals like *Socialist Review*, *In These Times*, *Kapitalstate* were drawn in. In fact as Mike Davis has shown:

> Not since the Meridean of the Popular Front during World War Two, when the Browderite Communist Party attempted to dissolve itself into the left-wing of the New Deal, had the majority of the American left been so fully submerged in the Democratic Party.[27]

The recent history of the American left, then, is the very opposite of Rorty's sad and sentimental story. Far from standing aloof in spectorial and cultural isolation the left strove to become a Rortian "reformist left" in the Democratic Party. One might expect Rorty to be intensely interested in what happened next given his own perspective for today's American left. Nothing of the sort. And I suspect a repression of sorts is surely at work. For what happened next was this. In the shape of the Jackson campaign a left-wing insurgency began within the Democratic party, gained real electoral credibility, stirred social hope among workers, blacks, women and Hispanics, gays and lesbians. Mike Davis has examined the way the "Howe-Harrington" strategy was faced — what good fortune! — with the "first social-democratic alternative seriously offered to the America electorate in a presidential campaign," an alternative which not only linked full employment, disarmament and anti-imperialism but was lodged within the Democratic party. Their response? An attack on Jackson and full backing for the sotto voce Reaganism of Mondale. And then, after Mondale won the nomination, the left-wing of realism "watched helplessly as their labor strategy was sex-changed into a corporate strategy after the Democratic convention." At this point the DSA became positively delusional praising Mondale's "exceptional left-liberal credentials" and dreaming of a "peoples campaign" for a "peoples president." Jackson meanwhile turned out to be a permeationist too, a man trapped within the Democratic Party who snuffed out the potential of the Rainbow Coalition to take on a real life and develop independently. Davis shows that permeationism left Jackson a rather pathetic Father Gapon figure leading supplicants to "little father" Mondale.[28]

Ignoring the Reasons for the Failure of Liberalism in the Sixties

RORTY'S HISTORY OF THE LEFT MISSES what Hal Draper pointed out to Irving Howe back in 1965. Howe had complained, in *Dissent*, that for the New Left, "liberalism means Clark Kerr not John Dewey; Max Lerner, not John Stuart Mill; Pat Brown not George Norris". Draper's acerbic reply in *New Politics* was that "Since the one quality which [Howe's] three Good Liberals have in common is that they are dead, Howe is letting Kerr, Lerner and Brown stand for contemporary liberalism...and what more has to be proved?"[29] Today Rorty invokes the Good Dead "reformist leftists" Dewey and Whitman. Rorty, like Howe, ignores the profound long-term secular transformation of American liberalism and the tragic relationship of the left to that transformation. While Rorty paints the New Deal as the high point of a united reforming left and a model for us today, Draper argued the eclipse of the reformist left in the 1960's can be traced to the character of its insertion into the New Deal coalition in the 1930's. The continuation of the New Deal by Eisenhower demonstrated that a deeper shift — the bureaucratic statification of capitalism — was forcing a convergence of liberalism and conservatism. Individual rascally liberals were not the issue. The Democratic Party would act, Draper warned, "at every important juncture exactly like the Greater Evil and sometimes worse" because liberalism has decayed and is converging with conservatism under the impress of the changing nature of the capitalist mode of production and of the role of the state in managing it.[30] As capitalism ages it becomes more and more a threat to democracy and liberty and liberalism has been forced to choose between its attachment to capitalism and its attachment to democracy and liberty. Even Irving Howe acknowledged that "anarcho-authoritarian sentiment" among the New Left was primarily due to the "crisis and virtual collapse" of liberalism (it is this Howe which Rorty studiously ignores). [31]

Rorty and Dewey

AND RORTY IS NOT JOHN DEWEY'S "ABLEST INTELLECTUAL HEIR" as Alan Ryan writing in *The Nation*, had it. Robert Westbrook has detailed Dewey's increasingly critical relationship to liberalism in the 1930's and his shift to a radical democratic socialism. Dewey thought liberalism had "ossified and narrowed" turning from a "means of producing social change" to a "means of preventing social change" because it had become identified with "the maximization of unrestrained individualistic action in the economic sphere." The free market was "as fatal to the realization of liberty for all as it is to the realization of equality." Liberalism, Dewey concluded, must "become radical" to save itself and his proscription went far beyond anything Rorty has so far proposed. While Rorty thinks liberal values can be realised within the free market Dewey thought the free market the "chief obstacle" to liberal values, reducing people to "hands" and breeding authoritarianism and alienation in equal measure. While Mill's *On Liberty* remains the name of Rorty's utopia Dewey thought liberty was meaningless as mere "negative liberty" and was really a demand for power. Liberty has meaning "in relation to the liberties, the effective powers, of other individuals, groups and classes." The problem with capitalism was that it brought about a narrow distribution of liberties. Democratic socialism, thought Dewey, would mark the opening up of liberty, of effective power, to all. Equality is the democratic distribution of liberties so conceived. To facilitate that end liberals must now embrace the means of "socialis[ing] the forces of production...so that the liberty of individuals will be supported by the very structure of economic organization." Where Rorty thinks the very idea of planning was buried by the 1989 revolutions, Dewey opposed the Stalinist "planned society" but saw no reason to stop working for a "planning society," in which democratic popular planning would complement a participatory democracy. Rorty is the heir not of Dewey but of Walter Lippman who earned Dewey's anger in the 1930's for identifying all socialist planning with its Stalinist forms and embracing the free market accordingly. Finally, while Rorty calls for piecemeal reforms to realise social justice Dewey warned precisely that "piecemeal policies taken ad hoc" would not be enough to challenge the might of corporate and state power. Only "thoroughgoing changes in the set-up of institutions" would be enough. Rorty has regressed from Dewey's positions at a time when global capitalism offers daily confirmations of their accuracy.[32]

Ignoring Structural Reasons for the Radicalization of the '60s New Left

RORTY HAS IT THAT THE NEW LEFT WAS RADICALIZED because it lost hope in America. He equates radicalism with despair. He would have us contrast a cynical anti-Amerikan "New Left" to an older and more hopeful American "reformist left." I think this account gets things pretty much as wrong as it is possible to get them. Listen to Michael Harrington in 1965:

> When I became a radical in 1948...it was taken for granted (on the Left) that the Fourth of July was really a front for the four hundred families...The Young radicals of today, it seems to me, did not start with this inherited cynicism...They became active in order to affirm those traditional values.[33]

In other words the old left had Theory and Europe and the New Left had Hope and America. The reverse of Rorty's account. The New Left, Harrington observed, felt "a sense of the immediate contradiction between democratic posturing and the underlying reality" and were descended "from the abolitionists and the Wobblies not Marx."[34] Failing to understand this, Rorty can't understand the radicalization of the New Left. As it fought to "affirm traditional values" it found out they were not traditional at all. That they had been abandoned in practice by liberalism. The sunlit Whitmanesque democratic vistas had been replaced by the carpet bombing of North Vietnam. The New Left faced up to the realities of the transformation of American liberalism in a way Howe never did and Rorty never does. Best about the New Left was its refusal to be incorporated as the left-wing of the Democratic party. Its hard-won understanding that "the issue was not the issue," that racism, capitalism and imperialism constituted a system, and its grasp of the Democratic Party's relationship to that system were precious advances. But not in Rorty's sad and sentimental, and false, history. He seeks a "return" to a time of innocence before the New Left learned about the nature of the system. He wants us to forget there is a system. He wants a willed and knowing ignorance. Take for example his treatment of Martin Luther King. King is presented as a Rorty-kind-of-leftist, a man who challenged the nation to live up to its own ideals and was able to feel pride in a national identity. He contrasts King to today's "Nietzscheanized left [which] tells the country it is rotten to the core — that it is a racist, sexist, imperialist society, one which can't be trusted an inch, one whose every utterance must be ruthlessly deconstructed."[35] King, says Rorty, did not share the kind of nihilistic thinking of the New Left which thought "the Vietnam War and the endless humiliation inflicted on African-Americans, were clues to something deeply wrong with their country and not just mistakes correctable by reforms."[36] King was "a superficial dreamer" who aspired to "local hope not universal knowledge."[37] Rubbish. In 1967, King said America was "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world" and called racism, economic exploitation and militarism "triple evils" which were "incapable of being conquered" as long as "profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people."[38] King learned from his experience of struggle the same kinds of lessons as the New Left: "For years I labored with the idea of reforming the existing institutions of the society, a little change here, a little change there...Now I feel quite differently. I think you've got to have a reconstruction of the entire society."[39] This radical King is either unknown to or suppressed by Rorty. Instead he tells us — a man with no practical political experience who describes himself as a someone who "stay[s] in [his] study and compose[s] ever more effective little bits of rhetoric" — that "Campaigns" are good but "Movements" are bad. This is because when separate campaigns connect up as "parts of something bigger" it is to return to the bad old habits of wanting either God (the Christians) or History (the Marxists) to ground political action theoretically with a Grand Plan grounded on Truth. In one of his most ridiculous passages Rorty tells us that "Movements are suited to onto-theological Platonists, campaigns to many-sided men of letters."[40] This is risible stuff (not to mention as narcissistic as you can get. Why is it "onto-theological" to connect up social relations or institutions and see the world systematically? It is not. Look at Seattle. Group after group realizing their concerns "connect up" and each seeking to become "parts of something much bigger." This did not make them "onto-Theological Platonists." It just means they were doing structural analysis, grasping as the New Left did before them that "the issue is not the issue." And this is relevant today. Seyla Benhabib has recently written of the "Balkanization of urban America" which a particularistic politics, a politics of access or brokerage, has helped produce. She has called for a "new politics of civility and solidarity, robust enough in its vision to unite those social forces torn now by fragmentation and factionalism."[41] Indeed. Filling peoples' heads with nonsense about "onto-theological Platonism" and "campaigns not movements" is the last thing we need.

Utopian Program

RORTY'S DREAM OF GLOBAL HUMAN BROTHERHOOD AND A CLASSLESS SOCIETY simply eliminates the harsh realities of the new political economy of reformism in a global capitalist economy. Clinton's failure has been an expression of a global phenomena: reformism-without-reforms. The search for profitability in a global economy of liquid capital has squeezed the space for national governments to deliver redistributive reforms. Yet in this hostile environment Rorty blithely proposes the classless society will be achieved through a program of "piecemeal reforms within the framework of a market economy." He is convinced that "capitalism would be compatible with American ideals of human brotherhood...if the state were able to redistribute wealth" and that means a return to the New Deal. He mocks the idea of the social ownership of the economy saying "nobody wants to nationalize production."[42]

But there is a wild oscillation in Rorty's politics between proscriptive caution and descriptive radicalism. This oscillation is caused by two pressures on Rorty. On the one hand the polarization of U.S. society as global capitalism sends inequality soaring, eats the environment, and swallows the political process. On the other hand, since 1989, Rorty has concluded there is no alternative to the market; Stalinism is what you get when you try an alternative. Rorty's political thought bounces between these two pressures, unstable and unsettled. Its future direction will likely be to follow the logic of one or the other.

Markar Melkonian, in his new study of Rorty's politics, argues that if Rorty is to maintain his role as radical liberal defending liberty and the mitigation of suffering then he "will have to abrogate his role as apologist for the bourgeois liberal democracies." Currently Rorty refuses to "allow his own conclusions to add up, or to register on his story about America" and so Rorty's self is not at all balanced between private irony and public duties as he imagines but torn apart between two selves which "co-exist at each other's expense, conflictually, like two armies of metaphors locked in mutual siege."[43] I think Markonian is absolutely right and the prosthetic memory and false history I have highlighted in this essay is employed by Rorty to broker this war within. The result is incoherence and often wild lurches between giddy hopefulness and black despair. It is hard to know who Rorty is. Sometimes he appears before us as an anti-capitalist radical. He will condemn the "global overclass which makes all the major economic decisions, and makes them entirely independent of the legislatures and a fortiori of the will of any given country." This Rorty thinks "the super-rich can operate without any thought of any interests save their own."[44] He sees "a world economy in which an attempt by any one country to prevent the immiseration of its workers may result only in depriving them of employment."[45] This up-and-atem Rorty thinks that "only global political institutions can offset the power of all that marvellously liquid capital."[46] But then the other Rorty, the one who thinks the free market "indispensable," the apologist for capitalism, must have his say as well. This Rorty thinks the very opposite: "The current leftist habit of taking the long view and looking beyond nationhood to a global polity is as useless as was faith in Marx's philosophy of history for which it has become a substitute."[47] Within a single sentence Rorty can warn that the free market "makes it very difficult to institute fraternity" and that the free market is "indispensable." He is capable of arguing that "Nobody wants to nationalise production" only for the radical Rorty to but in with "For all I know, fighting off the cosmopolitan super-rich might require...some kind of nationalisation." [48] But the dominant voice identifies all attempts at planning with the Stalinist experience and so thinks There Is No Alternative to the market:

> The Marxists hoped that once those on the bottom seized control, once the revolution turned things upside down, everything would automatically get better. Here again, alas, the Marxists were wrong. So now Marxism is no longer of much interest, and we are back with the question of what top-down initiatives we gentlefolk might best pursue.[49]

To escape these twin pressures, to end the war between the "two armies of metaphors locked in mutual siege" inside his brain Rorty just has to believe that capitalism will generate the wealth for progressive reforming governments — Liberal Gentlefolk in Power ! — to redistribute.[50] But this is no less false and prosthetic than his history. As a political and economic program for the 21st century it is literally incredible. Since the late 1970s the deregulation of markets and the free movement of capital and commodities have gone hand in hand with an attempted destruction of trade unions and an assault on the social wage. These policies have been continued, and sometimes initiated, by one "left" "reforming" "social-democratic" government after another from Australia to Spain, Britain to America. Was this because these governments were dominated by ex-New Leftist Nietscheanized Cabinet Ministers whose reading of Foucault and Derrida had left them without social hope? Or have new right economic and social policies been continued by "left" governments because capitalist profitability and the markets required it? In truth every single social democratic party in the world has dumped the kind of program Rorty proposes. Rorty is proposing nothing less than a return to something Michael Harrington argued was out of date in the late 60s, "Smith-Keynesianism," that combination of Adam Smith's invisible hand of the market and Keynes's partnership between the corporations and the government. Harrington argued the economic ideology of FDR's New Deal, "Smith-Keynesianism," saw Government "share the room" with Big Business while Labor was locked outside the room but kept within the coalition. Labor's independence was lost, its opposition to capital was unexpressed and its organizations and its fibers weakened. As Harrington put it in 1968 in *Toward a Democratic Left*, "FDR's innovations are not only inadequate to the challenges of the 70s and 80s but are themselves the source of some of our most serious difficulties."[51] And yet, 30 years after Harrington, and 60 years after Roosevelt, Richard Rorty can say, "I guess I just don't see what the change has been. What's wrong with New Deal politics ?"[52]

A Sentimental and Nationalist Left

RORTY EMPLOYS TWO SORTS OF ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT of his political program that a reformist American left could persuade the state to redistribute the profits of the corporations in the form of a generous social wage. First, sentimental arguments which are elitist and utopian. Second, there are some nationalist hints and asides which hover on the edge of something more reactionary altogether. In his 1993 lectures for Amnesty International, Rorty argued that we should "hand our hopes for moral progress over to sentiment...in effect...to condescension. For we shall be relying on those who have the power to change things...rather than relying on something which has power over them." He anticipates our indignant refusal to Look To The Powers That Be:

> it is revolting to think that our only hope for a decent society consists in softening

> the self-satisfied hearts of a leisure class. We want moral progress to burst up from below...[but]...the people on top hold the future in their hands...everything depends on them... there is nothing more powerful to which we can appeal against them. Like everyone else I to would prefer a bottom-up way of achieving utopia...But I do not think this is how utopia will in fact come into being.

Rorty thinks sentimentality is "the best weapon we have" and that "we shall have to wait for the strong to turn their piggy little eyes to the suffering of the weak, slowly open their dried-up little hearts." We need to soften the hearts of the rich with "sad sentimental stories," like *Uncle Tom's Cabin* or *Oliver Twist* which educate the sentiments by enabling the reader to find out "what it is like to be in her situation":

> Such stories, repeated and varied over the centuries, have induced us, the rich, safe, powerful people, to tolerate and even to cherish powerless people — people whose appearance or habits or beliefs at first seems an insult...[53]

So, alongside the stirring calls from Rorty for popular politics and civil disobedience which we saw at the start of this essay there is a bold-as-brass elitism. [54] Listen for instance to this: "Every top-down liberal initiative, from the abolition of slavery through the extension of the franchise to the establishment of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, had been driven by the hope that someday we shall no longer need to distinguish us gentlefolk from those others, the people who live like animals."[55] "Against Bosses, Against Oligarchies" indeed ! The elitist Rorty is attracted to Roberto Unger's argument that the agency of social change is now "the multitude of more or less well-intentioned, confused, unheroic, crypto-leftists — middle class, university-trained youth, filled with the vague leftist ideas afloat in the world" which staffs the "lower-rungs of the government bureaucracy."[56] These are the same bright young things J.K. Galbraith hoped would reform the corporation in the 1960's, the "intellectual and scientific community." Back then, Michael Harrington reminded Galbraith that this scientific and educational estate would be an elitist and anti-democratic development unless "it operates outside the existing structures of economic power and only if it allies itself with the poor and the unions."[57] Rorty, and Unger, accept the "existing structures of economic power" and view the scientific and educational estate as an alternative to the working class. Little wonder Nancy Fraser has labelled Rorty's predilection for technical solutions from above as "technocratism."[58]

But alongside the elitist arguments Rorty hints, I think, at a more reactionary kind of support for a statist, nationalist, redistributive socialism. I refer to the way Rorty sometimes plays with the idea that if the global capitalist free market can't deliver "universal tenderness" then maybe it can deliver tenderness of a more particularistic sort. There is, in this regard, his comment, "I don't know how you avoid protectionism."[59] And what are we to make of the remark that "The fear that is beginning to gnaw at the hearts of all us liberal gentlefolk in the North is that there are no initiatives which will save the southern hemisphere, that there will never be enough money in the world to redeem the South."[60] And how does that relate to his repeated stress that "everything depends on keeping our fragile sense of American fraternity intact" ?[61] This playing with the idea of protectionism as a means to preserve American fraternity puts into a rather different perspective his much-criticized statement that:

> Consider... the attitude of contemporary American liberals to the unending hopelessness and misery of the young blacks in American cities. Do we say that these people must be helped because they are our fellow human beings ? We may, but it is much more persuasive, morally as well as politically, to describe them as our fellow Americans — to insist that it is outrageous that an American should live without hope.[62]

Usually read as a philosophical statement about human solidarity being stronger when based upon attachments of a local, emotionally-rich and particularistic kind, in light of these half-thoughts about protectionism it appears more charged, more political, more worrying.

And when the tensions in his thought — between his acceptance of the free market and his revolt against its results, his hatred of the bosses and his despair about the workers, his attraction to protectionism and his horror at its implications — overwhelm Rorty he slips into hopelessness. In this mood he thinks America has probably lost its "newness" for good and has "frozen over."[63] "We Alexandrians no longer have the strength" he laments in a particularly maudlin, narcissistic and, one hopes, self-parodying moment.[64] When Rorty is in this mood he looks for social hope, ironically, in the same place as the New Left did once it gave up on Americans: Other countries. Rorty's hope may be directed at Brazilian reformism rather than Chinese or Cuban Stalinism but his conclusion "if there is hope, it lies in the third world" is identical.[65]

Nike Philosophy

THE THIRD PROBLEM WITH RORTY'S POLITICS IS THE VOLUNTARIST PHILOSOPHY which underpins it. Rorty is the philosopher for the Nike age. "Just Do It!" is his message. He tells us that the only human needs not defined by imagination are calories-per-day. For everything else we only feel constrained by "some past act of imagination." The post-Nietzschean philosophical themes of anti-foundationalism, anti-representationalism, and anti-essentialism do lend support to his utopian reformist project.[66] For if nothing has an "in itself" nature, not human beings nor capitalism nor the Democratic Party, nor anything, then there are no limits to whether or not a "reformist left" can be created nor what it can achieve. Just Do It ! In this Nikean mood Rorty thinks it "easy" to avoid the Orwellian future his despairing side frets over. All that is needed is for "all classes to confront the new global economy together...in the name of our common citizenship."[67] This, remember, includes a super-rich class which he has already told us operates "without any thought of any interests save [its] own." Presumably after the super-rich have listened to enough sentimental stories their little piggy eyes will turn to "our common citizenship."

Rorty thinks capitalism can be either the economic basis of a society of fraternity whose anthem is Solidarity Forever or of a jungle in which hereditary economic castes prowl around each other. At least Eduard Bernstein pointed to trends he thought basic to capitalism which made it reasonable to think capitalism could gradually evolve into socialism. Rorty's optimism is closer to Ralph Waldo Emerson's, or the self-help guru Anthony Robbins: "if you want it enough you can have it." With no determining social structures, no entrenched and opposed interests there are no limits to what a reforming politics can construct. On the lintel of his door-post Rorty has written, like Emerson, Whim. Rorty writes, "if we can work together we can make ourselves into whatever we are clever and courageous enough to imagine ourselves becoming."[68] But he can switch to philosophy-talk to make the same point: "I hope intellectuals will use the death of Leninism as an occasion to rid themselves of the idea that they know, or ought to know, something about deep, underlying forces — forces that determine the fates of human communities." Rorty candidly spells out the political charge of this philosophical warning: the best we can hope for is welfare-state-capitalism-with-a-human-face.[69]

Rorty tends to identify all theory with a fruitless search for The One True View Of The World. He counterposes narrative to theory, hope to knowledge, imagination to retrospection, and sentiment to reason. In yet another Rortian reprise of the New Left he claims we don't need theory. We just need to point. "After all, a lot of such repression [social and economic — AJ] is so blatant and obvious that it does not take any great analytic skills or any great philosophical self-consciousness to see what is going on...."[70] We do not need theory to penetrate appearances and reach an underlying reality, says Rorty, because the only reality that is reachable and relevant is human suffering and that is "already...clearly visible."[71] So it turns out Rorty is what Hal Draper, some quarter of a century ago, called the "non-ideological radical": anti-theoretical, issue-led, sentimental, wanting to just point and get on with it. One can hear a faint echo of Mario Savio telling the Berkeley students to throw their bodies against the machine and against the gears until it stopped. Rorty, of course, is telling you to throw your body into "piecemeal reforms under the framework of a free market economy" which does not have quite the same ring to it. But either way, heroic or prosaic, Hal Draper in 1965 pointed out why you can't just "point":

> Behind the cry "This is wrong!" is an ideological vacuum; for as soon as you try to examine why it is wrong, or how you know this is wrong but not that, and above all how you choose among the various things to do about making it right, you get into "ideology", that is more general ideas about social action and program. (...) Politics abhors an ideological vacuum. The new-radical knows, just knows, that racial discrimination is wrong because he has already absorbed and internalized this consensus-idea from his milieu. Just as people who "don't believe in theories" merely mean that they accept the current theories of the status quo without examination and uncritically, so also the new-radical ideological vacuum is also filled with an unexamined content.[72]

In 1975, James Weinstein argued that each American left reflected the "dominant empiricism" of American capitalist society. Each hoped that ultimate aims could be put aside and leave the immediate movement for reform to clarify the struggle. Each failed to base its politics on an analysis of the changing nature of advanced corporate capitalism. Each reached for the models of earlier movements which were inappropriate to the changing social relations of their own time. The "court socialism" of Richard Rorty seems to me — with his false history, his utopian politics and his voluntaristic philosophy — to bundle all these faults together.[73]

Left Oppositionism

To reject Rorty's ungrounded "hope" is not to embrace the cultural left's despair. There is an alternative to both, a tradition which has resisted too many times academic irrelevance and "court socialism," disaffiliationism and permeationism. Left-oppositionism refers not to a narrow sectarian tradition but as a broad left wing movement defined by Hal Draper as "[standing] outside the Establishment as an open opposition, achieving even short-term changes by the pressure of a bold alternative, while seeking roads to fundamental transformation."[74] This sums up the stance of a small but vital American radical tradition stretching from Tom Paine to the pre-1917 Socialist Party of Eugene Debs, from the new radicals of the 1960s to the radical Martin Luther King, from Teamsters for a Democratic Union to the movement for an American Labor party. This tradition is rich in pointers about how to work for fundamental transformation through a militant fight for concrete reforms, wrenched from below by independently organized and self-controlling forces. This left-opposition does not counterpose "revolution" to reforms but grounds the reforming effort in a self-activated and independently organized base. Left oppositionists fight for reforms in the spirit of Eugene Debs:

> Too long have the workers of the world waited for some Moses to lead them out of bondage. He has not come; he never will come. I would not lead you out if I could; for if you could be led out you could be led back again. I would have you make up your own mind that there is nothing you can't do for yourselves.[75]

This tradition is more relevant today than ever before. The political economy of reformism means that winning reforms and avoiding roll-back is now inseparable, as Kim Moody has argued, from "the importance of mass mobilizations, coalitions with community-based organizations, and international contacts and outlook."[76] And while Rorty writes as if no Marxist ever proposed or fought for a reform, the truth is that from *The Communist Manifesto* through to the *Theses on Tactics of the Communist International* and Trotsky's Transitional Program Marxists have made the fight for reforms the very heart of the process of self-emancipation. The constructive alternative to Marcuse's nihilistic Great Refusal is a collective fight, from below, for a standard beyond bourgeois right, the standard of human need. Human need is, of course, the standard of distributive justice belonging to the future socialist society "as it has developed on its own foundations" for "right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development conditioned thereby."[77] But that begs the question: how do we get there? In other words, how can a collective actor be forged in this present capable of producing that future? The tradition of socialism from below has generally answered this question by pointing to the potential for the self-emancipation of the majority through a militant struggle for its needs, this struggle being, potentially at any rate, at once educational, stimulating a process of "self-changing," and instrumental, a means for the "changing of circumstances." This political method can be traced back to *The Communist Manifesto* in which Marx and Engels insist that socialists "fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present they also represent and take care of the future of the movement." In 1921, the method was developed further by the Communist or Third International in the *Theses on Tactics*, a document replete with the language of need. A militant fight for present needs, conducted without regard for the "needs" of capital, argued the Comintern, can be the bridge to the future society. The *Theses* urged a fight for reforms focused on the needs of "the broadest masses," for "demands whose fulfilment is an immediate and urgent working class need." Principles of justice which "belong" to the future society are reached for in order to build a bridge to that society in the present. And that bridge is not pieces of legislation or the incremental growth of collectivisation but the spiritual growth of a collective actor, organized, conscious, and self-controlling. Transitional politics stands at the heart of Marx's conception of socialism as self-emancipation because it is the rational political expression of the philosophical understanding of the simultaneity of the constitution of the emancipatory subject and the struggle for its needs, of "the coincidence of the changing of circumstances and self-changing." And with that perspective you can "name the system" without spooking itself into passivity by Foucauldian tales of the ubiquity of "power" or Derridean nightmares about "phallologocentrism."

Conclusion

RORTY'S *ACHIEVING OUR COUNTRY* IS A FALSE HISTORY, a sad story which seeks to manipulate our sentiments. He employs the same "rhetorical intoxication," as Mike Davis called it, which Howe-Harrington used to drag a generation of ex-New Leftists into the dead-end of the Democratic Party in the 1970s. His voluntaristic philosophy, with its injunction to "replace knowledge with hope," supports a utopian political program of "piecemeal reforms within the framework of a market economy" ignoring realities about both the Democratic Party and the new global economy. His thought remains trapped in a contradiction. He detests the effects of the market but can see no alternative to it. So he seeks to resurrect the idea of the redistributive state doling out the profits of a global capitalist economy at a time when all around the world social democracy has dumped that program. A relatively detached philosopher might be able to contain these contradictions indefinitely, each oscillation producing another book or article. But any real movement for social change which acts on Rorty's anger will soon face a dilemma. Facing the conservative bulwark of the Demo cratic Party it will have to give up either its anger or its attachment to the Democratic Party. It will have to dump permeationism and the Democratic Party and join the left-opposition or, more accurately, help build the left-opposition.[78] As tremendously difficult as this will be is it not the more realistic route to "achieve America" ? Take, for instance, health care. Only with willed ignorance can one find social hope in Bill Bradley's capitulation to the health insurance companies, a policy cheered by the Heritage Foundation, or in Bill and Hillary Clinton's failed plan to enrich the largest health insurance companies. Look instead to the Labor Party members of Somerville, Massachusetts going door-to-door explaining the case for Just Health Care, winning a local referendum and building the party. Look to the Seattle protesters who saw out the century holding aloft the slogans of the radicalized Enlightenment in the biggest protest demonstration since the Vietnam War. There lies social hope. There lie the forces to "achieve America." And, we democratic Marxists suspect, Walt Whitman would know them to be writing the history of democracy and John Dewey would know them to be writing the narrative of freedom.

NOTES

1. Richard Rorty, *Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth Century America*, Harvard University Press, 1998:105. Thanks to Joanne Landy and Jesse

Lemisch for helpful discussions about Richard Rorty.

2. Hal Draper, "In Defense of the "New Radicals," in *Socialism From Below*, Humanities Press, 1992. The article was first published in 1965 in *New Politics* and Draper's target was the "realignment" strategy of Irving Howe and Michael Harrington.

3. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, 1980, Princeton University Press; *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, Cambridge University Press, 1989; *Philosophy and Social Hope*, Penguin, 1999. For a critique of Rorty see Norman Geras, *Solidarity in the Conversation of Humankind. The Ungroundable Liberalism of Richard Rorty*, Verso, 1995, and Markar Markonian, *Richard Rorty's Politics: Liberalism at the End of the American Century*, Humanity Books, 1999.

4. There are other strange portents of radicalization. Donald Trump runs for President shouting "Tax the Rich !" The former conservative Arianna Huffington writes a book called *How to Overthrow the Government*. Of course such figures are opportunists. But it is precisely because they *are* opportunists that when they don a *radical* garb it tells us that something is going on in the society.

5. *Philosophy and Social Hope*, p. 255.

6. Ibid p. 258.

7. Ibid p. 256-7.

8. Ibid. p. 259.

9. Ibid. p. 129.

10. See Draper, op cit.

11. In Derek Nystrom and Kent Puckett, *Against Bosses, Against Oligarchies: A Conversation with Richard Rorty*, Prickly Pear pamphlets, Number Eleven, 1998, p.23-4. An odd title that, to describe an interview with a man who is for the free market.

12. The way the centrality of class is posed by Adolph Reed Jr. in his collection *Class Notes: Posing as Politics and Other Thoughts on the American Scene*, The New Press, 2000, seems useful to me.

13. Irving Howe, "'Confrontation Politics" is a Dangerous Game," in Howe ed. *Beyond the New Left: A Confrontation and Critique*, McCall, 1965, p. 45.

14. Irving Howe, *Selected Writings 1950-1990*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990, p. 389. I do not think Howe's point can be dismissed. I sat on a train in Manhattan while a man gave an impromptu and angry lecture to the travellers about the recent spate of shootings of unarmed black men by the police. As he urged them to protest the killings he incited them with the rhetorical question "Do you call yourselves Americans?" and with taunt, which seemed to me to carry a sense of the "national myth" Howe refers to, "You're not Americans!"

15. *Philosophy and Social Hope*, p. 268.

16. op cit. p. 268, and *Achieving Our Country*, p. 52.

17. *Achieving Our Country*, p. 56.

18. In Geras, op cit. p. 127.

19. Richard Rorty, "Human Rights, Rationality and Sentiment," in his *Truth and Progress. Philosophical Papers, Volume 3*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 182.

20. *Achieving Our Country*, p. 42-3.

21. Julius Jacobson, "Sink with the Democrats or Build an American Left," *New Politics*, Vol.II, No.2 (New Series), p.11-12.

22. Draper, op cit. p. 112.

23. Jacobson, op cit. p12.

24. Michael Harrington, "The Mystical Militants," in Howe ed. *Beyond the New Left*, op cit. pp. 33-39.

25. Howe, ibid., p14.

26. Michael Harrington, *Newsletter of the Democratic Left*, 1973, p.5. cited in Mike Davis, "The Lesser Evil? The Left and the Democratic Party," *New Left Review* 155, 1986, p.7.

27. op cit. p. 8.

28. op cit., p. 22.

29. Draper, op cit. p. 118.

30. Hal Draper, "Who's Going to Be the Lesser Evil in '68?," in Michael Friedman, ed. *The New Left of the Sixties*, Independent Socialist Press, Berkeley, 1972, p. 61.

31. Irving Howe, *Beyond the New Left*, p. 11.

32. Robert B. Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy*, Cornell University Press, 1991, pp. 434-436, 456.

33. Harrington, "Mystical Militants" op cit. p. 33.

34. op cit. p. 34.

35. *Philosophy and Social Hope*, p.129.

36. *Achieving Our Country*, p. 55-6.

37. Richard Rorty, "Posties," *London Review of Books*, 3 September 1987, p.12.

38. Adam Fairclough, "Was Martin Luther King a Marxist?," *History Workshop Journal*, Spring 1983, p. 121.

39. David Garrow, *Bearing The Cross, Martin Luther King, Jr. and The Southern Christian leadership Conference*, Vintage, 1986, p. 562..

40. *Achieving Our Country*, p. 116-7.

41. Seyla Benhabib, "From Identity Politics to Social Feminism: A Plea for the Nineties" in David Trend ed. *Radical Democracy: Identity, Citizenship and the State*, Routledge, 1995, p.34-39.

42. *Philosophy and Social Hope*, p. 244, 225, and interview with Scott Stossel, *Atlantic Unbound*, 23 April, 1998.

43. Markonian op cit., p. 192-3.

44. *Philosophy and Social Hope*, p. 233.

45. *Achieving Our Country*, p. 85.

46. *Philosophy and Social Hope*, p 234.

47. *Achieving Our Country*, p. 98.

48. See Stossel, op cit. p. 5-6. Norman Geras has explored this tendency to systematic incoherence in Rorty's philosophical thought, his "reliance upon what he simultaneously disclaims" (Geras, op cit. p. 57). I think this describes much in his political writings as well. It often seems that if you don't like the first Rorty another will be along in a minute.

49. *Philosophy and Social Hope*, p. 225.

50. Ibid. This "begging bowl" social democracy accepts deep structural socio-economic inequalities of power as necessary to generate the wealth the redistributive state doles out. This contradicts Rorty's other idea that a liberal and democratic society is defined by "domination free communication" (*Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, p. 65). Another incoherence.

51. Michael Harrington, *Toward a Democratic Left*, Macmillan, 1968, p.35.

52. See Nystrom, op cit. p. 10.

53. Rorty, *Truth and Progress*, op cit. pp.182-5.

54. See Alan Johnson, "The Affinities of Edward Bellamy and Richard Rorty. A Response to Jonathan Rée," *Radical Philosophy*, No. 91., 1998.

55. *Philosophy and Social Hope*, p. 225.

56. *Essays on Heidegger*, p. 182.

57. Quoted in Christopher Lasch, *The Agony of the American Left*, Pelican, 1973, p. 182.

58. Nancy Fraser, "Solidarity or Singularity?" in Alan Marchowski, ed. *Reading Rorty*, 1990.

59. In Stossel, op cit. p.6.

60. *Philosophy and Social Hope*, p. 226.

61. op cit. p. 251.

62. *Contingency*, op cit. p. 191.

63. Richard Rorty, *Essays on Heidegger and Others*, Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 186-7.

64. op cit. p. 192.

65. op cit. 180.

66. See the discussion in Markar Markonian, *Richard Rorty's Politics: Liberalism at the End of the American Century*, Humanity Books, 1999.

67. *Philosophy and Social Hope*, p. 244.

68. *Theory and Practice*, p.175.

69. op cit. p. 228.

70. *Essays on Heidegger*, p. 135.

71. Ibid. p. 25.

72. Draper, "New Radicals," p. 110-11.

73. James Weinstein, *Ambiguous Legacy. The Left in American Politics*, New Viewpoints, 1975.

74. Draper, op cit., p. 112.

75. Debs in ibid. p. 22.

76. Kim Moody, "On Workers in a Lean World," *Against The Current*, May/June 1999, p. 42.

77. Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (1875), 1969, p. 19.

78. The grip of lesser-evilism was seen during the impeachment hearings of President Clinton. What Christopher Hitchens, in his superb book *No One Left To Lie To. The Triangulations of William Jefferson Clinton* (Verso, 1998) describes as "a quasi-governmental or para-state division devoted exclusively to the bullying and defamation of women" and "the use of the soft-money world to cover it up" was ignored. Hitchens charts the debasement of the left before this "pliant serf of the Pentagon," this "stealthy envoy from the enemy camp" who has "completed the Reagan counter-revolution" and "made the state into a personal friend of those who are already rich and secure." Hitchens concludes, like Hal Draper 30 years before him, that lesser-evilism is the cancer of the left.

Engendering Transition in Russia: An Interview with Valerie Sperling

Interview Conducted by Nanette Funk

In November 1999, Cambridge University Press published Valerie Sperling's fascinating book Organizing Women in Contemporary Russia: Engendering Transition, *an in-depth discussion of the contemporary women's movement in Russia. Her research was done in 1994-6 in Moscow and in two provincial cities, Cheboksary and Ivanovo. In March 2000, Nanette Funk conducted the following interview with Valerie Sperling.*

Nanette Funk: *The contemporary Russian women's movement is taking place in the midst of a tremendous transformation in Russia at the political, legal, economic and social level. In what ways is gender important to the transformation in Russia over the last 10 years? Is there discrimination against women in Russia today? If so, what sort of discrimination? How does it compare to discrimination against women during the Soviet period?*

Valerie Sperling: If Russia had managed somehow to wipe out discrimination against women, it would be unique in the world community! But seriously, yes, there's widespread discrimination against women in Russian society, and it takes many of the forms that it takes elsewhere, from an economy divided into male- and female- dominated industries, where the pay and prestige of the male-dominated ones are far higher; to the glass ceiling, or what's also referred to as the horizontal segregation of the labor force, where women predominate among the lower ranks, and men dominate the management. There's discrimination in the home, as well. Household labor and childcare is still seen as

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NANETTE FUNK *is professor of philosophy at Brooklyn College of City University of NY. She teaches social and political philosophy and feminist theory. She co-edited* Gender Politics and Post-Communism: Reflections from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (Routledge Press, 1993), *a collection including original articles by women from the region.*

"women's work," and there's a tremendous amount of violence against women — approximately 14,000 women are murdered each year, by husbands and partners, and 25% of women surveyed in Moscow recently reported some form of spousal abuse. Sexual harassment, and even workplace rape, have been reported, and are apparently on the rise since the end of the Soviet period and the creation of a private sector within the economy. Some want ads in popular newspapers explicitly state that they're seeking attractive female employees, under 35 years of age, with "European features," who "lack hang-ups" (*bez kompleksov*) — that is, who should understand that sex may be part of their job. There's also an evident cultural bias against women's participation in politics. Women won just under 8% of the seats in the recent elections to the Duma (the lower house of the Russian national legislature) in December 1999, down from 13% in 1993, and 10% in 1995.

It's a little difficult to compare some of these manifestations of discrimination to those that existed in the Soviet period. In the early Soviet period, of course, just after the revolution, some attempts were made to redress manifestations of discrimination against women (illiteracy and prostitution, for example), and a women's department was set up within the party organs in 1919. In 1930, however, Stalin declared that women had been successfully "liberated," and shut down the women's department, effectively silencing public discussion on the topic of discrimination. Sexual harassment and rape were taboo topics under the Soviet state, and there wasn't much survey research on family-related issues until the 1970s, and even then, it certainly didn't include gathering statistics on domestic violence. So it's hard to compare the levels of violence currently with what they may have been during the Soviet era. Many women have talked about the widespread nature of sexual harassment in the workplace under Communist rule too, although it was never labeled as such. As for women's involvement in politics in the Soviet period, percentage-wise, women held a far more significant place in politics, because there was a "quota" for women's seats in the Soviet legislature, the Supreme Soviet, according to which about one-third of the seats had to go to women. Impressive as that may sound, the fact was that the Supreme Soviet was merely a rubber-stamp legislature, it had no decision-making or legislative power of its own; it merely approved the policies handed down to it by the party. And within the party leadership, women were rarely found. Few women ever made it onto the Politburo (the highest party body), and women made up only about three percent of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. According to research by sociologist and women's movement activist Elena Kochkina, in the executive branch, it was a similar story: women made up about one-half of one percent of those occupying ministerial positions during the Soviet period. And in the post-Soviet period, as of 1997, the number of women occupying positions as ministers and deputy ministers, chairs of state committees and federal services and agencies was only about 4%. At least one woman (Ekaterina Lakhova) who served in legislatures in the late-Soviet period, as well as in the post-Soviet era, confirmed that male deputies' attitudes toward women deputies ranged from verbal harassment to patronizing dismissal during both eras.

When we consider economic discrimination in both periods, the picture is somewhat more complex. Certain things about the gendered nature of the labor force are very much the same as they were: women's predominance in occupations requiring manual (rather than mechanized) labor, and in low-prestige, low-pay professions — all of these were carried over from the Soviet period. The major difference between the Soviet regime and its aftermath, with respect to women and the labor force, has to do with unemployment. The Soviet regime guaranteed full employment to its population, and as a result, women's labor force participation rate was very high, over 90%. In the early 1990s, as Russia's transition toward a market economy began, unemployment appeared along with privatization, and women quickly became disproportionately unemployed by comparison to men. In some cities, women made up as much as 90% of the unemployed at first. By the mid-1990s, women made up just over two-thirds of Russia's registered unemployed.

Now, how can we account for this disproportionately female unemployment? One part of the explanation is that with the state no longer subsidizing factories, employers had little incentive to retain women, who were viewed as more costly employees, due to the fact that women were entitled to maternity leave, and other benefits and privileges associated with motherhood. Another reason was that certain industries that were female-dominated, like the textile industry, were particularly hard hit by the transition period, and their production levels fell dramatically, along with demand for employees. Another aspect of the transition was that social welfare spending was cut, and, in part as a result of structural adjustment programs, thousands of child-care centers closed, or became "privatized." This threw many women into a position where they had to either quit their jobs and face economic hardship, or find some other means of taking care of their children — not necessarily an easy task, especially because the new, privately-run day care centers are prohibitively expensive for most of the population. Yet, the Russian labor minister, Gennadii Melikian, responded in 1993 to this situation by arguing that as long as men were unemployed, there was no point in creating jobs for women!

So, clearly, economic discrimination against women in the post-Soviet period is a dramatic problem. However, the roots of this problem extend explicitly back to the Soviet period. The labor ministry's argument that women's proper place was in the home, raising the children, and that women's unemployment was "natural," rather than problematic, was an argument made popular in the Brezhnev era, when the Soviet state reasoned that the birthrate among Russians (and other Slavic nationalities of the former USSR) was dangerously low, and that women had to somehow be encouraged to reproduce, perhaps by taking extended maternity leaves (up to three years). A gender-neutral parental leave policy wasn't pursued, and the option of promoting men's role as equal partners in housework and childcare was never adopted as official rhetoric by the Soviet state. Sex-role stereotypes that track women primarily into the home persist, despite the fact that under current economic conditions, most families require two salaries in order to meet the minimum living standards.

This image of women as being mothers first lies behind other manifestations of sexism in the economic realm, but, again, some of these are not of recent vintage. For example, women's labor in certain professions is prohibited, and has been since the Soviet era: women are barred from 460 occupations by government decree, because these jobs are ostensibly dangerous to a woman's reproductive health. Many of these regulations appear ludicrous. For instance, because underground work is forbidden to women, they may not work as subway train drivers, although for some reason, they are permitted to sweep the floors in subway stations. And although women are not allowed to work as pilots, they are permitted to work as flight attendants. While these regulations seem to have kept women out of some of the highest-paid occupations, they never prevented women from being disproportionately employed in heavy manual labor, and in hazardous jobs. These various forms of economic discrimination in the Soviet era and afterward, by the way, stand in sharp contrast to the official rhetoric about equality that prevailed under Soviet rule and post-Soviet rule alike. The Soviet regime's official rhetoric proclaimed that Soviet women and men were equal in all ways, with similar responsibilities and identical opportunities in the labor sphere, and the Russian Constitution of 1993 states that men and women have equal rights and should have equal opportunities to realize them. What both eras have in common is the fact that the official rhetoric is far less influential than the prevailing set of sex-role stereotypes that help determine how or if women will be able to be employed.

NF: *How significant is the contemporary women's movement, and who participates in it? Have women's groups addressed present discrimination against women ? If so, have they been effective? Do you think, based on your research, that "identity politics" in Russia today and over the last 10 years has a place? Why do you think, if you do, that women in Russia should be organizing around their interests as women, rather than as citizens or as workers addressing the general political and economic changes?*

VS: The women's movement in Russia is relatively small, in terms of the numbers of women who participate directly in it, and not terribly well-known. Aside from the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers (a nation-wide organization of women who fight against hazing in the military, help parents and their draft-age sons to avoid conscription, and lobby for alternative service, among other things), whose activities began in 1989, few average people would be able to name a Russian women's organization of national repute. But the groups that do exist are numerous — estimates range from 400 to several thousand organizations. Some of these are small, with only a handful of members, but others have a few thousand members, and have branches across the country. Some of the small ones also have academic affiliations, and are able to influence state officials on matters of policy and legislation. Others have active members who publish articles in newspapers; in fact, several women journalists have been instrumental in establishing "women's" pages, where these stories can be run.

When you think about the size of the movement, and how limited it is in some ways, it's important to remember the political and historical context in which the movement developed. Until the late 1980s, it was absolutely illegal to form an organization in the Soviet Union independent of the Communist Party. Civil society was almost completely destroyed by the Soviet dictatorship. So, there was no women's movement flourishing in the Soviet Union in the 1970s, the way there was in the U.S. In fact, the few female dissidents who pulled together an underground women's journal in 1979 were hounded by the KGB and some were even deported. So until about ten years ago, the Russian women's movement didn't even exist! That puts its size and its reputation into perspective somewhat.

But even given these inhospitable conditions, activists in the women's movement have brought to light a lot of the issues I mentioned before, and in that sense, I think they've been quite effective. In the early 1990s, there were several small-circulation women's newspapers that included articles about the unfair division of household labor, and the burden that fell on women's shoulders as a result. I remember one particularly memorable article that totaled up the weight of the groceries, dishes, pots, pans, and cutlery that women carry back and forth over the course of a year, to show how heavy that "burden" actually was! These sorts of pieces really have the power to change women's consciousness, to show women that they're not alone in their difficulties. And activists have also been effective in criticizing manifestations of sexism that blossomed in the last years of Soviet rule — things like pornography, and beauty contests. The beauty contests began to flourish at the end of the 1980s, and the objectification of women was criticized by movement activists in the press. More recently, a women's organization in St. Petersburg took the Russian version of *Playboy* to court, for printing misogynistic painted images of famous Russian women, including one of the Russian Czarina Catherine the Great, topless. Other sites where the work of women's movement activists is visible include the creation of rape crisis centers in over a dozen of Russia's cities. Rape was one of the Soviet period's "taboo topics;" statistics on rape weren't even published until the late 1980s! Some goals have not been achieved, due to a growing mood of backlash. In 1999, for example, despite rising rates of sexually transmitted diseases and increasing numbers of teenagers becoming sexually active, the Ministry of Education dropped its plans to introduce sex education in Russian schools, because of pressure from the Russian Orthodox Church and other conservative forces, including the Communist Party. And although advocacy by women's movement activists resulted in Yeltsin issuing a decree in June 1996 on a national plan of action to improve women's position by the year 2000, concrete steps in that direction have been elusive, and funding for programs to improve women's status has not materialized.

As for the question about "identity politics," or women organizing as women, rather than as "citizens" or "workers," I think this tension has particular significance in the former Soviet Union, where, for decades, women were *forbidden* to organize as women, on behalf of women, and were *only* supposed to organize as workers! Even the Soviet Women's Committee [the official "women's organization" formed in 1941] was subordinated to the Communist Party, and was there to implement its policies. Women haven't had much space in which to set their own agenda. And, as with any oppressed group, the first step toward ending oppression is to raise consciousness about it and to form an agenda. And these things are impossible to achieve without devoting energy to organizing within the oppressed group. The Combahee River Collective in the U.S. put this very nicely in their "Black Feminist Statement" back in 1977, saying, "...the only people who care enough about us to work consistently for our liberation is us." There's a very real need for women to organize, as women, in today's Russia.

Without a women's movement, the struggle against the many forms of women's oppression will be diluted if not entirely swallowed up by a broader movement addressing "general political or economic changes." Such movements in today's Russia are male-dominated and, as such, are unlikely to make ending discrimination against women a priority; this is as true of the labor movement as it is of all the political parties currently represented in the Russian legislature. Moreover, from 1917 on, after taking power, the Communist rulers of the Soviet Union effectively told women, "Your problems will be solved when socialism is implemented." This pledge (not to mention the promise of implementing socialism!) turned out to be rather far from accurate. Similarly, during perestroika [Gorbachev's policy of economic and political reform], and after the collapse of the Soviet state, Russian women were told that their issues would be addressed after the country's broader economic problems had been solved. The combination of women's issues with other "national" issues tends to result in the submerging of women's issues, and in superficial promises about their resolution at an unspecified time in the future. This is not to say that women shouldn't participate in coalitions with groups that have other priorities, but simply to say that if this is women's only form of political activity, it is unlikely to lead to improvements in women's political, economic, and social status.

NF: *In your book, you locate the Russian women's organizations within what is today called a global or transnational context, particularly in relation to western feminism and western organizations, both governmental and non-governmental. Could you explain some of the forms this takes and how it is important for the contemporary Russian women's movement?*

VS: Women's organizing in the 1990s has become increasingly transnational, which is not to negate the significant local differences in priorities between women's movements at all, but merely to say that the flow of ideas between activists now occurs at a great pace, crossing national boundaries at international conferences, as well as on the Internet, and that activists are now able to strategize and cooperate in ways that would have been very difficult (and expensive) two decades ago. And funding for women's organizations also crosses state lines, much of it flowing from "North" to "South," as well as to the former Soviet bloc countries, from governments, private foundations, and women's groups in the United States and Western Europe. The Russian women's movement emerged into this transnational context, and I think the ramifications of that have been positive in a lot of ways. Many women's organizations in Russia benefit from foreign financial support. Some of this support comes from sister organizations in Europe and the United States (the Network of East-West Women, for instance, has set up email listservs that connect women with each other across Eastern Europe and the former Soviet states), which help sponsor publications or events. Foundations and governments also provide grants that support women's organizations' program work, and attendance at international conferences (which not only gives Russian women opportunities to meet and strategize with women from other countries, but also raises the status of the organizations at home in their dealings with state officials). Foundations also provide support for feminist researchers in Russia, at a time when the Russian state has pulled back dramatically from funding academic and scientific research in general, all of which was formerly supported by the Soviet state.

NF: *You suggest that this contact with the West also has a negative impact. In what ways does this occur? Could you also discuss the upside and downside of attempts by western funders such as USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development) to form "umbrella groups" i.e., a group composed of multiple women's organizations?*

What sort of ethical and political guidelines do you think would reduce the negative effects?

VS: Western funding — like state funding of any social movement, in any country — is a mixed bag. While the funding, particularly in today's impoverished Russian social movement community, provides much needed support, it also comes along with some unintended side-effects. Groups in Russia may alter their agendas in order to fit in with the priorities of funders. Groups accepting foreign funding may be seen as coopted or as non-indigenous, catering to the West. Also, because of the way that a lot of the funding is distributed, through grant competitions, groups with similar sets of priorities end up splitting, and competing against each other, hoarding information about funding contacts, and so on. As you might expect, jealousies arise when resources are scarce, and salaries are at stake.

I would argue, though, that the funding itself is not really the problem; I tend to think that there are ways that foundations and governments could distribute funding that would promote cooperation, rather than competition, such as funding coalitions (and thereby enticing groups to work together on common projects). One such grant (indirectly from USAID) sponsored a coalition of Russian women's groups rather successfully in this manner, bringing together a number of groups in Moscow that had not worked together previously, in an "umbrella group" called the Consortium. I also think it might be worthwhile for foundations to sponsor projects that would explore ways that Russian women's groups might more productively be able to conduct fundraising domestically (something which is still at a very low level). And, of course, the granting organizations should be as transparent as possible about their selection procedures. Foundations are becoming increasingly aware of these issues.

***NF:** You indicate there were contacts between Russian and western women before 1989. In what way did contacts occur? Were there conflicts even then, and if so, what kinds?*

VS: Contacts between Russian and western women occurred before 1989 in a number of ways. Some western women traveled to the Soviet Union; some Soviet women were able to travel abroad. A number of women who were able to travel abroad did so as representatives of the Soviet Women's Committee, and came into contact with western feminists. One woman who later went on to help found the Russian Association of University Women, for instance, met a representative of the International Federation of University Women, while in the West at a conference, and started thinking about the benefits of having multiple women's groups, not just one! Even when contacts were scripted to some extent, and thus conflictual, as they were during the Cold War (you can see evidence of this at the United Nations' first international women's conference in 1975, for instance), they were likely to present some opportunities for discovery and friendship. Later contacts led to western feminists' disillusionment about the Soviet "paradise," as they learned about the grisly conditions in abortion clinics and maternity hospitals, about the lack of household appliances like vacuum cleaners and dishwashers, and the Soviet state's failure to produce even tampons and sanitary napkins.

The other form of contact with the West available to some of the women who were later to become movement activists in Russia was exposure to western feminist literature, and to research on other aspects of western social movement organizing. One activist, for example, talked about how her research on the New Left movement had introduced her to the idea of non-hierarchical organizing (something that the bureaucratic Soviet state inherently opposed), which she attempted to implement later, upon getting involved in women's movement organizing. Many of the women who later became involved in the movement got their first exposure to feminism (as a theory) from western feminist literature that they uncovered, hidden away in the special sections of the libraries at their academic institutes. For some women, reading such literature was a consciousness-raising experience; one activist discovered Friedan's *Feminist Mystique* and found that it transformed her view of what it meant to be a woman living in her society. Others, upon reading western feminist works, felt that this literature confirmed what they had known to be true from their own experience, but had never seen in print. So these various forms of exposure to western feminism contributed to Russian women developing a critique of patriarchal Soviet society.

In general, the international factor has tended to be understudied in social movement theory, although, as I show in the social movement theory model that I developed in my book, international influences are a vital aspect of the opportunity structures that shape social movements around the world.

NF: *What can you tell us about the relationships between Moscow and non-Moscow women's groups and between women's groups in other successor states of the Soviet union with Russian women's groups? How do you explain this situation? Are there any class differences among Russian women's organizations?*

VS: To my knowledge, women's group collaboration across the now independent states of the former Soviet Union is not very extensive. Some of the women's studies research centers are in contact with each other, such as those in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Naberezhnye Chelny (in Tatarstan, one of Russia's ethnic republics), and in Kharkiv (Ukraine). And the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers has a well-developed national network, and even works with similar committees of women in Chechnya (which is still technically part of the Russian Federation). A gender studies "summer school" held a few years ago in Southern Russia, sponsored by the Moscow Center for Gender Studies, brought together academics and activists from several of the former Soviet republics, but that's not the same thing as ongoing collaboration among groups. Although collaboration among organizations in the former Soviet states would seem to make sense — after all, women across the region share a lot of the same problems — one of the reasons that it may not be very widespread is that it would be costly. Travel has become inordinately expensive. Even holding conferences to bring women together from across Russia's regions is nearly impossible without western funding. And I would hypothesize that some women's groups might not welcome collaboration with Russian sister organizations; post-colonial resentment toward Russia could potentially get in the way of developing such ties.

Within Russia, contact between Moscow-based women's groups and those outside the capital is growing, in spite of prohibitive travel costs. Groups and activists discover each other and pursue ties through email contacts, and the existence of small-circulation women's journals like *Dialog Zhenshchin* [*Women's*

Dialogue], which includes features on women's organizing across the country. In the smaller cities I visited, Ivanovo and Cheboksary, some of the women I interviewed felt that their agendas, which were focused on economic issues, were narrower than those in Moscow women's organizations, where the economic crisis was not as severe. A few of them had traveled to Moscow for women's movement conferences, but others had no contacts in the women's movement there at all, and were exclusively focused on local concerns.

The issue of class differences among Russian women's organizations is complex. While the leadership of most of the organizations I've encountered tends to be "elite" in the sense of having a college or even graduate education, precious few of the organizational leaders belong to the upper class in the economic sense of being well-off. Most of the women's group activists are struggling just like their non-activist counterparts. Even the ones receiving a salary for their activism from a foreign grant are hardly living high on the hog. And while some organizations restrict themselves to political advocacy work on a certain set of issues, many take up multiple issues, including women's employment, or charity. And a number of organizations are focused on assistance to single mothers, whose numbers are increasing — in 1997, 25 percent of all mothers were single, compared with 20 percent in 1994. Even a number of "businesswomen's" organizations work on social welfare-related issues. This focus on economic issues is likely the result of the feminization of poverty in Russia, and also the large number of unemployed women who have a higher education (as of 1993, women made up over three-quarters of the unemployed with a higher education).

NF: *How would you compare the situation of women today with their situation in the Soviet period?*

VS: I've already talked a bit about the comparison between discrimination in the Soviet period and afterwards. In some ways, the situation for women — and men — is worse than it was during the Soviet era. Life is a lot less predictable now. Many people miss the minimal guarantees that the Soviet state provided, insufficient as they were — subsidized food, health care that was at a very low level, but was practically free, a guaranteed job, and so forth. With the transition to a market economy, Russians now have some new opportunities, to start up small businesses, for example, although that's much more difficult for women to do than it is for men; women have more trouble getting credit than men do, again because of cultural assumptions about women's proper roles and abilities. However, no matter how low the representation of women may be, the political situation is an improvement on the Soviet era. Even a faltering democracy is better than a dictatorship. And even if there are fewer women in the legislature than in previous years, at least this legislature has some small degree of power, although it's obviously very limited compared to the power of the presidency. And even if things are worse now in some ways, at least women have the freedom to complain about it, and to organize, without the threat of severe repression hanging over their heads.

NF: *What do you see as the impact of the Soviet period on contemporary women's organizing and attitudes towards feminism? Do you, like some other writers, think that the Tsarist period also influences contemporary Russian women's attitudes toward feminism?*

VS: The Soviet period definitely warped contemporary Russians' view of feminism. The Communists labeled feminism as a purely "bourgeois" phenomenon, something that would distract women from working toward their "real" goal as workers. So in that way, rhetorically, the term was discredited. The Soviets also painted a stereotyped portrait of the most radical form of western separatist feminism as though it were representative of feminism on the whole, so many people formed the idea that to be a feminist automatically entailed hating men, wanting to live apart from men, and being totally independent of men. Moreover, the fact that under Soviet rule, the Soviet state oppressed men and women alike, drives many women today to reject feminism because it represents a struggle for women's rights, seemingly ignoring the ways in which men's human rights were also violated by the Soviet regime. As for the impact of women's organizing in the Tsarist period, little is known outside of academic circles about women's organizing before the October 1917 revolution. Several academics have now written about organizing in the Tsarist period, including Olga Khasbulatova, who published a book on the experience and traditions of Russia's women's movement between 1860 and 1917, and Marina Liborakina, who has written about Tsarist-era women's charity work among single mothers and the unemployed, with interesting resonance for the work of the contemporary movement.

NF: *Finally, "What is to be done," now, and is there any significant change that you know of, in women's organizing and "feminism" in Russia since you did your research?*

VS: There have been some positive changes. One that I find particularly impressive is the growth in organizing on the issue of violence against women. The Association of Crisis Centers, for instance, has grown rapidly over the past few years. This is a group of rape crisis centers and hotlines (also covering domestic violence) that's working together and providing a very necessary set of services to the women of Russia. The ongoing war in Chechnya, horrifying and brutal as it is, also continues to provide organizing opportunities, particularly for the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers. One change that I was disappointed by recently is that a few of the consciousness-raising organizations that I studied and participated in are now defunct, although their former leaders are still quite active in other ways.

In terms of high politics, the outlook is not very good as far as the women's movement's search for allies is concerned, at least in the executive branch. On International Women's Day this year, Russia's acting president, Vladimir Putin, stated that "Women should enjoy one indisputable privilege — the right to be protected by men"! If that's the top privilege that women have the right to enjoy, this does not bode well for the furthering of women's rights. Does this statement represent what women have to look forward to from the man who is likely to become Russia's next president? Of course, on the other hand, the March 2000 presidential election represents the first time that there will be a female candidate running for president — Ella Pamfilova, who was the Minister of Social Protection under Yeltsin for several months. In her campaign, she stated that she did not expect to be able to win the election, but hoped that her candidacy would inspire younger Russian women. Her own experience in high politics, however, led her to claim that men's tolerance for women in politics was rather low, which may have been a contributing factor to her resignation in February 1994.

A number of theorists, including Sonia Alvarez and Amrita Basu, have been talking recently about the professionalization of women's movements, the tendency toward "NGO-ization," where women's groups focus on elite contacts and on attempts to influence legislation, rather than taking a more broad-based approach, trying to change popular attitudes, alter the cultural assumptions about gender roles, and make the extent of discrimination more visible. Although Alvarez and Basu have documented this in Latin America and India respectively, it seems to be the case in Russia also, as I show in my book. But given the fact that legislation and law are not readily implemented by today's Russian state, I believe a two-pronged approach is really needed, where activists would pay attention to gender-biased policies and laws, but would also be drawing attention to discrimination and socialization and so forth, at the everyday level. In the book, taking a page from social movement organizing in the U.S., I suggest a number of ways that the movement could do outreach to the broader population. One way to increase public knowledge about discrimination, for example, is to hold public events, protests — even simple, low cost events — that will make people aware of the situation. There are infinite varieties of these kinds of events, including: picketing a business that's known for sexually harassing female employees, holding a "take your child to work" day, to protest the closure and privatization of daycare centers, protesting in front of street kiosks that sell pornography, and so on. Several of the women I interviewed talked about the problem of preaching to the converted, holding seminars and so forth, the results of which were only really available to women already involved in organizing. One woman pointed out that she herself wasn't "born a feminist" — "I was a mathematician!" she said — but she had been converted to the cause, and felt that it was time for the movement to do more outreach to the population, to raise women's consciousness, as her own had been raised. I think that's likely to be a much more fruitful approach, in the long run.

1968 Revisited:
"Be Realistic, Ask for the Impossible"
Daniel Singer

1968 WAS THE YEAR OF THE REBELLION OF YOUTH, of student risings from Berkeley to Tokyo. Why single out the French May 1968? Because it was only in France that the revolt of the students got a response from the workers — ambiguous, complicated, but nevertheless a response — that precipitated the biggest general strike in French history, paralyzing the economy and raising, for a brief spell, the question of power in the country.

As an eyewitness, I shall try to convey something of the atmosphere of the period, explain how people's moods and attitudes change when history suddenly quickens pace, then look at the events from a 30 years' distance and examine their significance from a historical perspective.

The movement was plainly defeated and it was clearly followed, not immediately but after a time, by a very important and lasting swing to the Right. Was May 68, as some now suggest, the inspiration of that shift? With its emphasis on the individual, as opposed to the collective, did it inaugurate the period of "libertarian reaction"? Or, on the contrary, with its stress on the radical break, its rejection of the established rules of the game, with its utopian ambitions -— "Be Realistic, Ask for the Impossible" — does it foreshadow battles still to come? The case of some of yesterday's rebels and today's "realistic" politicians, like Dany ex-Red now pale-Pink Cohn-Bendit will help us to tackle this issue. But I shall, unfashionably, argue that the questions raised in 1968 — not answered but raised — what growth? For what purpose? For whose profit? In what kind of an environment? — are today more topical, more relevant than they were thirty years ago.

NOTHING EVER COMES OUT OF THE BLUE, but the confrontation on that Friday May 3, 1968 took everybody by surprise. It had all started at Nanterre, a campus in the western suburb of Paris. Because leftish students wanted to stage an anti-imperialist rally (don't forget the war was on in Vietnam at the time) and because fascist students threatened to attack them, the Dean chose to close the faculty. A few hundred left activists then met at the Sorbonne, in the heart of the Latin Quarter. Since they feared an attack, they had crash helmets and sticks. The rector then made the not unprecedented but very rare decision to call the police into the Sorbonne. Was there a deal that the students would be allowed to leave free? In any case, they were not. As they were leaving, the student activists were picked up by the gendarmes and thrown into Black Marias that the French call "salad baskets" (*paniers à salades*). And then the unexpected happened. As

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the so-called ringleaders were arrested, students flocked to the Sorbonne from all over the Latin Quarter. They did not sign a petition. They did not write a letter to *The Times*, I mean *Le Monde*. Chanting “free our comrades” they attacked the police. Surprised, the latter responded with violence. But they had to deal with an adversary that was mobile, inventive and knew its terrain. Shells, truncheons and grenades on one side, cobblestones and a first barricade on the other — you already had the ingredients of battles to come.

Each day, in fact, the students grew more numerous. They were soon joined by the teachers, by the researchers. Intellectuals, workers began to rally as they met late every afternoon at place Denfert Rochereau, just outside the students’ district; because the Sorbonne was closed and the Latin Quarter occupied by the police. And so it went on crescendo. On Bloody Monday there were battles with the police throughout the day. On Tuesday the students marched throughout the smart districts, climbing up the Champs-Elysées. On Wednesday, another march ended with the order of dispersion at the top of the Boul’Mich — Boulevard St Michel, the Broadway of the Latin Quarter — just opposite the Luxembourg Gardens. In the crowd there was an obvious mood of disappointment. The movement had to advance, to gain ground or it would collapse. On Thursday there was still a mass teach-in on the Boul’ Mich, but on Friday the 10th it was clear that it was do or die.

There was no question this time of telling the students to go home. The slogan was: stay put and occupy the Latin Quarter. But facing the demonstrators was the huge army of policemen and so they looked for protection. Somebody found an air hammer at the works on top of the Boul’Mich and the cobblestones provided the ammunition. Barricades went up, fifty or sixty, some of them three yards high. And all this building was coupled with a dialogue in the night. Not on tv at the time, but on the radio. Questioned by the journalists, students and professors stated their conditions. The rector was acting as the intermediary for the government. At one stage the difference seemed reduced to one item — the liberation of the arrested demonstrators. But the state didn’t want to be seen to yield. At 2.15 at night, after a bombardment with tear gas, the forces of repression went into action. The outcome of the confrontation was never in doubt, though it took nearly four hours to bring down all the barricades. There followed some mopping up with maddened policemen barging into private homes to beat up young men and women seeking shelter. At dawn it was the usual scene at the end of a battle, with haggard defeated prisoners being pushed into vans by the angry victors. Only the image was deceptive. The vanquished were the real winners, while the triumphant troops had inflicted on their masters a political defeat. Having listened to the drama overnight, France woke up overwhelmingly on the side of the battered students.

Georges Pompidou, the prime minister just back from Afghanistan, grasped this and changed the line altogether. The Sorbonne was to be reopened and the arrested demonstrators freed. (This, incidentally, was an eye-opener for those who believe in the total independence of the judiciary). The idea was to let the students stew in their own juice. And it might have worked if the climax of the First Act did not prove to be the beginning of the Second; in other words, if the workers had not taken over from the students.

The climax of the First Act was the mass demonstration on Monday May 13.

Behind the banner "Students, Teachers, Workers Together" it was a huge crowd, a human sea or rather two rivers meeting, one guided by the students, the other by the labor unions. How many were they? Half a million, rather a million, chanting "ten years that's enough" (the Gaullist regime was born ten years earlier in 1958) or echoing the new slogan of the students*: ce n'est qu'un debut, continuons le combat* ('tis but a beginning, let us carry on the fight...). Had it ended then, the French May would have been just a dramatic episode of the student revolt. But it didn't. It was but a beginning.

The pampered students, the middle class kids had just shown that one could fight back, that the mighty state could be forced to yield. The demos took place all over France and the message was not wasted on the workers. On Tuesday May 14, young workers occupied the aircraft company Sud Aviation near Nantes. The day after it was the turn of the Renault car works in Normandy. By Thursday the labor unions were telling their members to join the movement. The biggest of the labor confederations, the Communist dominated CGT (*Confederation Generale du Travail*) urged its militants to both spread the movement and keep it carefully within economic channels, confine it to bread and butter issues. By then the tide was spreading fast. Within a week it covered the whole of France. After the car industry, engineering, chemicals, it was the turn of transport, of the mines, of public utilities (though on purpose they didn't cut off gas and electricity). In the second week, it was the turn of big department stores, of small plants following the big ones. It was the turn of the professional intelligentsia, of teachers, researchers, writers, actors, doctors, architects. By the end of that week, with about ten million people, half the labor force, on strike, the country was paralyzed and the mood was one of extraordinary excitement, of frenzy.

AND YET THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT IN A STATE OF TOTAL PANIC. It was cheered by the attitude of the Communist Party and the already mentioned labor union, the CGT, which clearly wanted to avoid a political confrontation over the nature of society. It was high time to take advantage of it and clinch a deal while it was still possible. On Saturday May 25 (after another bloody Friday in the Latin Quarter) representatives of the employers, the government and the labor unions got together on rue de Grenelle for some 25 hours of bargaining. The negotiation was essentially between Georges Pompidou, the prime minister, and Georges Seguy, the leader of the CGT. Judging by normal standards, what the workers obtained was quite impressive: an increase of the minimum wage by a third; a ten percent rise of other wages; something on trade-union rights and an improvement in social security payments. Plus a half payment for the wages lost through the strike. The snag is that the times were very far from normal.

Still, by Monday morning, when the talks are ended, the radio and the press announce that the crisis is virtually over. The draft agreement must still be approved by the rank-and-file. The labor leaders go straight to that proletarian fortress, the Renault car works at Boulogne Billancourt, in a suburb of Paris. They did not expect an enthusiastic response. They expected a "yes, but" or a "no, but," which would enable them to end the frontal conflict and to continue talks at regional or branch level. But what they got was a *veto*. Seguy realized in the middle of his speech that it was plainly no. And the rejection was echoed in big plants throughout the country. For the next few days France was going to live in a state of suspense.

That very evening, the dynamic wing of the movement, including the students, gathered in a Paris sports stadium. On Tuesday it was the day of politicians: François Mitterrand offering his services as potential future president and suggesting Pierre Mendès-France as the prime minister for the transition. On Wednesday May 29 it was panic in the official quarters: General de Gaulle had vanished. And the CGT, to reassert Communist strength staged a mass demonstration. Won't the workers seize the Paris townhall or, who knows, the Presidential palace? The Gaullists were worrying unnecessarily. The Communists had no such intentions and the General had not vanished altogether. He had gone to Baden-Baden, in Germany, to get the blessing of the French commander there, General Massu. Yet it was not his backing that cheered de Gaulle. An army of conscripts, the French army was hardly an instrument of civil war. What gave him confidence was the realization that the Communists could be bullied into obedience.

On Thursday the 30th, back in Paris, de Gaulle announced the dissolution of the National Assembly and a general election. Now it was the turn of his partisans, brought from all over France, to climb the Champs-Elyseés, cursing the rebels and pleading for law and order. Were they as many as the students and workers on the 13th? Probably not. In any case, they did not represent the same social weight. They could shout "open our factories," but they needed the workers to run them. But with the country so deeply divided, wasn't France heading toward civil war? The danger did not last. The day after Georges Seguy proclaimed the dispersion, the demobilization of the army of labor. He expressed the readiness of the CGT to discuss at all levels so as not to hinder the forthcoming elections.

Was is not the attitude to take? Here, a lesson provided by a French precedent. Ten years earlier, in May 1958, the military commanders and the French settlers in Algeria staged a coup. General de Gaulle profited from the occasion to bring the Fourth Republic down and seize power. Once in power, he had his regime endorsed by a referendum. The Gaullists, who had carried no electoral weight a few months earlier, were triumphant. Here, the Left could pay him back in his own coin, declaring that this government and this regime were unable to ensure social peace and stage an election, that a provisional government had to take over. For this, it was simply necessary to harden the strike. But the Communists, we just saw, would not take any risks. They opted for surrender and certain electoral defeat. Though it would take some time to bring the strike to an end, in historical terms the real crisis was over.

Let us sum it up. Those who wanted to carry the movement beyond the confines of existing society — the students, the revolutionary groups, the radical unionists — did not have the power to do so. Those who might have been able to push it as far as it would go — the Communists — did not want to do so. The Communist leadership tried desperately to keep the torrent of class conflict within established, institutionalized bounds and, though it lost control for a time, it ultimately succeeded. While badly shaken, French society did not change in any fundamental way.

A FEW EXAMPLES ABOUT THE MOOD OF THE PEOPLE in that jolly month of May, what happens to people's minds when machines come to a standstill, when transport comes to a stop, when normal life is paralyzed.

May 68 did not produce much artistically. Only the poster. At the École des Beaux Arts, artists and strikers would discuss the contents and the form and they invented something. But that month was dominated by the word, whether spoken or scribbled on the walls. There was discussion, dialogue, debate, contesting, the questioning of the established order. Naturally, in exceptional circumstances, you do discover things. Thus, when the students rebel, the state takes its elaborate mask off and assumes the shape of the policeman with a truncheon. Or, when the prime minister says that the arrested students will be freed and they are, you begin to have doubts about the independence of the judiciary. My gem was the exclamation of the famous sociologist Raymond Aron: "Do you expect a bourgeois state to finance a Cuban university?" In normal times, neither our states nor our universities are called bourgeois…

But there was something deeper than that. In the occupied factories, in the offices, in the laboratories, in the streets people were talking to each other, questioning the hierarchical structures and their own function in society. Teachers, sociologists, scientists were debating their own role in the existing order. All over, the thinking cogs were pondering over their place in the machine.

Why was it? Because in normal times you have the routine, the taboos, the prescriptions, the unwritten rules of the game. And you follow them unconsciously. Today the slogan that stands for that normalcy is T.I.N.A, there is no alternative, Tina — things must be as they are. On the contrary, in a moment of social upheaval, when the machine is not functioning, suddenly all things are questionable, nothing is sacred, for a spell everything seems possible.

Naturally, everything is not and, once you've lost, once the cars are back on the road, the trains are running, the engines are started up again in the factories, then conditioned reflexes also come back. Indeed, it was not just back to normal. After a time, say between the mid-seventies and the mid-nineties, in France and throughout western Europe, you had a reactionary retreat, a very important ideological shift to the Right. (It was actually more important in Europe than in the U. S.)

I WANT TO MAKE TWO POINTS ABOUT THIS SPECTACULAR IDEOLOGICAL RECOVERY of the system. The first one is concerned with this very capacity for ideological domination. After all, the ruling ideology had been shaken in the western world in the sixties. But at the time the economy was still functioning smoothly. In western Europe it was still the "golden age of capitalism," with production rising by about 5% every year. But by the mid-seventies Europe was faced with a structural crisis. If economic discontent combined with ideological questioning, the system could be in real danger. This is when it showed its capacity for recovery, with what may be called "operation new philosophers". It was still too early to use established thinkers like Raymond Aron to proclaim that radical transformation is dangerous. For this you needed alleged "children of May," young people who had shouted "Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao and Lin Piao" and who, reversing the slogan in the same primitive fashion, were rendering Marx responsible for the barbed wire of concentration camps. To rebel individually may be just, they argued, but to try collectively to alter radically existing society can only lead to a tragedy, to the gulag.

Intellectually, it was not worth a dime. Twenty years after, it was the anti-

Communist rehash of *The God That Failed*. The only new ingredient was Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*. Otherwise it was a slice of von Hayek, a cut of Karl Popper, the French "philosophers" providing only the advertising gravy. But politically, as a weapon of propaganda, it was very successful. It prepared the ground for the already mentioned TINA and, in this country, for Mr. Fukuyama's *End of History*.

My second point concerns France's "respectful Left," respectful, that is, of the established order. It took it a long time to recover from May 68, to convince the French electorate that, if the revolutionary road was blocked, there was a reformist solution. It was only in 1981, after 23 years in opposition, that the Left returned to office and by then its inner balance was different than in 1968. The Socialist Francois Mitterrand was elected president and the Communists were his junior partners. Above all, the leadership of the Left was totally unprepared for the new economic situation and had not mobilized its followers to face up to it. Thus, the inevitable happened. The Left, which had come into office to "change life," gave up its policies after one year, and after two years followed the austerity line of its predecessors with exceptional zeal. The result was total disenchantment. Indeed, some people describe Mitterrand as the normalizer of France, as a man who brought into consensus politics a country which until then believed in the possibility of radical change.

This may be going too far. In November-December 1995, when Paris was paralyzed by a transport strike and the whole country shaken by mass demonstrations, when the protesters were really saying: "if that is the future you offer us and our children, to hell with your future, alternative or no alternative," France did not look fully normalized. Indeed, that "French winter of discontent" may well be taken by historians as an ideological turning point, as the first revolt against resignation, against Tina, against there is no alternative. But that is another matter…

The fact that the "new philosophers" were allegedly children of May and that among the pundits and preachers of the establishment, particularly in the media, you now find quite a lot of people who thirty years earlier were using a more revolutionary language should not lead us to conclude that May 68 was a plot designed to turn France in a reactionary direction. It simply confirms that as people get older they tend to become more conservative and, as they climb up the social ladder, they tend to forget principles they were sworn to in their youth. The recent Kosovo conflict was a good illustration of such a change of mood. Probably the most bellicose of all ministers was the British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, a former Aldermaston marcher, that is to say protester against nuclear arms. The Secretary-General of NATO, on this occasion, Javier Solana, had in his earlier days demonstrated against American bases in Spain. *Sic transit*…But for our purpose, there is a more complex, more sophisticated case, that of Dany Cohn-Bendit, today's "realistic" Franco-German leader of Greens who, for many people, is still the best known symbol of May 1968.

Red-headed Dany the Red was one of the most prominent and flamboyant figures of 1968. He was there from the start, at Nanterre, as one of the co-founders of the 22nd of March Movement. That movement was founded during a mass protest (because some students who had attacked the American Express offices in the Champs-Elyseés had been arrested) and it included Anarchists, Trotskyists and other radicals. As one of its chief spokesmen, Cohn-Bendit occupied center stage throughout May. Indeed, because Dany was Jewish and German, because while he was outside France the government declared him to be an "undesirable alien" and because a crowd can be linguistically inventive, there we stood, thousands and thousands, facing the Bastille and chanting "We are all German Jews." (Incidentally, I stood next to the great black poet from the Martinique, Aimé Cesaire, who made the unforgettable comment: "I am willing to shout, but nobody is going to believe me.")

But in which way has Daniel Cohn-Bendit, a municipal councillor in Frankfurt or the electoral leader of French Greens in the European poll last June, in which way has he betrayed his former principles? To answer that question I will offer some sample quotations from a document published by the 22nd of March Movement in May 1968:

> There are ten per cent of workers' sons in higher education. Are we fighting so that there should be more of them, for a democratic reform of the University? This would be better, but this is not the most important thing… That a worker's son should be able to become a director, this is not our program. We want to abolish the separation between labor and management.
>
> There are students who, on leaving university, do not find a job. Do we fight so that they may get one, for a good employment policy for graduates? This would be better, but it is not the essential… We want to build a classless society…

And I could go on. But this is enough to show that the authors of this text did not want to tinker with the world but to reshape it; their purpose was not to make changes within existing society but to change that society. And this is where they differed from the "realists" Daniel Cohn Bendit or his fellow, the German Minister of Foreign Affairs Joshka Fischer. The latter want to limit changes to what can be fitted into the existing framework.

On May 10th 1968, you may recall, the French Prime Minister was back from Kabul. He then had what he thought was a bright idea. He would put on television three of the rebel leaders (Cohn-Bendit, Jacques Sauvageot and Alain Geismar), together with the usual servants of the establishment and Gaullist hacks; by contrast, they would appear wild and dangerous. The project boomeranged. For the public the rebels proved a breath of fresh air. Not only did they appear, by contrast, vivid, lively and natural. But in keeping with the then fashionable slogan — "run comrade, run, the old world is behind you" — they somehow represented the future, a different world. Daniel Cohn-Bendit has kept the spontaneity, the verve, the gift of the gab. But for all that, he is now on the other side. Like the Gaullist hacks, he stands for the old world, for the established order.

In other words, he deserves the famous epitaph for turncoats that Shelley used against his former companion Wordsworth, who had in the past fought for freedom and equality:

> "Deserting these thou leavest me to grieve
> Thus, having been, that thou shouldst cease to be"

From the above, it is clear that I do not believe the main message of May — change your life by changing society — is now obsolete. On the contrary, I think it is more valid than ever, because our society, meanwhile, has grown more unequal, more unjust, more absurd. And not just in France, but on the world scale.

Thirty years ago the richest fifth of the population absorbed 70% of the world's income; now it absorbs more than 86%; and the share of the poorest fifth has gone down from 2.3 to around 1%. The gap is growing between the have and have not nations, but also between rich and poor in our societies. Also, we are now more aware of the fact that, if we allow growth to be driven by the search for profits and not by genuine social needs, we shall quite soon reach the ecological limits of our planet. Altogether, there is this maddening contradiction between our technological genius, which should allow us to lead a very different life, and the absurdity of our social organization.

And people are aware that we are living in an oppressive and unjust society. Only they think there is no way out. Consider Jeane Kirkpatrick and her definition of the Soviet "evil empire" as a hell from which there is no exit. That proved a silly prediction. But we are now told that our capitalist system, call it hell, paradise or purgatory, is the one from which there is no possible way out. The great success of our huge propaganda machine, of our Reagans and Thatchers, of the new philosophers and the Fukyamas is to have spread the conviction that there is and can be no other solution, it is to have consolidated the already mentioned rule of There Is No Alternative, the reign of TINA. Part of their power lies in our acceptance, in our resignation.

The purpose of our pundits and preachers is to doom as impossible a radical, fundamental transformation of existing society. In contrast let us recall what is probably the best known slogan of the French May: "Be Realistic, Ask for the Impossible," a slogan that is not a call for escapism. What we must recover is the conviction that we can change life, *changez la vie,* through collective political action. When this conviction is regained, all the establishments will once again begin to tremble.

China and the Third Camp

Paul Hampton

Introduction

THIS ARTICLE ARGUES THAT A RENEWED SOCIALISM FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY will be based on independent working class politics. It uses the "Third Camp" as a formula for summing up this essential element for Marxist history and for current intervention in the class struggle. China represents a fertile example in both these respects. In 1925-27 the working class lost a revolutionary opportunity because it was subordinated to bourgeois nationalism by Stalin's Comintern; in 1949 the working class was absent because of the terrible defeat it suffered at the hands of Chiang Kai-shek. Mao's Communists were able to establish a Stalinist state and brutally exploit the working class in the aftermath of their bureaucratic revolution, and more recently to turn China toward capitalism. However, Chinese workers have consistently fought for their interests, and despite some disastrous defeats, now have an unprecedented social weight in the country. The conclusion is that great class battles lie ahead, and that the Chinese working class will become the decisive social force in these struggles if it has learned the lessons of its own history.

There is a huge task ahead of renewing socialism, cleansing it of Stalinist excrescences and sharpening its meaning in the context of 21st century global capitalism. Yet previous decades are not without their signposts, nor are the seeds of hope absent from the present. The world we live in is still defined by the existence of classes, grounded in exploitation, and contested through class struggle. This basic analysis of reality not only provides the motivation to change the world, but also implies the social agent with both the power and the interest to carry out such a wholesale transformation: — the working class. For the renewal of socialism, we can do little better than to start with Marx's famous dictum that "the emancipation of the working class must be the act of the working class itself."

Implicit in the definition of socialism as the self-emancipation of the working class, is the fight on all three fronts of the class struggle. It requires the working class to organize collectively at the point of production, where it has potential economic power, through its own trade unions and stewards' committees. It requires a political fight for working class representation, through the formation of a political party which intervenes in all kinds of campaigns and against all kinds of oppression, and in bourgeois-democratic politics. And it requires an unceasing struggle on the "ideological front," to combat the "ruling ideas of the epoch" and to carve out the program, strategy and tactics to take this

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organized working class movement from its present state to the point where it can make its own revolution and take power into its own hands. On all fronts it implies democratic forms of organization, the free exchange of ideas, and the means to thrash out alternative perspectives in order to take the next practical steps toward liberation.

One of the most fertile approaches to this conception of socialism is the idea of the Third Camp. I take the Third Camp to mean consistently independent working class politics, the necessary line of march which the working class must take if it is to free itself. The Third Camp provides a convenient lens through which to understand earlier working class struggles: socialism from below implies the necessity of a history from below. But this is not merely virtual history from a working class point of view, it is a history of the actual possibilities inherent in past struggles and the alternatives which workers actually faced as they fought for their interests. Similarly the Third Camp is not idle speculation in the present. Current politics demand to know which side are you on, and the Third Camp is a warning of the dangers of the lesser evil and an immediate reminder that 'my enemy's enemy is not necessarily my friend'. Ultimately it is a perspective of transforming the existing labor movement, but the Third Camp does not have to wait forlornly until the socialist forces are neatly assembled. As some protagonists put it in 1939:

> The forces of the Third Camp are already at hand — scattered, demoralized, without program or perspective. The problem is to bring them together, to infuse them with morale, to supply them with a program and perspective. To argue that these forces are small and insignificant has no political meaning, for the argument could apply both ways (if they are insignificant, they can no more 'defend' than they can 'defeat'). *Political meaning is contained only in the line upon which we expect the vanguard to come together and along which we urge them to act*." (Matgamna, 1998: 557). (My emphasis)[1]

The past eighty years of Chinese history provide one of the best examples of the meaning of the Third Camp. Trotsky used the term to define his outlook during the great Chinese revolution (1925-27), when the emerging working class had the possibility of seizing power in it own interests, only to suffer a catastrophic defeat. The Third Camp was also a tool for understanding why the working class was absent during the 1949 revolution, and how the Maoist party-army created a Stalinist state which persists to this day. Finally the Third Camp helps us to understand the class struggles during the Maoist period, and following the immense economic transformation since 1978, the potential which the huge Chinese working class now has to finally consummate its own revolution.

How did the independent working class movement develop?

CHINA IN 1919 WAS RIPE FOR REVOLUTION. For two thousand years it was ruled by successive dynasties organized around a state bureaucracy. Still overwhelmingly a peasant country, it had stagnated for centuries until its last emperor, the five-year-old Pu Yi, was displaced and a republic created in 1911. After 1840 China suffered the indignity of ceding tracts of land such as Hong Kong to the European powers as "foreign concessions," and having opium foisted on its population, so that the British could better procure their tea. Imperial domination was summed up by the sign in the Shanghai municipal park which read, “No dogs or Chinese allowed.”

The European overlords brought with them the misery of capitalist development. The process of industrialisation was heralded by the spread of modern rice processing factories and by the cotton mills. The working class grew rapidly from 650,000 in 1915 to 1.5 million in the early 1920s. It was concentrated in the major cities: for example in Shanghai in 1923, 57 factories employed between 500 and 1000 workers and another 49 employed over 1000 workers. Nevertheless the working class remained an infinitely small minority in the country as a whole. Its conditions of work were barbaric. As one observer described it:

> Some of the match factories and carpet factories, the ceramics and glass works, and the old-style silk and cotton factories could well have served an inspiration for even Dante’s description of the infernal regions. Pale, sickly creatures move around there in almost total darkness, amidst indescribable filth, and breathing an atmosphere that is insupportable to anyone coming in from outside. At ten o’clock at night, or sometimes even later, they are still at work, and the feeble light of a few oil lamps lends the factories a still more sinister aspect. A few breaks are taken to snatch some food while still at work, or to eat a meal in a courtyard covered with excrement and filth of all kinds. When the time to stop work finally comes, these miserable creatures doss down in any place they can find — the lucky ones on bales of waste material or in the attics if there are any, and the rest on the workshop floor, like chained dogs.” (Chesneaux, 1968: 86).

The revolution of 1911 had briefly brought Sun Yat-sen, leader of the Guomindang (Nationalist Party) to the presidency, but he was deposed by warlords and China carved up still further by civil war. However, this ferment found an echo within a layer of intellectuals, who looked to western ideas such as science and democracy as the answer to China’s problems. Most prominent was the May Fourth Movement, a kind of Chinese Enlightenment, which was sparked by student demonstrations in Beijing in 1919 against the decision to transfer Germany’s concessionary rights to Japan at the Paris Peace Conference. New periodicals sprouted, the best being *New Youth*, edited by Chen Duxiu, then professor at Beijing University.

Out of this upsurge developed a labor movement, and a vanguard party. Inspired by the Russian Revolution, small study circles of intellectuals, including socialists, anarchists and university teachers came together to form the new organization. In September 1920, *New Youth* became a Communist paper, and *The Communist* was launched as an educational journal. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was founded in July 1921, Chen Duxiu was elected General Secretary, and Henk Sneevliet (Maring) represented the Communist International (Comintern). Although it is true that in its early years the CCP was financed almost entirely by the Comintern, it was not an artificial creation. Rather the existing movement was redirected toward forming a new party. (Saich, 1991: 61-62), (Dirlik, 1989: 193-195).

What could the CCP do? The Communists helped to build the trade unions, modeled on the Shanghai Mechanical Workers Union, which they had established in 1920, and militants inspired a strike against British-American Tobacco company in Shanghai in 1921. However, there remained the burning questions of China’s situation — the absence of a democratic republic, the groan of imperial oppression, and the necessity of land reform. In 1920 Lenin counseled that, "The Communist International must enter into a temporary alliance with the bourgeois democracy in the colonial and backward countries, but should not merge with it, and should under all circumstances uphold the independence of the proletarian movement, even if it is in its most embryonic form." (1966: 149-150).

Where was this bourgeois-nationalist movement in China? Sneevliet put his faith with the Guomindang, characterizing it as an amalgam of four different groups — the intelligentsia, emigrants, soldiers and workers, and therefore argued that the CCP should join it without becoming completely submerged. The Guomindang had been central to the Hong Kong seamen's strike in January-March 1922, in which 120,000 workers came out, winning a great victory. According to Sneevliet it had led the strike and recruited hundreds of militants, whereas the CCP had done very little. (Saich, 1991: 100, 106). Sun Yat-sen would only allow Chinese Communists to join as individual members, but the new tactic was pushed through in August 1922. The CCP had just 123 members. Its leadership including Chen Duxiu voiced their unhappiness, but Sneevliet evoked Comintern discipline to pressure them to agree. In fact, asking CCP members to join the Guomindang as individuals was something of a dead issue at this point, since the Guomindang was then in a state of disarray because a warlord had just driven Sun Yat-sen out of Guangzhou. (Feigon, 1983: 172-173).

Events in China reinforced the new policy. By January 1923, Sun Yat-sen had retaken Guangzhou and returned to the city in triumph to re-establish his government there. However, the most telling event was the repression of the Beijing-Hankou railworkers strike in February 1923. At Jiangan, the chair of the branch — Lin Xiangqian — was told three times to order a return to work and when he refused, was beheaded and his head displayed on a bamboo pole. (Chesneaux, 1968: 209). The positions of the Communist Party and the Guomindang were reversed, with the Guomindang now in the ascendent. This finally persuaded Chen Duxiu and most of the other Chinese Communists that the working class movement was too weak and that they should enter the Guomindang. Following the line of the Comintern, the CCP resolved that, "The Guomindang should be the central force of the national revolution and should assume its leadership." Leading members of the Communist Party were initiated into the Guomindang and they held a minority of places on its executive. The Russians helped to rebuild the Guomindang, with Borodin arriving as an adviser to Sun Yat-sen in 1923, and the Whampoa Military Academy was established to train its officers with Russian help.

Why was the working class defeated in the revolution of 1925-27?

AFTER THE VICTORIOUS HONG KONG STRIKE IN JANUARY-MARCH 1922, the Chinese labor movement grew rapidly. The CCP helped organize unions and played a major role in the founding of the first National Congress of Labour which met on May 1, 1922 with delegates representing 300,000 workers. Despite the murderous repression, the workers remained unbowed. On May Day 1924, 200,000 workers in Guangzhou and 100,000 in Shanghai marched for an eight-hour day. By May 1925 at the second National Congress of Labour, the trade unions announced a membership of 540,000. (Rousset, 1987: 8, 10). At this point strikes over wages spread through Japanese textile mills in Shanghai. Strikers were killed on the picket line, and thousands marched in protest. At a demonstration on May 30, 1925, British police fired into a demonstration, killing ten and wounding countless others. The Shanghai General Union, led by the CCP organized a general strike two days later in all foreign owned companies. Over 160,000 workers were out by mid-June, and the strike began to spread to Chinese owned businesses. On June 23, British and French troops shot at a demonstration in Guangzhou, killing 52 and injuring over a hundred. A general strike was called in Hong Kong, run by a Strikers Delegate Congress of over 800 delegates (out of around 50,000 strikers).

As Chesneaux put it, “The responsibilities of the strike committee went far beyond the normal field of activities dealing with a work stoppage. During the summer of 1925 the committee became, in fact, a kind of workers' government — and indeed the name applied to it by both its friends and its enemies was 'Government No2'.” (1968: 292-293). The strike committee extended its activities to Guangzhou, and the strike lasted nearly sixteen months. During that time, British power in China was virtually paralyzed and the Guomindang was able to declare itself the national government. Plainly the situation had changed. In 1923 the CCP had 300 members and reached only 1000 in the spring 1925. Yet by November 1925 it had grown to 10,000 members. When the third National Congress of Labour met in May 1926 the trade unions announced a membership of 1,240,000 — by April 1927 the figure was 2.8 million. (Rousset, 1987: 11). Although the combined activity of the Comintern and Soviet diplomacy had contributed to the parallel growth of the CCP and Guomindang, they were now on a collision course.

WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME OF THIS REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION? On March 20, 1926 Chiang Kai-shek, who became leader of the Guomindang after Sun Yat-sen's death, ordered a surprise attack on a revolutionary naval unit headed by Communists in Guangzhou. The political advisers attached to this unit were arrested, along with the Soviet advisers. Chiang became master of the city, eliminating his opponents within the Guomindang and fixing limits on CCP influence within the party. The CCP responded with timidity, accepting Chiang's conditions. In July 1926, Chiang launched the Northern expedition, aiming to drive out the warlords and unify the country under his command. Meanwhile the peasant war reached an apex. In 1926, the first National Congress of the Peasant Movement met, claiming one million members. In July 1926 the CCP set up a Peasant Department, with Mao Zedong as its head; by 1927, the party influenced approximately ten million peasants. Yet the CCP continued to denounce and hold back the peasants in Central China from rioting, pillaging and massacring landlords. In October 1926, Chiang's army ended the Guangzhou-Hong Kong strike and boycott. Only after Wang Jingwei set up an alternative Guomindang government in Wuhan did the Communists break with Chiang and instead supported the “left-wing” of the Guomindang.

The revolution was still in the ascendent. In November 1926, the Guomindang government moved from Guangzhou to Wuhan. The British were forced to abandon their concessions in this region. Chesneaux explained that “the unions of Hubei and Hunan were, in fact, becoming a 'workers' government' to an even greater extent than those of Guangzhou had been during the Hong Kong strike and boycott." (1968: 325). They controlled large amounts of money, organized armed pickets — effectively a workers' militia paid for by the factories through the unions. The CCP grew to 30,000 members in July 1926, and 58,000 by the spring of 1927. At the time of the Northern Expedition the CCP organized 1.2 million workers and 800,000 peasants, especially through its influence in the nationalist Fourth Army. (Bianco, 1971: 55-56). In Shanghai in March 1927, workers greeted the incoming armies of the Guomindang as liberating heroes, rising magnificently with nearly 800,000 out on strike. Workers militias effectively controlled the city, and new trade unions sprang up. An insurrection in Shanghai handed over power to the general trade union and the Communists. Chiang's response on April 12, 1927, was to orchestrate the massacre of the Shanghai working class, crush the trade unions, the peasant associations and the Communist Party. Victor Serge summed up the cataclysm:

> What has happened? This: on March 21-22, a working class insurrection, headed by the trade unions and a few handfuls of courageous Communist militants, took Shanghai, China's real industrial and commercial capital, after a bitter street battle against the troops of the northern reaction. The proletariat carried out this exploit under the muzzles of English, French, American, Japanese and Italian cannon (not to mention the rest). Less than a month later, on April 13-14, the Generalissimo commanding the revolutionary-nationalist armies of the Guomindang had this proletariat treacherously disarmed and machine-gunned, defeated and strangled in a single night by his official allies. And this grievous blow — foreseen and announced for many weeks by the bourgeois press of every country — was a sad, frightful surprise for the working class militants and Communists of all countries. (1994: 63).

In April-May 1927 the CCP held its 5th congress in Wuhan. Chen Duxiu's supporters were largely removed from the central committee and the CCP further assimilated into the Guomindang. After Chiang's massacre, the CCP on the orders of Borodin switched his allegiance to the "Left Guomindang" led by Wang Jingwei. Two Communists joined the Wuhan government, as ministers for labor and for agriculture, and were promptly sent into the countryside to suppress the insurrectionary peasants. Chen Duxiu resigned as General Secretary of the CCP, scapegoated for the defeats of the party. On July 19, 1927, the so-called left-wing of the Guomindang expelled the CCP and reunited with Chiang. Borodin fled China, just as the party he had so successfully reorganized along "Bolshevik" (in reality Stalinist) lines, finally triumphed. The CCP called for a general strike, but hardly a factory came out in support. Even for Zheng Chaolin, the workers by now looked on the CCP as a second Guomindang rather than their own party. (Benton, 1997: 130).

But the Chinese revolution had a final, cruel epilogue. The strategy of subordination to the Guomindang had obviously failed and the workers' had lost the initiative. Instead the Communists were ordered to organize a series of urban and rural insurrections, known as the Autumn Harvest risings. This culminated in the disastrous "Canton insurrection," in which the CCP were ordered to take over Guangzhou by military force. Although Communist leaders in the city warned that an uprising was out of the question, the order was enforced by two Comintern emissaries, who organized the uprising and used the Russian consulate as the insurgents' headquarters. (Bianco, 1971: 69). Not surprisingly, the putsch was isolated from the working class and easily put down. But it finally severed the link between the Communists and the working class. An estimated 38,000 Communists were liquidated. (Rousset, 1987: 12).

What conclusions can be drawn from this defeat?

> BUT IT IS PRECISELY WHY I BELIEVE YOU HAVE MADE AN ERROR ... where you say that in China, 'two camps that are bitterly hostile to one another have come into being: in one are the imperialists and militarists and certain layers of the Chinese bourgeoisie; and on the other are 'the workers, artisans, petty bourgeoisie, students, intelligentsia and certain groups from the middle bourgeoisie with a nationalist orientation...' In fact, *there are three camps* in China — the reactionaries, the liberal bourgeoisie and the proletariat — fighting for hegemony over the lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie and peasantry. We know how complex and contradictory the course of the revolution is, especially in such a huge and — to an overwhelming extent — backward country like China. The revolution can still pass through a series of ebbs and flows. What we must safeguard in the course of the revolution is above all the independent party of the proletariat that is constantly evaluating the revolution from the point of view of three camps, and is capable of *fighting for the hegemony in the Third Camp* and, by so doing, in the entire revolution. —Leon Trotsky, [1927].[2] (My emphasis)

The betrayal of the Chinese revolution was a major issue of disagreement between Stalin, who after 1923 consolidated his leadership of the USSR and over the Comintern, and the Left Opposition led by Trotsky. At its root were different conceptions of the revolutionary potential of the Chinese working class, with Stalin subordinating the Communist Party to the needs of Soviet diplomacy, whereas Trotsky perceived the need for further socialist revolutions, as part of his celebrated theory of permanent revolution.

The first disagreement concerned the nature of the Guomindang. Stalin, interpreting Sneevliet, argued the Guomindang was a "bloc of four classes," or a workers' and peasants party, whereas Trotsky saw it as a straightforward bourgeois formation.[3] While Trotsky did not reject an alliance between the Chinese Communists and the Guomindang, he was alarmed at the form it took. However, Stalin enforced his analysis within the Comintern, which meant the vanguard of the Chinese proletariat was not merely allied, but actively subordinated to the nationalists. This was well summed up by Comintern representatives in March 1926: "The present period is one in which the Communists should do coolie service for the Guomindang." (Duxiu, 1976: 601). In fact, following Stalin's policy during this period, the Comintern seemed to replace the working class with the peasantry as the main revolutionary protagonist in backward countries.

Yet within the Comintern, and the Communist Party, there were early voices that concurred with Trotsky rather than Stalin. As Zheng Chaolin explained, "[In 1924] Peng Shuzhi brought back an article from Moscow titled 'Who Leads the Chinese National Revolution?.' He said that after the achievement of the national revolution, we would still need to carry out 'our own' revolution. But he also said that the revolution that is 'not our own' would 'automatically' come under the leadership of the proletariat. This theory of the proletariat constituting the natural leadership of the national revolution was to the exact taste of the Chinese comrades and became the guiding theory in the Party during those few years." (Benton, 1997: 110). In fact, on at least five occasions, Chen Duxiu advocated a change of policy instead from the "united front from within." (Feigon

1983: 176). The root of Stalin's errors was his analysis of events in China as a struggle between two camps, essentially the imperialist powers and warlords on one side and the nationalists on the other, with the socialist revolution put off to some distant point in the future. This was particularly damaging when a revolutionary situation developed in 1925, and the forces of counter-revolution gathered around the Guomindang. The centrality of the working class — the Third Camp perspective which Trotsky articulated in 1927 was well explained at the time by Victor Serge:

> China has almost five million industrial or craft workers (120,000 railway men, 420,000 miners, 300,000 textile workers and 200,000 metal workers). Working class centers such as Shanghai, Hankou and the mines of Hainan are strong strategic positions for the proletariat. All the recent epoch-making events of the Chinese Revolution are those of working class action. The boycott of Hongkong kept up for 16 months is the work of the Guangzhou workers (the Cantonese bourgeoisie, helped by the National government has lifted it). The great Shanghai strikes of 1925 marked the take off point of the revolution. The taking of the British concession in Hankou by proletarians is the greatest victory of the 'Northern Campaign'. Then followed the admirable exploit that was the seizure of Shanghai by the workers' insurrection... (1994: 78).

In March 1926, the Guomindang was admitted to the Communist International as a sympathizing party and Chiang made an honorary member, with only Trotsky voting against. When Chiang organized his coup later the same month, the news was suppressed in the USSR and the Comintern press glowed with pride at the "revolutionary government" (Isaacs, 1938: 125). In April 1926, Trotsky appealed to the Politburo for a change of line and in September he formally moved for the CCP to withdraw from the Guomindang. (Evans and Block, 1976: 116). Trotsky called for soviets in China at the Politburo in March 1927, before Chiang's bloody coup. He would seek to salvage the situation for the Chinese party at the Comintern in May 1927, his articles for the Soviet press having been rejected. He was not to know until long afterward that Chen Duxiu and his supporters were struggling for precisely the same independent orientation, only to be thwarted by the Comintern.[4]

In October 1926, Stalin sent a telegram which urged the Chinese Communists to moderate the peasant movement in order to preserve the alliance with the Guomindang. When the CCP requested 5000 rifles to advance the peasant struggle they were denied by Borodin. The Comintern still upheld the alliance even though the nationalist government imposed compulsory arbitration in strikes and the unions remained illegal in "liberated" areas. The Communists pledged not to criticize Sun Yat-sen — indeed its "daily" paper only appeared irregularly as a weekly. As late as April 1927, Stalin boasted that the Guomindang would be "utilized to the end, squeezed like a lemon and then thrown away." (Isaacs, 1938:185). In fact, it was Chiang who tossed away the Communists, and even as he did so, Comintern agents were still ordering Shanghai and other workers to surrender their arms to him. Max Shachtman summed up the tragedy of the Chinese revolution:

> Victory lay within reach of the hand for the Chinese workers and peasants, but something unprecedented in history took place: the leadership, clothed in all the formal authority of the Russian revolution and the Communist International, stood in the way like a solid wall. Stalin and Bukharin prohibited the proletariat

> from taking power. In the Chinese revolution the epigones played to the end, and with tragic results, the role which Lenin's struggle in the Bolshevik party in April-May 1917 prevented them from playing in the Russian revolution. (1974: 34)

Trotsky's Third Camp analysis upheld the independent role of the working class but was flexible enough to incorporate tactics toward both the bourgeois Guomindang and an alliance with the peasantry. (It would also prove flexible enough to address the Japanese invasion in 1937, too.) Trotsky responded concretely to the reality of the situation as it developed, posing tasks for the Communist Party so that it could play its historic role as the vanguard of the working class. It is impossible to judge in hindsight that if the Communists had followed Trotsky's directives, they would have inevitably led the working class to power. But all the objective prerequisites for a successful seizure of power were present by 1927, except for the necessary leadership to consummate the process.

Only a few hundred supporters of Trotsky, from within the CCP and from among the returning students from Moscow, drew the lessons from this disaster and retained a commitment to the working class in China. Among them were Chen Duxiu, Peng Shuzhi and Zheng Chaolin, leading figures from the leadership of the Communist Party. According to Wang Fanxi, by late 1927 Chen had already come into contact with some of Trotsky's ideas from students returning from Moscow. (Feigon 1983: 199). By the middle of 1929 Chen Duxiu had organized an opposition group and Liu Renjing had made direct contact with Trotsky. On May 1, 1931 the unification of the Chinese Left Opposition (CLO) took place, with 438 members.

If the prospects were bright after unification, why did the Chinese Opposition fail to make an impact? Remaining in cities, they were decimated by Guomindang and later CCP repression. Benton argues that the disciplinary measures of the CCP, together with its relative affluence compared to the CLO (the CCP received $400,000 a month from the USSR) was significant, but the main reason was Guomindang repression. Chen and Peng were arrested in October 1932. (1996: 109-113). Benton also argued that they were unable to develop a strategy for the new opportunities which opened up after the Japanese invasion in 1937. Although the were some Trotskyist-led guerrillas, including some 2000 in Shandong, they were destroyed by the CCP. (Fanxi, 1991: 214). Nevertheless, they held up the banner of authentic Marxism in a period of terrible defeat for the working class, and despite their size, offered a way out of this impasse for the Chinese proletariat.

Why Was the Working Class Absent in the 1949 Revolution?

> Yet the proletariat played a negligible role in the last and decisive phase of the revolution. Neither major strikes nor urban uprisings paved the way for the Red Army as they had twenty years earlier for Chiang Kai-shek in Shanghai. There were very few workers in the triumphant Red Army; it was composed essentially of peasants and officered by other peasants and intellectuals. (Bianco, 1971: 83-84).

At the end of 1926, two-thirds of the CCP were workers, a quarter were intellectuals and 5% peasants. Yet by 1928 only 10% were workers, just 3% by 1929 and virtually none by 1930. In 1928 the CCP "did not have a single healthy party nucleus among industrial workers." (Isaacs, 1938: 333, 394). What remained of the vanguard was dissipated into the countryside. Mao established his first revolutionary base in October 1927, with one thousand men. Within three years this peasant army numbered 65,000 and in November 1931, the "Chinese Soviet Republic" was founded in the south Kiangsi area, covering a population of 2.5 million by 1932. (Bianco, 1971: 64-65). When the Second Congress of "soviets" met in January 1934, there were only eight urban workers out of 821 delegates. During the Long March — out of 90-100,000 who set out, only 7-8,000 arrived with Mao in Shensi a year later, with perhaps only 30,000 eventually reaching northwestern China, further separating the party from the working class centers and entrenching the peasant composition of the party-army. (Rousset, 1986: 3). In short, the Chinese Communist Party was a completely different entity from the one built and smashed in the twenties.

Nevertheless, the consolidation of the Communist Party-state after 1935 under Mao's undisputed leadership proved to be a crucial turning point. The Guomindang was unable to threaten the existence of the party, and the Japanese invasion offered the opportunity to incorporate more territory under its control. (The invasion also further dispersed the working class on the eastern seaboard.) When Japan surrendered in 1945, there were nineteen Communist base areas. In 1937, there were 80,000 men in the Red Army; in 1945, there were 900,000 soldiers, and Mao claimed a militia force of 2.2 million men. In 1937, the CCP governed 1.5 million peasants in desolate Shensi; in 1945, there were 90 million peasants under Communist control. In 1945 the party had 1.2 million members, controlled about 10% of Chinese territory and was a serious contender for power. (Bianco, 1971: 150). Yet in Shanghai the CCP apparently had only 800 worker-activists in 1948. It had succeeded in creating a social force capable of ruling; the tragedy was that this force had nothing to do with working class self-emancipation. However they came to power, the Chinese Communists certainly did not do so in the manner of the Russian Bolsheviks in 1917.

Regarding the kind of revolution possible if the working class was unable to take power, Victor Serge offered an interesting interpretation. Quoting the Soviet sinologist, Ivine, he argued that over the last 2000 years China had experienced five great peasant rebellions, all led by vast secret associations of poor peasants against the big landowners, the usurers, the feudal lords and the state bureaucracy; all of them ending in the more or less complete expropriation of the rich classes; after which the process of concentration of wealth and the pauperization of the small cultivator began again, until the next peasant uprising. He believed that the "history of China provided a spectacle of the tragic repetition of an economic process that for 20 centuries until our own day has only undergone minor modifications... Precise information seems to indicate that we are on the eve of a peasant movement comparable with the greatest ones of the past. Will the former cycle of revolutions be repeated once again? That is the question." (Serge, 1994: 85-86). This was an important insight, but I think it overlooks the fundamentally modern character of the Chinese revolution, and the unique role of the Communists in crafting their own path to power (which Serge could not have foreseen in 1927).

Trotsky, himself, drew attention to these possibilities in his article, "The Peasant War in China," (1932), but he also posed the question of what would occur when the 'Red Armies' encountered the working class, suggesting the likelihood of conflict. Comparing them with the Social Revolutionary armies during the civil war in Russia he foresaw disaster for the working class if the peasantry became the foot-soldiers of another social force. He wrote: "In old China every victorious peasant revolution was concluded by the creation of a new dynasty... Under present conditions the peasant war by itself, without direct leadership of the proletarian vanguard can pass only on the power to a new bourgeois clique... And this would signify in turn a new massacre of the workers with the weapons of 'democratic dictatorship'," (Evans and Block, 1976: 527-528, 530). He even speculated that the CCP and the Chinese Left Opposition might come to represent different class bases, although at this time he did not conceive of the Communist apparatus in Russia or abroad as an autonomous force. Yet Trotsky's prognosis contained more than a germ of truth, and he provided further insight on this Stalinist variant only days before his assassination in 1940:

> The predominating type among the present 'Communist' bureaucrats is the political careerist, and in consequence the polar opposite of the revolutionist. Their ideal is to attain in their own country the same position that the Kremlin oligarchy gained in the USSR. *They are not the revolutionary leaders of the proletariat but aspirants to totalitarian rule.* They dream of gaining success with the aid of this same Soviet bureaucracy and its GPU. They view with admiration and envy the invasion of Poland, Finland, the Baltic states, Bessarabia by the Red Army because these invasions immediately bring about the transfer of power into the hands of the local Stalinist candidates for totalitarian rule. (Breitman, 1973: 350-351). (My emphasis)

Why was the working class absent? It was not primarily due to a weak social base — 1925-27 had shown that, nor was it simply down to an economic crisis. The catastrophic defeat suffered in 1927 must be considered one of the principal causes of the workers' absence in 1949. The reasons were again essentially political — the repression by the Guomindang, the disorganization of workers into sham unions, together with the shattering of the vanguard for a generation. Quite simply, and despite the best efforts of the Chinese Trotskyists, the Third Camp of the working class was crushed beneath the juggernauts of the Guomindang and the Communists.[5]

Why Was a Stalinist State Established in China after 1949?

ANY POLITICAL PARTY OR STATE APPARATUS which enslaves the working class is, in this day and age, from a proletarian, socialist, revolutionary point of view, fundamentally and completely reactionary. Therefore the CCP and the state apparatus which it has set up are also reactionary. Yet at the same time we must recognise the following facts: They have overthrown the Kuomintang [Guomindang] government, which represents foreign imperialism and the native bourgeoisie and landlord class; they are wiping out the anachronistic agrarian relationships in China's farming villages; they have dealt a mighty blow to the foreign imperialist powers led by the United States. All of these actions, from the point of view of Chinese nationalism and democracy, have an undeniably progressive character. The difficulty is this: How and why can a fundamentally reactionary political party and government perform objectively progressive acts? (Wang Fanxi, 1951: 102).

The only real attempts to develop and extend Trotsky's analysis at the time were the articles by Jack Brad, under the pseudonym of Jack Ranger, in the pages of *Labor Action* and *The New International*, and Chinese Trotskyists like Wang Fanxi. Ranger's articles were a model of clarity and accuracy in their prognoses of the situation. Unable to seriously influence workers' in China, these articles at least pointed to a different outcome than either a Guomindang or Communist Party victory, and thus upheld the Third Camp banner of Marxism, which championed the independence of the working class.

Ranger acknowledged that the CCP had established a peasant base, but given its separation from the working class, it had become in composition and outlook a rural party. It had even developed an ideology in which the peasantry was given leadership in the Chinese revolution, acting through the organization of the Communist Party. But from a Marxist perspective, "Nowhere in modern history has a national revolution been led by a party based on the peasantry. The unique Chinese experience is possible because that unifying ingredient which is absent in the peasantry as a class. [i.e. the Communist Party.] With its discipline, ideology, leadership and indefatigable organizational labors it creates cohesion and gives unified direction." (1949a: 50).

The answer lay in the transformation of the party. Echoing Trotsky's final verdict on other Communist parties, Ranger argued that, "Since 1927 Stalinism has not been a political party in China but an armed camp, an embryo state. Party members and leaders were equivalent to state officials. Sometimes the fortunes of the state party were low indeed, as after the Long March when it was reduced to 40,000. In those days, and even today, not only were and are party and state identical, but the two are coefficients of the army's power and are identical with it too." (1949a: 50) Since the founding of the Chinese "soviets" in the South, there has existed a special GPU or political police. (1949b: 4). As such the Chinese Communist Party was a Stalinist party, with identical aims to its Russian parent and would seek power in order to create its own system of class exploitation:

> The Chinese Communist Party is aiming at a monopoly of political power. All compromises with coalitions, with propertied classes, in city and village will not alter this basic fact. They will permit the city bourgeoisie to retain their factories and mercantile establishments (provided they do not encroach on big industry and big commerce which will be nationalized). But they will not permit them to organize political parties to represent these interests. They will support the village *tukhoa* (kulak), but at the same time insist that he accept the party as his sole defender. They will form unions and workers will be forced to join, but any party that arises to speak for the workers outside of officially created organizations will be dealt with as counter-revolutionary. (1949b: 4).

Ranger defined the seizure of power by the CCP as a "bureaucratic revolution," in which the working class did not play an active role. He contrasted this revolution with others in modern history in which, "a rainbow variety of ideologies has had to struggle for support and position of hegemony... This was the source of the enormous release of energy and the dramatically democratic nature of the revolutionary process. Millions, emerging on the stage of history, become politically literate overnight, developing unforeseen talents, assuming new roles and carving out a new historic path." In China he argued that the opposite had occurred: "The CP is marching to victory over a road which is a political desert. No contenders are in the field against it and no other political movement allied with it. The military character of its conquest is a consequence of this reality. We are witnessing the classical form of bureaucratic-collectivist revolution, the precondition for which is the prostration of the great urban social classes which have been the prime movers of history since the Renaissance." (1949c).

He cited examples of CCP directives for the newly conquered cities requesting that: "All law-abiding enemy functionaries, personnel of economic and educational organs and policemen should not be taken prisoner or arrested. They must be given duties and remain at their original posts under orders of definite organs and personnel, to watch over their original organs." (*China Digest*, August 13, 1948, 1949a: 52). At the outset of the conquest of the Yangtze Valley, an eight-point proclamation, "hoped that workers and employers in all trades will continue work and that businesses will operate as usual." Even in Shanghai, where great unrest was caused by the inflation, where a great strike wave had occurred and the Guomindang's power had ebbed, the workers remained nonpolitical, not even organized as a class grouping. (1949c).

But he did not fail to note the significance of what was occurring, even if the revolution was being led by the mortal enemies of the working class. For the first time a Stalinist state of continental proportions had been established outside of Russia and on the basis of its own conquest of power. An historic event had occurred:

> The conquest of all China by Stalinism is an event of world history whose full significance will unfold with time. If Stalinism can organize effectively this continent and begin its industrialisation, it may well be one of the turning points of history. A powerful social force, albeit a force of counter-revolutionary Stalinism, is sweeping aside three millenia-old incubus of decay and stagnation. China is being torn from her antiquated roots and thrust into the modern world maelstrom. The tragedy of the Stalinist victory lies in this: that this gigantic event takes place under the aegis of a totalitarian rather than liberating leadership, one which will tie China to the Russian despotism in world politics as in domestic economic construction. (1949c).

What could working class socialists do in this situation? Ranger argued that the working class was not yet completely permeated by Stalinism and could still be imbued with political independence. The CP was primarily an agrarian party and an independent proletariat could eventually organize its own organs, take power in the rich coastal cities, and organize an independent democratic movement which could call the peasants to revolutionary action. He thought workers should call for immediate arming of all the people in fighting units of their own, with their own elected officers. They could organize under the program of ousting the capitalists regardless of party; for social and political democracy, not a new one-party regime; for maximum freedom to organize, without CP direction; against the CP doctrine of revolution by 'stages'; for the restoration of revolutionary leadership of the workers; and for full freedom of speech and press. (1949a: 54).

The major problem for the CCP was how to create a new national ruling class around the party as a core by recruiting from many sections of the population, especially the young intellectuals. Ranger denounced the Consultative Conference they set up, counterposing to it "democratic assemblies of freely elected delegates." He also defended the right of Formosans to self-determination, noting that Chiang had massacred 20,000 in 1947, and that if the CCP were victorious, it would establish a new tyranny. He called on the Chinese masses to fight against all imperialism and its agents, American and Russian. Most of all, "The workers of China need a party of their own. That is the beginning of a program." (1949a: 54) [6]

A similar balance sheet was offered by Wang Fanxi inside China at the time. He showed that a Third Camp perspective, if not the forces to coalesce around it, was still alive in China, when he wrote: "In judging and estimating the nature of a movement, a political party, or a state, for the proletarian revolutionist there is one unchanging standard: What is its relation to the working class, that is, to the only revolutionary class in the modern world? For us there can be no more decisive standard than that, nor can there be any other point of departure." (1951: 100). Wang argued that the CCP had not improved the position of the working class, while economically it had lowered their standard of living. In reality, like the Guomindang, the Communists enslaved the Chinese working class. For Wang it was the twenty year absence of the working class from the political stage which determined what he called "the peasant aspect, the capitalist nature and the bureaucratic-collectivist direction of Chinese Stalinism." Although Wang's views did not completely coincide with Ranger's, and he later revised his analysis, his early assessment still has great merit. The tragedy was that he found it increasingly difficult to correspond from his virtual prison on Macau, and of his few hundred co-thinkers on the mainland, almost all of whom were imprisoned after 1952. [7]

What Was the Social Nature of China After 1949?

ONE OF THE YAWNING GAPS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A THIRD CAMP PERSPECTIVE is an extension of the analysis pioneered by Ranger and Wang to the whole Maoist period, and to the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy's subsequent turn toward capitalism under Deng. The rightful starting point is Marx's method for differentiating class societies: "the specific economic form in which surplus labor is pumped out of the direct producers determines the relationship of rulers and ruled." (Marx, 1977: 791). After 1949, the Communist Party-army used its military victory to smash what remained of the old bourgeois state, organized around the Bonapartist Guomindang, and its monopoly of violence to create a new state. In essence this was an expansion of the "Soviet" established in 1931, over a larger territory, although the CCP sought to incorporate others who had allied with it in the so-called "united front" against the Japanese and the Guomindang.

This new state proceeded to expropriate the landlords and the capitalists, to nationalize the means of production and to establish a new form of exploitation, on the blueprint of the USSR, creating a new ruling class around the Communist Party. The mode of surplus extraction was direct and collective. Through the nationalisation of industry and the collectivization of agriculture, the new ruling class could control the means of production, and set the tempo for industrial expansion through its five year plans, first instituted in 1953. The amount of necessary labor workers and peasants had to perform to reproduce themselves (i.e. to produce the means of consumption) was directly managed through a system of subsidies and rationing, while the state could appropriate their surplus labor essentially as tribute directly from the factories and farms. That such a bureaucratic-command system was bound to malfunction does not negate the fact that the CCP was the "sole master of the surplus product."

By 1956, 97% of rural households worked in co-operatives and 88% on collective farms; in the same year 68% of factories had been nationalized and the remainder transformed into joint state-private enterprises. According to Mao, China had 12 million industrial workers out of a population of 600 million in 1957. As Cheng and Selden argue, the *hukou* system of population of registration was crucial to the social relations established by the party-state, in particular the restrictions on labor migration and the channeling of the agricultural surplus product to the cities. Hukou registration determined their identity, citizenship and proof of official status. (1997: 24, 32). Although it had antecedents in the ancient baojia system of mutual surveillance and the Soviet passbook system, the hukou was a unique, contemporary phenomenon. It divided the cities from the countryside, where peasants were expected to live self-sufficiently, and regulated the supply of labor to the cities. Introduced after 1953, the hukou privileged those who lived in urban areas, with the state taking on direct responsibility for their well-being and exploitation. This was carried out principally by the *Danwei* (work units) system; without it workers lost their eligibility for food, clothing, housing, employment, education, marriage and army enlistment.

In the cities, the mechanism for regulating workers' means of consumption (the so-called "iron rice-bowl") was the *Danwei*. After 1958, work units took responsibility for the provision of housing, food, healthcare and pensions, replacing the earlier form of registration based on the family unit. Between 1953-56 private home ownership was largely eliminated in urban areas and the state established a monopoly over urban housing. At the same time, state control over food was established, and food rationing introduced for grain and clothing in 1955, features which were to remain for over thirty years. Stalinism with Chinese characteristics lacked capitalist markets: its symbolic rents, low prices and notional wages did not correspond with the proportions of social labor employed. The outward appearance of this system were the coupons for sugar, rice, soup and cigarettes and the queues in the cities which were still a visible part of life a decade ago.

The Great Leap Forward sparked rapid urbanization between 1958-60. Some 38 million people left their villages; even in the state sector employment rose by 21 million in 1958 alone. The urban population rocketed from 15% to 20% of the population, as rural Chinese temporarily burst the fetters of the *Hukou* system. But as Michael Harrington observed astutely at the time, "Yes, Chinese Communism industrializes — but at enormous cost and through enormous waste." (1958: 100). The principal cause was the terrible starvation unleashed by the forced collectivization of agriculture, the forced extraction of the agricultural surplus by the state, now known as the "great leap famine," responsible for perhaps 20 million deaths in the space of four years. Grouping peasants into large agricultural communes, and into production brigades, creating mess halls for food and indoctrination, the regime did away with the old relations in the countryside, and resisted the creation of household responsibility which peasants developed to avoid the crisis. (Yang; 1997: 282-4). Yet within the space of two years, some 20 million workers were laid off and sent back to the countryside. (Cheng and Selden, 1997: 44). Thereafter, people were forced to reside in the place of their birth, except for women who might live at their husbands' domiciles. It is not surprising that Mao is remembered by ordinary Chinese for his slogan, "in order to have construction, you must first have destruction."

China's limited industrialisation for thirty years after the revolution was hardly analogous to the primitive accumulation of capital which ushered in the modern epoch in Europe. The system bound workers and peasants to the means of production, indeed millions simply lived and died in their place of birth and with their tools. It did not create a capitalist class but rather a Behemoth state which arbitrarily drove the exploitation of the direct producers with only limited success. By the 1970's, the system was simply unable to generate the surplus necessary to carry out the transformation of the Chinese economy. The chronic malfunctioning of the system was built into its very nature; in competition with capitalism it was bound to fail.

As if to illustrate its perversity, the Chinese bureaucracy had recourse to the most primitive forms of exploitation, just as Stalin did in the thirties. A huge pool of slave labor, incarcerated in over a thousand labor camps by the 1970's, served both as an economic resource for the state and a chilling reminder of the costs of opposition. China lurched from the great leap famine through the cultural revolution with its barely formed system unable to satisfy its ruling class, let alone the needs of workers and peasants. And with workers' democracy ruled out by the nature of its rule, the only place for the CCP to go was the market. [8]

How Has China Developed Towards Capitalism Since 1978?

WITHIN TWO YEARS OF MAO'S DEATH, CHINA UNDER DENG XIOPING began to lurch toward capitalism under the guise of a "socialist market economy." Deng's change of direction with slogans like, "it doesn't matter what color the cat is, as long as it catches mice," might be rationalized as gradualism, but in fact the aperture unleashed a wave of class struggle in the countryside. Believing they now had the chance to make money, peasants broke out of their "communes" to produce for profit, going beyond the intentions of the CCP in embracing household responsibility. This process has transformed the countryside, with 200 million clambering out of absolute poverty (defined as $1000 per year) releasing labor for the township enterprises which now generate 40% of China's industrial output. Signaling the collapse of the old communes, 800 million now effectively stand outside of the old system of exploitation, but only to exchange it for the bondage of the market place.

Over the past twenty years China has undergone the most rapid industrialisation yet seen in human history, which in the words of Paul Theroux, "Yesterday's paddy field is tomorrow's high rise, and a thousand factories bloom." Twenty years ago Shenzhen near Hong Kong was merely a rural hamlet; today it is a super-city with four harbors. Suzhou Industrial Park, near Shanghai, known as "Little Singapore," is currently under construction after foreign investment of $20 billion and will soon house 600,000 people. Shanghai itself is once more Asia's largest city, its polluted skyline dotted with high-rise towers, its rivers spanned by new bridges and its new roads teetering on top of the old, all built with the new money. While there is still a Red Star over China, capitalism is rapidly engulfing the firmament.

The Chinese government boasts of its virility in the language of economic growth statistics. The United States took 47 years between 1839-86 to double its per capita income, whereas China has managed the same feat between 1978-87, and again from 1987-96. China is now the world's largest producer of grain, meat, cotton and peanuts, as well as steel, coal, cement, fertilizer and TV sets. Already one of the largest economies in the world, it is expected to rival the US as the largest on the planet within two generations. The harbinger of capitalism has been the foreign investment of the Chinese diaspora, especially from Taiwan and the newly integrated Hong Kong. The prosperity of the eastern seaboard has created a labor market and thus undermined the *Danwei*; market wage rates and prices have replaced state rationing and new housing is either sold or rented at exorbitant cost to tenants.

According to Sargeson, terms such as exploited (*boxue*) and class (*jieji*) and wage laborer (*dagong*) are now commonplace in workers' discourse about their working lives. Presently, millions of Chinese workers fit Marx's description of the proletariat which was formed in Europe in the early stages of industrialisation. In 1979, there were 49 million workers employed in industry, commerce, transport and services which were not state-owned; by 1995 this figure had increased to 167 million, or 60% of China's non-agricultural workforce. (1999: 3-4). On this broad definition, the Chinese working class now numbers over 270 million people.

One of the signs of the development of capitalism in China is the dramatic decline of state-owned firms. In 1978, state-owned enterprises produced three-quarters of China's total output. In 1995, this had fallen to approximately one-third, less than was produced by collectively owned rural firms. Overseas investment, ostensibly from companies registered in Hong Kong and Macau, means that over 20% of China's exports earnings now come from foreign-invested enterprises, and private firms employ approximately 56 million people. (Sargeson, 1999: 27-29). Another is this huge increase in the number of contract and temporary workers. The party-state has simplified hiring and firing practices, eliminated life-long employment in state firms and supported performance-related pay. Because of continued political domination by the CCP, these reforms have resulted in a proliferation of rent-seeking and entrepreneurial activity on the part of government officials. In this bastard-capitalism, connections to the bureaucracy facilitate business activity, with all the implied corruption and nepotism.

To facilitate labor mobility and the operation of a labor market, the government has approved temporary residents permits and the transfer of personnel dossiers. In 1990, only 12% of the urban workforce were on temporary contracts, within six years this figure rose to 41%. Some estimates indicate that one-third of the adult work-force, or approximately 200 million people were surplus to agricultural requirements and were underemployed or unemployed. Even a decade ago there were 70-80 million migrant rural workers in China's towns and cities. (Sargeson, 1999:31-34) Youth, mainly women, work in the new factories as little more than modern indentured labor. Two-thirds of the population still live in the countryside, and 300 million people still subsist on less than $1 a day. In 1999, 20 million workers were sacked or indefinitely sent home, yet the government quotes a figure of 3% for unemployment.

Conditions in the new economic zones recall the description of factories nearly a century ago. One survey found a factory in Shenzhen with 521 separate punishments for workers' infringement of workplace regulations. Prohibitions on using the toilet, drinking and talking during working hours, go together with draconian piece rate systems and the use of electronic prods by supervisors. Even in state-owned firms, where workers had been relatively privileged, authoritarian management, long working days, productivity pay and harsh discipline have become the norm. Workers do not have the right to strike, unless their workplace is unsafe. Independent unions are prohibited, and leaders liable to imprisonment. Even official union membership is rare among workers in private business. Despite the 1995 national labor law, which was supposed to regulate conditions for the (40 hour) working week, minimum wages and safety are ignored with impunity. (Sargeson, 1999: 40-41).

The period since 1978 is far closer to the era of the primitive accumulation of capital, in the manner as Marx described it: the creation of a class of capitalists and a class of proletarians. (Holmstrom and Smith, 2000: 2, 15). Allowing for the obvious differences between feudalism and Stalinist collectivism, what has happened over the past twenty years in China does look uncannily like the process of separating the direct producers from the bondage of the old social relations in town and country (i.e. the *Hukou*, *Danwei* etc), and subjecting them to the tyranny of the labor market. On the other hand, this period has also witnessed the emergence of a rapacious capitalist class, out of a section of the old bureaucracy that has acted in collusion with overseas capital. The incorporation of Hong Kong and the tension between China and Taiwan are significant in this respect. It also implies that huge explosions are ahead as these social forces come into conflict.

How Has the Working Class Struggled Under CCP Rule?

RECENT ACADEMIC RESEARCH HAS CHALLENGED THE COMMONLY-HELD MYTH that Chinese workers basically supported the Maoist regime. Numerous times since 1949, the working class has risen up in major acts of protest, and working class dissent over the past fifty years has been the most heavily repressed by the Communist Party. There is little doubt that the last half-century of Chinese history has been characterized by uninterrupted class struggle, sometimes open, sometimes hidden.

Sheehan's research confirms that the working class was "relatively passive" when the CCP took power. (1998: 26). The right to strike was included in the constitution, but workers were told they no longer needed to use these old methods of struggle. A sign of caution toward the new regime was that workers did not dismantle the old Guomindang "unions," preferring these organizations to nothing at all. Although workers' congresses were established in factories, they became rubber stamp bodies for factory management committees, with party cadres and factory directors making the crucial decisions. The official trade unions preached the doctrine of increasing production and labor discipline. The All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) defined their tasks as, "To ensure and consolidate labor discipline, correctly organize labor, fully and rationally use working hours, raise labor productivity and turn out quality products." (Harrington, 1958: 91). The nationalisation of industry tended to reduce the democracy and participation of the workers, and former capitalists received interest payments and sometimes posts in these new joint enterprises, which was resented by workers.

The working class is often written out of accounts of the Hundred Flowers protests, yet workers talked of "creating another Hungarian incident." (Sheehan, 1998: 48). Workers' complaints included high fares and rents, sick pay and the abolition of end of year bonuses and allowances. The unofficial Guangzhou dock strike in the spring of 1957 involved half the workforce. Workers formed autonomous unions, sometimes called “redress grievance societies” and adopted a “waged-labor mentality.” Workers continued to complain that party cadres had special sanatoria and canteens, and some denounced the party as a new ruling class. Research by Perry reveals that in spring 1957, there were major labor disturbances in Shanghai, including more than two-hundred walk-outs, one hundred organized show-downs and over 700 less serious disturbances. By comparison in 1919 there were 56 strikes, 175 in 1925, and 280 strikes in 1946. Only the last six months of Guomindang rule witnessed more strikes, when the numbers rocketed to over three thousand. (Perry, 1997: 234, 254). These figures are one more illustration that far from being a golden age, this period was one of fundamental social cleavages.

Perry does not deny the role of Mao in encouraging protests during this period, but puts the causes down to economic restructuring. Some 90% of strikes took place in the newly formed joint-ownership enterprises, the majority of them in small workplaces with less than one hundred workers. These changes had affected workers’ real incomes, and led to disparities in welfare assistance, housing subsidies, bonuses and job security in favour of workers in state-owned companies. They were generally not about wage differentials. (Perry, 1997: 240). Some workers resented the loss of worker supervision which had been introduced over the previous decade, and many strikes involved apprentices livid about changes to the length of their tutelage. About one-fifth of the industrial action involved the whole factory, although usually less than half the workers took part. The focus of dissent was usually factory management, but also included the official unions and party cadres. But this movement was crushed, and the official union purged of sympathetic elements.

During the Cultural Revolution (1966-69), workers took advantage of divisions within the CCP to push the movement in directions in which it was not intended to go. Some ex-Red Guards, such as Shengwulian developed a critique of the regime using Maoist verbiage. Workers complained of the increased use of temporary and contract labor, and the keeping of dossiers on them at work. The army was sent in to restore order in some factories and rebel workers federations were suppressed. In 1974, big character posters attacked cadres privileges and again characterized the bureaucracy as a ruling class. Workers again formed independent unions, and in Hangzhou 30,000 troops were used against strikes. Over one million demonstrated in Beijing in 1976 to oppose the Gang of Four. Although workers tended to side with Deng against the old Maoists, they soon became critical of his reforms, which removed the “iron ricebowl” of job security while retaining the “iron armchair” for party cadres.

The Democracy Wall movement between 1978-81 published journals and explicitly addressed the question of whether the workers really were the “leading class” and “masters of the enterprise,” as official propaganda stated. Again rebels characterized the party as a new ruling class — the journal *Spray* discussed exploitation under public ownership. (Sheehan, 1998: 163). Wang Xizhe raised ideas of direct democracy, modeled on the Paris Commune and Russia in 1917. In the background was the rise of Solidarnosc in Poland, from which workers drew great inspiration, stimulating demands for independent unions at the Taiyuan steel works, and in Shanghai. The fear of a “Polish crisis” led to the suppression of the movement and a number of nominal freedoms were stripped from the constitution, including the removal of the right to strike in 1982. The new journals too were suppressed on the grounds that they had not registered with the authorities; the authorities of course had no intention of accepting a free workers' press. The CCP was explicit about its fear of a link up between dissident publishing efforts and the self-organization of workers. (Sheehan, 1998: 193).

The reasons for protests in Tiananmen Square in 1989 also deserve elaboration from a Third Camp perspective. Workers had lost confidence in the government after a decade of reforms. A survey by the official trade unions (ACFTU) in 1988 found that less than 10% of workers thought the unions spoke up for workers or solved their problems. Around 25% said unions only collected dues and organized recreation and 70% said the workers' congress was not effective. (Sheehan, 1998: 202). The ACFTU estimated that the majority of incomes had fallen by 25-30%, with many workers reduced to subsistence. Workers resented the growth of contract labor in the state sector, worsening health and safety work, a punitive style of management and corruption.

During the Tiananmen protests students did not generally seek working class support, confining the workers' headquarters to the far side of the Square until the end of May. Students were increasingly pulled toward the internal power games of the elite, and held back general strike calls at the end of May. The Beijing Autonomous Workers Federation began organizing in April, before announcing itself on May 18. Workers federations spread across many major cities, and although they involved perhaps 150 hard-core activists, they had registered 20,000 workers, including in state-run factories such as Shougang (Capital Iron and Steel) and Yanshan Petrochemicals. Workers denounced the regime of Deng and Li Peng as "this twentieth century Bastille, the last stronghold of Stalinism." (Sheehan, 1998: 214-215).

The working class became the major force in the democracy movement prior to its brutal suppression. The shootings in Beijing prompted great heroism on the part of the workers there, and the creation of new organizations in places like Guangzhou. The number of strikes and the dip in production figures measure the extent of workers' involvement. While the regime claimed workers remained aloof, the workers' organizations suffered the fiercest attacks in the press, and workers the severest repression in the crackdown. Internal documents from the official unions admit to the political nature of the Tiananmen protests. In 1991, the Ministry of State Security investigated fourteen underground workers' organizations, with between 20 and 300 members, two modeled explicitly on Solidarnosc. In 1994, campaigns for the right to strike and the formation of independent unions were set up.

Perry concluded her study of the 1957 Shanghai strike wave by arguing that it was the fragmentation of Chinese workers that was the key to their militancy. The image of the *Danwei* as co-opting the proletariat and thus diluting protest is only part of the picture, since these workers were only a minority of the industrial labor force. In 1957, it was those excluded from the benefits of reform who took the lead. By way of a contrast, she argues that the state-employed workers on permanent contracts, who stand to lose most by the re-introduction of capitalism after 1978, are most likely to rebel. (1997: 250-254). The heartlands of the new unemployment in the north-east have recently witnessed an increase in strikes, sit-ins, petitions and factory occupations. What is certain is that neither Stalinism nor capitalism eliminated the basic economic contradictions which drive the class struggle.

Conclusion: What Are Prospects for the Third Camp in China Today?

OUT OF FIFTY YEARS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT HAS MUSHROOMED A 200-million strong working class, a force of tremendous revolutionary potential, a fact well known to the CCP leaders who have maintained it in an atomized state without the capacity to form its own legal organizations. Yet the Tiananmen demonstrations shook the totalitarian state to its foundations. As capitalism continues to seep into the pores of Chinese Stalinism, the Communist Party continues to lose its grip on the people it oppresses. What the working class lacks compared with its heroic forebears is the necessary organization and consciousness.

The situation is highly fluid. The CCP is still in power. According to Harry Wu it still has 15-20 million people in labor camps. The army itself owns 20,000 companies and the state still controls hundreds of thousands of firms. At its last congress in 1997, the CCP rejected privatization of the largest enterprises, while agreeing to sell off some of the smallest with a new shareholding arrangements (effectively forced lending). The banking system is insolvent with $600 billion of loans outstanding — its economists breathed a sigh of relief when China avoided the "Asian flu" financial crisis two years ago. Also, the signs are that after playing catch-up, the phenomenal growth rates of the past two decades are now slowing down.

The Communist Party-state is squeezed by the transformation of the countryside and by capitalists from within, and the pressures of the global market from without. Whether the CCP will introduce full-blown capitalism itself, or be swept away by the forces it has unleashed, remains an open question. Undoubted revolutionary possibilities are ahead. Therefore in the current situation, Third Camp socialists have to do everything possible to help the Chinese working class play an independent role, to exploit the loosening of the *Hukou* and turmoil created by the introduction of the market to fight for their own interests. The death of Stalinism in China would be a fitting epitaph to the recent anniversary celebrations, but not if it is replaced simply by the chaotic, bastard-capitalism which Russia has endured over the past decade. Far better for the Chinese working class to rediscover the militant tradition of its youth, when it stood on the threshold of its own revolution, a tradition that has not been snuffed out despite eighty years of brutal domination.

I would like to thank Claire Standring, Sean Matgamna, Martin Thomas, Rosie Woods and Mark Osborne for their observations and comments.

NOTES

1. Abern, Bern, Burnham and Shachtman, [1939], "What Is At Issue in the Dispute on the Russian question? A statement of the position of the minority," in Matgamna, (1998). The term Third Camp is usually associated with the Workers Party and its successors, but that the concept was (and still is) relevant beyond the Cold War dichotomy of Stalinism and capitalism. Clearly there are different nuances and interpretations of the Third Camp, but I find Trotsky's version a most powerful analytical tool.

2. Trotsky, Leon [1927] "Letter to Alsky," in Evans and Block, (1976).

3. Trotsky described Sun Yat-sen's ideas as bourgeois as early as 1924, Trotsky

(1973: 8).

4. For Trotsky's opposition to Stalin see, Lauscher, Hans (1994), "Trotsky and the Guomindang," *Revolutionary History*, 5: 3. See also Trotsky, Leon [1926] "The Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang," and the rejected article, "Class Relations in the Chinese Revolution," [1927] in Evans and Block, (1976). Victor Serge played a leading role in the Left Opposition's work on China during this period.

5. Trotsky's articles on the Sino-Japanese war are also in Evans and Block, (1976). Dissent from these views, especially after 1941, are found in Fanxi, (1991: 204-245), Benton (1996: 78-90), Benton, (1997: 254) and in Shachtman (1942), "China in the World War," *The New International*.

6. A version of Ranger's principal article (1949a) was reprinted in *Workers' Liberty* 58 (1999), as "Where did Chinese Stalinism come from?" Ranger also predicted that a conflict between Russian and Chinese Stalinism — both nationalistic — was inevitable, although he did not believe it would occur immediately. (1949c).

7. "Appeal for Protests Against Mao Terror", *Labor Action*, October 26, 1953. Wang Fanxi discusses the evolution of his own thinking in his memoirs (1991: 255-273). His views on the 1925-27 events, originally an introduction to Trotsky's writings on China published in German, were reprinted in *Workers' Liberty* 12/13 (1989), as "Trotskyism vs Stalinism in the Chinese Revolution." By the late fifties, Wang endorsed the mainstream "Trotskyist" interpretation (albeit critically), that China had become a "deformed workers' state" after 1949. Nevertheless, I believe his early analysis remains a more significant contribution to the understanding of this period in Chinese history.

8. Does this argument imply a "peaceful road" to capitalism? Only in the sense that Lenin defined the Prussian road to capitalism, i.e., that after the failure of the German bourgeoisie to make a revolution in 1848, the Junker state laid the basis for the development of German capitalism. It certainly does not imply an unwinding of the film of reformism backward — China never had a socialist revolution, so there never was a "workers' state" to be overthrown peacefully.

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Cuba Today & Prospects for Change

Samuel Farber

CUBA ENTERED THE NEW MILLENNIUM — although the Cuban government sticks to the strict position that it doesn't actually begin until January 1, 2001 — celebrating the forty-first anniversary of Fidel Castro's arrival to power as leader of the Cuban revolution. This anniversary was celebrated in the midst of the controversy over 6 year old Elian Gonzalez, a survivor of a failed attempt by his mother and several other Cubans to cross the Gulf of Mexico on a raft. This would normally have been a routine custody case according to the legal norms prevailing in Florida and elsewhere; namely, the surviving parent (in this case still living in Cuba) is entitled to custody provided that he or she has maintained an affective relationship and has not engaged in any physical abuse of the child. However, the Miami-based Cuban-American right wing went all out to keep Elian in the United States. The Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) and its hard right-wing congressional allies saw in the Elian case a golden opportunity to recover at least some of the political ground they have lost in the last few years. A series of political events including the death of CANF founder Jorge Mas Canosa, the 1998 visit of the Pope to Cuba, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers coming out against the blockade and, most recently, the important turn of midwestern agribusiness now favoring commercial relations with Cuba, culminating in Illinois Governor George Ryan's visit to the island in 1999, have eroded political support for the blockade, although not to the extent of portending its early demise. The Cuban right wingers are also very interested in controlling their own population, particularly since a significant liberal minority has grown among Cubans in South Florida and the younger generation is not as interested in right-wing politics as their elders.

The Elian case has been colored by hypocrisy and manipulation all around. The U.S. right-wing's proclaimed concern for the human rights of refugees is belied by its indifference, if not outright hostility, to the human rights of the Haitian refugees arriving on the shores of Florida. The Cuban government's claims to defend family reunification is belied by its emigration policies which amount to hostage-taking. These include forbidding Cubans going abroad on cultural or any other missions from taking along their families, forbidding people from traveling abroad for five years in those cases where family members stayed

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abroad without government permission, and charging exorbitant dollar fees to those legally emigrating from the island (there is no recognized *right* to travel in Cuba).

COINCIDENTALLY, I ARRIVED IN CUBA DURING THE ELIAN CONTROVERSY on January 15, 2000 and stayed for two weeks. I was born and raised in Cuba and left the island in early 1958 while the Batista dictatorship was still in power. I last visited the country for one week at the end of 1979 (a few months before the massive exodus from the port of Mariel in the late spring of 1980) and my impressions of that trip were published in two socialist journals.[1]

The Havana metropolitan area that I saw this time is even poorer than the impoverished Havana of 20 years ago. This is the Havana of the "special period," the term used in Cuba to refer to the time elapsed since the collapse of the USSR and the Soviet bloc in the late 80s and early 90s. The combined impact of the U.S. economic blockade and the disappearance of Soviet bloc subsidies brought about a dramatic reduction of economic activity and living standards in Cuba, particularly from 1992 to 1994 when the economy hit bottom. Practically everybody I talked to spoke of the traumatic effect of those two years . Friends told me of having lost from 20 to 30 pounds due to insufficient and inadequate food, a practically collapsed urban transport system, hospitals without anesthetics, antiseptics, medicine. People were often obliged to bring even clean bedding from home. There were frequent and extensive blackouts. In typical good Cuban humor many of my friends spoke of having gone through *alumbrones* instead of *apagones* ("lightups" instead of blackouts).

While the situation is not quite as grave today, the economic crisis remains very serious and Cubans suffer considerable hardship. The most critical areas appear to be shortages of food, medicines, transportation, and the deterioration of the housing stock. The lack of adequate urban transportation is keenly felt by many *habaneros*. I heard of more than one case where people had quit or were thinking of leaving their jobs because of transportation problems. With a bus system in terrible shape, the alternative is the collective taxis paid with pesos (the well organized dollar taxis are out of the question for the overwhelming majority of Cubans). However, one ride in a collective taxi that picks up and drops people along an established route costs 10 pesos, which if taken everyday to go and return from work would amount to more than 400 pesos a month, more than the total monthly salaries of most Cubans. I was told that blackouts are much less frequent, although I experienced a couple of them during the time I was there, notwithstanding the fact that I was staying in the Vedado hotel area which is considered a high priority in the electrical distribution network. In any case, streets are usually pretty dark at night creating not so much a crime problem, but the possibility of accidents caused by streets and sidewalks in poor condition, frequently the result of work done to repair the badly frayed public utility infrastructure and the lack of tar and other materials to properly fill the excavations.

These hardships are especially acute for the anywhere from 40 to 60 percent of the Cuban people with no access to dollars. People living outside Havana and major tourist destinations are less likely to have access to dollars, and so are Black and mulatto[2] Cubans, who probably constitute close to half of the population. Darker skinned Cubans don't have as many relatives abroad and are noticeably underrepresented in the tourist industry where the racially tinged concept of *buena presencia* (good presence or appearance) plays an important role in that sector's employment practices. It should be added that the supply of workers to the tourist industry is managed by the Cuban state and not by its many foreign joint venture partners.

Ever since having dollars was legalized in the summer of 1993, the Cuban economy has become sharply segmented between the dollar and peso sections with an approximate current equivalency of 20 to 22 pesos per dollar. Pesos are good to pay for utilities and other government-provided goods such as the consumption articles distributed through the rationing system, including food. The problem is that the goods provided through the rationing system are not adequate and people are compelled to buy many goods at the free markets which often charge the peso equivalent of dollars, or at the dollar stores. These dollar stores, where practically everything can be purchased, have created a "dollar apartheid" since they do not accept pesos even at the current exchange rate with the dollar. My most unpleasant experience was going to the park in the Vedado section of Havana where the Coppelia ice-cream is sold. Some of the ice-cream kiosks were assigned to pesos and others to dollars. The peso kiosks had long lines of Cubans waiting to be served while at the dollar kiosks there was no wait at all.

No wonder, then, that theft (from both the state and private individuals) and prostitution have flourished in this economic and social environment. There is also an enormous amount of hustling in areas most frequented by tourists, with people offering private taxi services, advertising the small private restaurants ("paladares") allowed by the government, young people pretending that they just want to talk but actually trying to be invited to nightclubs, openly requesting dollars to "buy medicine," and selling cigars (probably stolen and/or fake brands). I was actually never approached by prostitutes probably because I was always accompanied by my wife and perhaps because of the repressive measures against prostitution the government established at the beginning of 1999 (reeducation programs for the first offense and heavy prison sentences for recividism). These rules are enforced by the recently recruited and highly-paid young police force that is very visible in the hotel area. Nevertheless, it appears that prostitution has somehow managed to survive. I frequently saw older Spanish, Italian and other European men coupled with young Cuban women, often of African descent, who could easily have been the age peers of their daughters, and sometimes even of their granddaughters, in restaurants and other tourist spots.

While in 1979 I saw no begging in the streets of Havana, now it can be seen here and there, although always involving old people rather than children. However, the magnitude of this expression of extreme poverty is still small by Latin American standards, something I know first hand since I am a frequent traveler to the capital and other cities in Mexico. Poverty in Cuba is very deep and affects the overwhelming majority of the population including people who would not be poor in most other countries (e.g., most professionals who, as state employees, earn peso incomes and have little if any access to dollars). Yet, while there is plenty of evidence of extreme poverty (in the condition of housing, for example), the great majority of the people of Havana do not look physically miserable or extremely poor.

THE MOST STRIKING DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE HAVANA OF LATE 1979 and the Havana of January 2000 is that in 1979 the physical deterioration of the city was evident everywhere. That is no longer the case. One can now see the *beginning* of a new, renovated Havana, whose continued expansion depends on the prospects of the newly emergent sector of the economy involving the joint ventures with foreign capital, particularly in tourism, those people getting substantial hard currency remittances from abroad, and some of those who are self-employed (still a small sector of the economy involving at most 5% of the labor force). However, the new Havana is confined to "Havana shore" (near the Gulf of Mexico and Port of Havana), to distinguish it from most of the metropolis of two million which I will call "Havana inland."[3] Havana shore includes such areas as the beach resort, Miramar and Vedado neighborhoods. Although the great majority of the buildings are still dilapidated, there is a significant amount of construction, in the form of renovations or new buildings. It is the site of many new hotels and where foreign joint venture firms are establishing headquarters in new office buildings or beautifully restored mansions. I actually witnessed something close to a traffic jam on 23rd Street, the main avenue of the Vedado neighborhood. In Miramar there is the handsome, luxurious Habana Melia hotel (a joint venture with Spanish capital). Right behind it, about one block from the water, two buildings respectively named Jerusalem and Habana are the initial core of the Miramar Trade Center, destined to become the biggest office complex in the island, a Cuban equivalent of London's Canary Wharf. This is a joint venture with the Israeli group, GBM, at the head of which is none other than Rafi Eitan, the former head of an Israeli intelligence organization implicated in the Jonathan Pollard spying case. The same Israeli group is also a participant in another joint venture in central Cuba involving the largest citrus plantation on the island. According to Miramar Trade Center's General Manager Enrique Rottenberg (an Israeli of Argentinian origin), that plantation produces more citrus products than the whole of Israel! He indicated that Jerusalem and Habana are already fully occupied by a wide variety of corporate offices. When I asked him how these substantial investments were compatible with the policies of Israel, one of the few countries still voting with the U.S. in support of the blockade of Cuba at the annual vote at the United Nations, he just answered with a big laugh. Behind him, hanging on the office wall was a picture of him shaking Fidel Castro's hand.

"Havana shore" also includes extensive and substantial renovations in those sections of Old Havana (*Habana Vieja*) that are near the entry of the port of Havana at its northern end. The rest of Old Havana, overcrowded and containing fewer historic monuments, is in wretched physical condition. The renovations in Old Havana are being carried out by the state corporation, Habaguanex, headed by Eusebio Leal, the city's official historian and one of the most important entrepreneurs in the country. Fidel Castro has essentially made Mr. Leal the owner of Old Havana. Leal doesn't answer to any of the usual ministries or to any other bureaucratic layer, only to the Council of State, that is to Fidel Castro, himself. Leal heads a massive project clearly oriented to tourism which claims to be self-financing and thus not dependent on the state budget. It has become the most attractive and interesting part of the whole city drawing on the beauty of the colonial architecture, restored and updated to modern standards of building preservation and museum exhibitions.

While Havana shore development holds the promise of ongoing change, the same cannot be said for Havana inland, which accounts for at least 80 to 85 percent of the metropolitan area's population. It is much more working-class, poorer and dark-skinned than Havana shore. There is little evidence of foreign investment and its inhabitants appear to be getting fewer of the dollars sent from relatives abroad. As it happens, I was born and grew up in Marianao, a predominantly working class district where my Polish Jewish immigrant parents were first shopkeepers and later intermediaries in the garment trade, the approximate equivalent of "jobbers" in the New York garment industry. Several kilometers from the water, smack in the middle of "Havana inland," my visit there was a truly depressing experience: housing deteriorated, no renovations, no new constructions, not even many dollar stores. The turn of the century building that was the site of my parents' clothing store also had a dwelling where six of us lived in three bedrooms, is now subdivided into smaller apartments with many more occupants. Battered by heavy rains and hurricanes, the roof collapsed in one of those apartments and, lacking dollars, there was nothing much the tenants could do about it. True enough, there is no rent to pay and utilities cost very little, but a fallen roof is nevertheless a fallen roof.

POLITICALLY, THE SITUATION ALSO DIFFERS FROM WHAT IT WAS IN LATE 1979. Things seem to have loosened up somewhat even as the overall economic situation has considerably worsened since then. Twenty years ago, I couldn't get anybody to leave me a message at the hotel. That was not a problem on my recent visit. A friend who is a Party member and mid-level government functionary, told me that he had checked with his superiors before contacting me 20 years ago. Apparently, that was not a problem in the year 2000. This time, my presence in the country became the catalyst for a reunion of part of my public high school's graduating class (1956), a quickly organized and very moving affair attended by about 15 classmates, particularly those who had been anti-Batista political activists. This social gathering, including people ranging from those I know are hostile to the regime to one high government functionary, would have been quite unlikely if not inconceivable 20 years ago.

Overall, people are now more willing to express criticism of the government and the system, *in private*. This reflects the substantial decline in support that the government has suffered in recent years. Many of the people I know who were unqualified supporters are now critical and those who were critical are even more so. I am not just referring to those old friends I last saw 20 years ago, but to more recent acquaintances and friends I got to know while they were visiting the U.S. in one or another capacity in recent years. Some who were fully integrated into the system, rather than becoming critics, have become cynical or have distanced themselves from the regime. One friend was much affected by her daughter who, alienated from the regime like so many other young people, left the country. This friend took advantage of the fact that an immigrant grandfather had never given up his original citizenship when he had immigrated to Cuba many decades before the revolution, and acquired double citizenship in the land of her grandfather. This person had held responsible positions involving frequent travel abroad and had not only been a party member (perhaps still is) but had also been the political officer (commissar) for many years in her workplace.

I was aware that most of the people I knew were in their late 50s and early 60s, and although many were of working-class origin, they had benefited from the social mobility provided by the regime and had become state functionaries. Unfortunately, I failed to meet people *currently* in the working class, I had relatively more success in contacting young people through two young Cubans I had met when they came to the U. S. on a visit authorized by the Cuban government. This allowed me to see students, academics and intellectuals who are now allowed a limited degree of cultural autonomy and relatively independent "space,." although not wide or deep enough to develop systematic criticism, let alone political opposition. I was invited to an excellent "tertulia" (cultural gathering) of some 25 people where poetry and short stories were read and music played. Significantly, this "tertulia," reminiscent of the cultural scene in many East European countries during the 70s, took place at an attractive cultural center sponsored by a European government, a liberating experience freed of the usually compulsory Party line laid down from above.

It is apparent that the degree of political alienation among intellectuals, academics and other professionals has grown enormously. This has a material base, since this is a group especially hard hit by the economics of the "special period." Since state employees, doctors, professors, researchers and many other intellectual workers have no access to dollars other than from family members abroad, their standard of living has fallen in the last ten years in absolute and relative terms. What political direction this alienation may take is unclear, but an elitist, pro-capitalist response is, unfortunately, not excluded.

EVERYBODY I TALKED TO, FROM ARDENT SUPPORTERS OF THE REGIME to its harshest critics, was concerned but had no clear idea about what would happen after Fidel Castro's inevitable departure from the scene. All seemed to agree that the slightly younger Raul Castro, who is said to be in poor health and may not outlive his brother, could not fill Fidel's shoes. These doubts and concerns were not just about succession but were also systemic in nature. People saw the socioeconomic system as dependent on the figure of Fidel Castro. This, in itself, constitutes an indictment of the blend of Communism and Latin American "caudillismo" practiced by the Maximum Leader. Related to this is the regime's political, ideological and organizational erosion. The Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) or neighborhood watchdog groups have substantially declined perhaps because their activists are, like practically everybody else in the country, spending every available minute "resolving" (*resolver* is probably the most important verb in Cuban Spanish) the problems of daily survival for themselves and their families on an individual rather than collective basis.

While nationalism has always been a strong component of "Cuban socialism," it became even stronger in the 90s. Because of the relative frankness of people in private conversations, it was possible to have a cautious but still honest political discussion with some of my friends who support the government. When confronted with my objections to the one-party state none of them argued in terms of the government's Stalinist perversion of Marxism or socialism. Instead, they rationalized the one-party state as the necessary defense against U.S. imperialism and the Cuban-American right wing. Aside from the profoundly undemocratic assumption that a society cannot defend itself unless it suppresses internal differences and dissent, this argument supporting the existing political system ignores the deeply corrosive and corrupting effect that the one-party system has on Cuban society. To the extent that people increasingly take refuge in the double morality — "socialism" in public to stay out of trouble and capitalism in daily life to resolve one's problems — people don't openly express their true feelings, which are thus not available for public clarification. Moreover, the frustration born of the inability to organize independently on behalf of one's grievances inevitably leads to political disengagement, cynicism and economic inefficiency that will exact their social costs in the long run, if not immediately.

In this context, it is also important to point out that the very real and substantial economic damage caused by the criminal U.S. blockade hides, from the eyes of government supporters, the no less important economic damage resulting from a highly bureaucratic system that is inherently inefficient and wasteful in industry and even more so in agriculture. In any case, these encounters confirmed my long standing belief that the blockade has been criminally wrong, not only on principled anti-imperialist grounds but also because it has become the principal source of whatever political support the Cuban regime still has. Although lifting the blockade would not suddenly convert Fidel Castro and his close associates into convinced democrats, it would drastically undermine the government's political legitimacy and thus provoke a serious political crisis unless some major democratizing political changes took place.

Cuban nationalism as a source of support for the regime has replaced the regime's previous claims to Marxism and socialism. Perhaps the strongest supporter of the regime I met was a highly articulate journalist in his early 50s who admires Fidel Castro so much ("one of the towering figures of the 20th century along with such other world leaders as DeGaulle and Churchill") that he told me he would have declined if assigned to interview Castro since he would have been unable to ask him anything other than very easy questions. Yet, when asked about what kind of a post-Castro Cuba he would like to see, the journalist laid out the outlines of what he called a "mixed economy" with a much greater role for small and even medium private enterprise. This perspective for Cuba's future would be thoroughly rejected by his much admired Fidel Castro. Whether fully aware of it or not, the journalist represents a tendency within the regime whose expression has so far been suppressed by both the nature of the social and political system and by Fidel Castro's leadership.

NOTWITHSTANDING THE RELATIVELY RELAXED POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE compared to 20 years ago, the regime remains repressive and maintains powerful totalitarian-type[4] controls over Cuban society. Dissidents continue to be systematically harassed, if not jailed by the government under such commonly used charges as "contempt" and spreading "enemy propaganda," which clearly constitute "crimes" of opinion. The government offensive against dissidents has become particularly severe since the Ibero-American Summit that took place in Havana in November, 1999.[5] During my stay in Havana, several friends mentioned how they had been personally affected by various totalitarian political measures taken by the government. One, an engineer, was prevented from organizing a non-political association to discuss technical problems in his industry because it would have been an organization not initiated and controlled by the Cuban Communist Party. Others mentioned problems with the use of the Internet. Practically everybody who has access to computers in Cuba has it through their workplaces (even if private computers were allowed to be imported, they would still be prohibitively expensive). The government recently compelled friends who are among those users to sign a statement affirming that they would only use email and the Internet for strictly business matters and would refrain from using them for any non-business or personal purposes. Ironically, the people who can escape such a prohibition with some ease are those working for joint ventures where the servers are located abroad in places like Montreal, Toronto and Madrid. When I mentioned to one of my friends who complained about restrictions on the use of the Internet that this mode of communication had played an important role in the 1989 Chinese student movement, she commented "you can be sure that Chinese historical experience has been well studied by the authorities here in Cuba."

The Case of Haroldo Dilla

ON MARCH 27, 1996 THE COMMUNIST PARTY DAILY *Granma* published a report of the Political Bureau of the Cuban Communist Party that had been approved by the Fifth Plenum of the Party's Central Committee. This report contained a violent attack on the CEA or Centro de Estudios Sobre America - Center for Studies of America (meaning the continent), a well-known and reputable academic Party think tank staffed entirely by Party members. The members of this think tank had apparently strayed too far. While remaining politically loyal to the system, they had proposed ideas that, in some cases, could be defined as "market socialist."[6] During the Spring of 1996 there were fears that at least some of the CEA members might end up in prison. The sudden death of one of those accused, and strong international pressure, much of it organized by supporters of the Cuban regime abroad, led to less drastic measures. The Center was radically reorganized, the group of offenders was dissolved and its members were dispersed to a wide variety of academic and intellectual institutions. While none of them was expelled from the Party, at the time, it is fair to say that they have since kept a low profile. One notable exception is the social scientist Haroldo Dilla, who is best known for his studies of political participation in Cuba's municipalities. He continued to write as if nothing had happened in 1996, and began to advocate the risky notion of developing a pluralist Communist Party representing the diversity of interests actually existing in Cuban society. Dilla also maintains that "whether or not this pluralism will lead to a multiparty system is a question that the dynamic of the political process itself should decide…but never should a pluralist political design — single or multiparty — acquiesce in the face of the U.S.'s historic pretension to be an internal actor in Cuba's national politics."[7]

Having read and heard about Dilla, I visited him at home in a Havana suburb where he lives with his wife and daughter. Dilla told me that he had last worked in the Institute of Philosophy where things had become so difficult for him that he was eventually fired. He was reinstated after challenging the firing in a labor court, but resigned immediately afterward because of the enormous difficulties he faced in that institution. He is currently jobless and after Communist Party hearings, was expelled from the Party (a decision he is currently appealing). According to Dilla, the expulsion was based on three charges: that he favored foreign intervention in Cuba, that he advocated a multiparty system, and that he had questioned and doubted the capacity and willingness of the current political leadership to solve the problems of the country. The Party authorities also denied him the right to leave the country for five years, a direct blow to his employment opportunities since he had just been offered a position in the Dominican Republic. Since I was curious about the formal jurisdiction of the Party on emigration matters, Dilla explained that such party decisions are routinely affirmed and sanctioned by the Ministry of Interior (MININT) that does have the formal authority on such questions. Finally, I should note that Haroldo Dilla has no connection to dissident circles and that he has quite consciously tried to operate and function within the established boundaries of the system.

The Road Ahead

EVIDENTLY, THE COLLAPSE OF THE USSR AND THE SOVIET BLOC, combined with the U.S. blockade, have had a powerful impact over Cuba's economy and society. Even those social services given priority by the regime, such as education and health, have been seriously affected by the crisis. In response to the economy touching bottom in 1992, the dollar was legalized in the summer of 1993. This action, in the context of a still very serious economic crisis, has produced a situation where the dollar remittances from Cubans abroad — close to a billion dollars a year — has become, with tourism and sugar, one of the three principal elements of the Cuban economy. Self-employment and very small private enterprises have also been allowed but with many restrictions (only relatives can be hired) and frequent harassment. Far more important has been the opening to foreign capital in tourism and other fields, although almost always in the form of joint ventures with the Cuban government. While the regime has allowed a certain amount of economic change, it has not permitted any significant institutional change in the political realm, where it has maintained all its principal controls. This became evident at the beginning of 1999 with the new legislation against political dissent and the trial and imprisonment of Vladimiro Roca (son of the old Communist leader Blas Roca) and three of his collaborators for a clear political "crime" of opinion.[8]

These economic and political decisions point toward the creation of what I have called a modified Chinese regime. As in China, the regime is combining a hard line in the political realm with an economic opening in the general direction of market economics. But in contrast to the Chinese model, the Cuban government has gone nowhere as far in privatizing the economy, particularly when it has sharply limited the ability of native Cuban citizens to participate in market activities as *private individuals*. At the same time, the growing and dynamic joint venture sector of the economy has encouraged the growth of an important number of Cubans actively involved in the domestic and international business world in their capacity as *state functionaries*. This is also the case with a number of semi-capitalist enterprises established by the Cuban state particularly in the tourism sector (e.g., Eusebio Leal's Habaguanex, Havanatur, Cubalse, and the Army's tourist enterprise, Gaviota). It is very hard to believe that this new and important economic sector does not or will not soon have a distinct perspective on how the Cuban economy and society should be organized, a perspective that will surely emerge in an open and perhaps dominating position when Fidel

Castro will no longer be around to silence it. If nothing else, the experiences of the former Soviet bloc and China suggest that this sector will opt for greater economic inequality and will not be unduly concerned with the restoration and preservation of democratic rights. One can already see the influence of this business sector, for example, in the modernization of the telephone system which has been prioritized over many other needs exactly as is the case in many other Latin American countries trying to create a favorable climate for foreign investment.

The emerging, dynamic sector of the economy will probably find support in some important current trends in Cuban society. Among them, the growing importance of capitalist values and culture. In Cuba as elsewhere, what cannot be expressed politically, is revealed in new trends in popular values and culture. What conclusions are being drawn from the fact that it is dollars, in many cases coming from the exiles in southern Florida, that allow people to "resolve" their daily needs? What lessons are learned from the fact that it is the free peasant markets and the *paladares* (small private restaurants), and not the government ration book, that "resolve" what some people jokingly refer to as the three principal shortcomings of "socialism": breakfast, lunch and dinner? Similarly, what do people conclude from the fact that the most desirable jobs are in the joint venture enterprises with foreign capital, particularly in the tourist sector? The advance of capitalism in Cuban culture is most noticeable among the young. In this context, it is precisely the government's monopoly of information and discussion that, aside from being grossly undemocratic, makes it more and more ineffective in the realm of ideas and culture.

AS MUCH AS FIDEL CASTRO CLAIMS EXPERTISE IN ALL THINGS, from agriculture and cattle-raising to biotechnology and grand military strategy, he has not yet been able to overcome the limitations imposed by nature, that life remains finite, even for the Maximum Leader. It is questionable that his successor will be able to maintain the regime's internal cohesion. It is also likely that his heirs will view capitalism, or at least some form of state capitalism, more positively. Here, it is important to underline the major institutional role and power of the military. Aside from controlling several key ministries (e.g., Interior and Sugar), the military has shown a great interest in participating in the new, emerging sectors of the economy as is the case with the above-mentioned Gaviota enterprise in the expanding tourist industry. The Armed Forces also constitute the most effective institution in today's Cuba. It is plausible that in post-Castro Cuba, this military leadership could reach an accord with U.S. imperialism, and even with the less belligerent sectors of Cuban capital abroad with the hope of achieving a peaceful and minimally democratic transition. Admittedly, this is speculative. There is also the possibility that Fidel Castro's death will bring about a collapse of the system, civil war and chaos although this appears less likely given the strength demonstrated by the Cuban state apparatus' ability to withstand the grave economic crisis of the nineties.

What are the possibilities for a successful democratic alternative? The regime's monolithism and repression are the principal obstacles to the development of independent rank-and-file organizations such as authentic unions (as opposed to the official unions that act primarily as state organs and transmission belts for the ruling Communist Party). Thus, the need for independent organization does not just involve an elementary democratic demand for today's defense against the one-party state Leviathan, but also constitutes a last chance to revive the self-organizational capacities of the Cuban working class and its potential allies for the defense of their long term class interests and for the defense of Cuba's national self-determination against U.S. imperialism.

NOTES

1. Samuel Farber, "Going Home to Cuba," *Critique* (Glasgow, Scotland), No. 13, 1981, pp. 138-150, and "A Look at Cuba Today," *Changes, July/August 1980, pp13-21*

2. These are the racial classifications used by the overwhelming majority of Cubans of all races, not my own.

3. This is a broad and imperfect generalization. Thus there are areas near the famous Malecon bordering the shore that are as badly off as what I have called Havana inland. It is significant, however, that the government is currently engaged in a project of painting the facade of buildings facing the Malecon. This project is being financed by donations from various Spanish regional governments.

4. I am using the term "totalitarian" to mean the attempt by the state to control, as much as possible, the entire social and political life of a society.

5. Amnesty International, "Cuba. 11 remain in detention following government crackdown on dissent during the Ibero-American Summit in Havana," January 31, 2000, AI Index: AMR 25/02/00 Distr: SC/CO/GR. (London, U.K.)

6. See, along these lines, what is also likely to be the most important of the many studies produced by the Center: Julio Carranza Valdes, Luis Gutierrez Urdaneta and Pedro Monreal Gonzalez, *Cuba. La reestructuracion de la economia. Una propuesta para el debate* Caracas, Venezuela: Editorial Nueva Sociedad, 1997. For a useful account of the CEA affair see Maurizio Giuliano, *El CASO CEA. Intelectuales e Inquisidores en Cuba. Perestroika en la Isla?* Miami, Florida: Ediciones Universal, 1998.

7. Haroldo Dilla Alfonso, "Apuntes Sobre Gobernabilidad Y Democracia en Cuba," Unpublished Manuscript, December 1999, p. 31 (my translation).

8. For a detailed discussion of the new legislation and of the Roca case see Human Rights Watch, *Cuba's Repressive Machinery. Human Rights Forty Years After the Revolution*, New York: Human Rights Watch, June 1999, pp. 62-65 and 70-73.

William Briggs 1917-1999

On the last day of December 1999, after more than 65 years of activity in the Socialist Party, William Briggs passed away. Bill was a member of the National Committee of the Socialist Party for many years and was also the SP spokesperson in Southern California in the 50s and 60s. He appeared on a number of local radio and television programs in discussions and debates defending the ideals of socialism. He was a sponsor of *New Politics*.

Bill was a man liked by everyone for his logical mind and humanitarian spirit. He touched many peoples' lives and will be sorely missed. He will be remembered by his wife, Mae, son Bob, and his three grandchildren for his faith in the goodness of people and the need for all of us to strive to make this a better world.

Hungary: Knocking on Europe's Door

László Andor

EXPANSION TO THE EAST MAY BE THE GREATEST CHALLENGE for the European Union (EU) in the first decade of the new millennium. In 1997, the EU nominated five former state socialist countries as potential candidates for entry, and at the end of 1999 another five governments were invited to start entry negotiations. From the perspective of the West, Hungary has usually been considered a likely nominee for the first round of eastward enlargement, since it is one of the best pupils, perhaps even the best, in market reforms and capitalist restoration. This position, however, obscures the tendencies of social decline and political degeneration that accompanied the transition from state socialism. These social, political and environmental problems are likely to cause hesitation and conflicts when entrance into the EU arrives at a practical phase. Without a more progressive Western attitude, however, the difficulties can only deepen, even in the best performing countries of the region.

The Uneven Triumph of Neoliberalism

OUT OF THE FORMER "SOCIALIST" COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE, Hungary has been the only one where governments elected since 1989 have always fulfilled their terms in office. This has usually been taken as a sign of political stability. However, no government in Hungary in the last ten years has managed to get re-elected, a sign of dissatisfaction with all the ruling parties and with the limited opportunities given by the so-called transition to the market economy.

In the most recent case, a Socialist-Liberal coalition government was thrown out in 1988 by the electorate, though only marginally, after receiving the highest awards for neoliberal restructuring from Western institutions like the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the EU. The Socialist-Liberal government had cut real wages by 10 percent in 1995, abolished a good part of the universal welfare benefits inherited from the state socialist era, introduced tuition fees in higher education, privatized commercial banks and public utilities, and launched a pension reform along the guidelines of the World Bank. These policies brought alleged rewards for the country such as an agreement with the IMF and membership in the OECD in 1996, as well as invitations in the summer of 1997 to join NATO (also invited were the Czech Republic and Poland) and to start membership talks with the EU.

But the Hungarian public did not rate the performance of Gyula Horn's

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administration with the same zeal as the international financial community. In May 1998, the general disappointment brought the party of Viktor Orbán, the Hungarian Civic Party (MPP, also known as the Young Democrats, or Fidesz), into power (see Andor 1998). A liberal party of the youth ten years before, Fidesz triumphed in 1988 by condemning the policies of the IMF, the tacit alliance between international finance and the ex-Communist nomenklatura, not to mention the multinational corporations that had seized the best segments of the Hungarian industry and markets.

According to the neoliberal discourse that determined the course of the transformation in the 1990s, market reform and transition to representative democracy were supposed to be the road to economic and social revival. The success stories that fill much of the liberal media today focus on the progress in institutional transformation, such as the number of private firms, the capitalization of stock markets, the share of the private sector in production, and the share of the multinational corporations in exports, instead of actual economic performance or data on living standards. Once we pay attention to the latter, we find that in the experience of the people of Central and Eastern Europe, the last decade has been a period of ongoing decline, if not collapse, with little likelihood of recovery any time soon. Obviously, this was a regional trend with roots in the pre-1989 era.

Transition and Destruction after 1990

TEN YEARS AFTER THE SO-CALLED TRANSITION BEGAN, even the leading politicians and advisors of the early 1990s have admitted that the optimism of the new political elite was largely unfounded in Hungary and in the rest of the region as well. Instead of reaching West European income levels and living standards, the region experienced accelerated relative decline after 1989. Gross domestic product dropped by some 20 percent even in the most successful former socialist countries. Only Poland managed to surpass its 1989 GDP level ten years after the transition began, while Hungary, like Slovenia and Slovakia, came very close to the 1989 level at the end of the 1990s.

Joseph Schumpeter would have been surprised to see how uncreative the destruction of the state socialist system was in Central and Eastern Europe. The Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (better known as the Comecon) was abolished in 1991 because Central European reformers believed it had no advantages for their economies. However, the disruption of trade relations left many Central and Eastern European companies without effective demand, and the lack of alternative export markets brought large productive sectors to bankruptcy. In most former state socialist countries, price liberalization took place when monopolistic state companies were still largly intact, which was a major source of inflation. The impact was similar when entire industries were sold to a single foreign owner, as in the case of the Hungarian sugar and seed oil industries. Privatization was supposed to be the magic policy to help revive the ailing post-socialist economies, but most of the advantages of the new private sector derived from layoffs and tax breaks for new entrepreneurs and multinational investors. A proportional restitution scheme that gave vouchers for former owners and concluded with auctions for the land created an era of uncertainty in Hungarian agriculture, formerly very successful. The lack of solid business prospects killed investment in this sector and the volume of grain produced, to take but one example, fell to one-third of the previous level as a result.

Innovative thinkers who proposed alternatives to this madness were silenced and stigmatized, including even the very influential George Soros, who in the 1989-1990 period put forward the idea of a regional payment union and large-scale debt relief. Two legislative acts in 1991 paralyzed and intimidated the major trade union federations of Hungary, whose overall membership declined to one-third of the 1989 level. Thus they could not mobilize serious resistance to the ongoing austerity throughout the 1990s. It seems the Hungarian people took representative democracy seriously, and did not often express their political discontent in between parliamentary elections. When elections came, however, that party which promised the greater level of social protection won.

In 1990, the question was whether the aggressively anti-communist and uncompromisingly free-market oriented Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ) or the calm and moderate Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) should form a government. A plurality voted for the latter. MDF, however, went along with the highly unpopular World Bank and IMF adjustment programs snd thereby suffered a meltdown of its popular support. As a result, the reconstituted former Communists, or the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP), won an absolute parliamentary majority in 1994. Voters expected the Socialists to maintain at least part of the social protection the working people enjoyed before 1990. Instead, MSZP formed a coalition with SZDSZ that imposed heavy austerity. It was caught in a major corruption scandal, too. Thus, the 1998 elections went to the untested Fidesz, which used anti-capitalist and anti-Western demagoguery to appeal to victims of the transition.

Despite the economic recovery that started after 1996, most people felt themselves to be on the losing side of the transition. At the core was the unemployed, a group that just marginally existed before 1989. The official average unemployment rate reached its peak in 1993 at 13 percent, and remained just below 10 percent afterward. Since, however, almost the same percentage of people withdrew from the active labor force — taking early retirement or permanent disability leave, or returning to the household — the official figure hides the fact that the fully employed part of the potentially active population fell to an extremely low level: just above 50 percent. The collapse of employment and incomes in working-class families gave rise to a new poverty. According to the late sociologist Rudolf Andorka, about 15 percent of the population lived below the poverty line in 1991, rising to 35-40 percent after 1995 (Andorka 1997). The transition showed in the death toll, too, though not so drastically as in Russia. In the early 1990s, life expectancy hit bottom at 64 years for men and 74 years for women, with only negligible improvement in subsequent years. Among the victims of the transition, the first and foremost single group was Hungary's Roma, or gypsies, an ethnic minority amounting to some 6 percent of the population who live in large families in mainly rural or de-industrialized regions. The Roma suffered from the devaluation of social benefits in addition to the loss of jobs and the rise of anti-gypsy prejudice, discrimination, and attacks.

The Orbán government, in other words, let down the victims of the new capitalism, just like all other populist parties that come to power on the shoulder of the nationalist bourgeoisie. Instead of compensating the losers, the Fidesz policies have favored those who have been benefiting but think they should win even more from privatization and the reallocation of income. Fidesz reduced the upper rate of income tax to 40 percent and introduced tax breaks for families with children (a benefit only to those with medium or high incomes) while devaluing the family allowance (which goes to every child, including the Roma).

Cultural Conservatism in Hungary

TAKING MANY OF HIS FORMER SUPPORTERS BY SURPRISE, Orbán, the second youngest Hungarian prime minister of the century, has embraced all the trappings of Hungarian conservatism. Appropriately enough, in the year 2000, Hungarians will celebrate the one thousandth anniversary of the founding of the Hungarian kingdom by Saint Stephen. Though Hungary was proclamed to be a republic in 1918, and again in 1946, the nation still considers the year 1000 to be the foundation of the Hungarian state. In 1990, when the post-communist Hungarian Republic chose its new symbols and holidays, August 20, the date Saint Stephen was made king, was designated the main national holiday. As a matter of fact, August 20 had been celebrated under the Communist regime, too, though it was dubbed, with reference to the harvest season, the "holiday of new bread" or, more politically, the "holiday of the worker-peasant alliance."

The past decade has already provided a millennial celebration for the Hungarians. Four years ago, the nation was supposed to celebrate the 1100th anniversary ("millecentenarium") of the conquest, that is, the arrival of the ancient Magyar tribes into the Carpathian basin which forms the topography of Hungary. One hundred years before, in 1896, the anniversary was the occasion for a major cultural and political celebration. By remembering the conquest of the country, the rapidly industrializing semi-bourgeois Hungary celebrated itself, and so did Budapest, the capital that started to compare itself to Vienna, Rome, and Paris in architecture and cultural achievement as well as economic performance.

In 1996, just emerging from an economic shock treatment that eliminated ten percent of real wages in one year, Hungarians did not feel in the mood to celebrate. The contrast between 1896 and 1996 could not be sharper. In 1896, there was a massive boom in the construction of Budapest, including the development of Heroes' Square, the first subway on the continent, and the house of Parliament. The year 1996, on the contrary, had to witness the cancellation of the World Expo that was first planned as a joint project of Vienna and Budapest, and later as an extraordinary opportunity for Hungarian science and industry to seize global attention. Even *The Economist* observed that it was strange to note such a glorious anniversary with so much gloom and ignorance.

The Orbán government wanted the millennium to be much more cheerful than the millecentenarium. A major theme of political discourse in the last two years has been the right location for the crown of Saint Stephen, which has been held in the National Museum since its return to Hungary. (At the end of World War Two, the crown was taken out of the country, along with other royal jewelry, by the Hungarian fascists. It was held for three decades in the United States until it was brought back by Secretary of State Cyrus Vance in 1978, on the condition that it would rest in the museum, without political function.) The millennium commissioner of the Orbán government proposed that in the year 2000 the crown jewelry should be conveyed around the country so that people would see it. Due to the expected costs of transportation, guards, and insurance, an alternative was proposed: that visitors to the crown from outlying areas be sponsored by the state.

The government also proposed that for the millennial year the crown should be exhibited in the house of Parliament, and later moved to the old royal castle in the hills rising above the Danube, rather than the National Museum.

The revival of the cult of Saint Stephen and its monarchist overtones is dangerously reminiscent of the interwar years, when the very same ideological basis was used by the reactionary ruling classes to oppose the Versailles peace treaties and to reclaim lands of the Hungarian crown given to Romania, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Austria by the Entente. In addition to this creeping irredentism, key advisors to the prime minister engaged in openly anti-Semitic discourse. Even the rehabilitation of some major war criminals from Hungary's fascist wartime regime was contemplated.

East and West

AFTER WORLD WAR I, the Western powers openly humiliated Hungary and other defeated nations. After the end of the Cold War, the expectations and promises were different. The Western community, including the EU, has been seemingly supportive, and moments of generosity have received a good deal of attention and media coverage. Indeed, the European Community launched the so-called Phare program for the assistance of democratization and economic reforms in Poland and Hungary in 1989, before the fall of the Berlin Wall. Association agreements were then made with ten former socialist countries. A thorough screening of these potential EU member states followed, and eventually talks on accession began in 1998 with Hungary, Estonia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovenia, and Cyprus.

However, assistance and inspiration on one side were coupled with ignorance and exploitation on the other. Even some leading neo-liberal experts of the region, like Timothy Garton Ash and Jeffrey Sachs, have been criticizing Western ignorance in relation to Central and Eastern European countries (see, for example, Sachs 1999).

This two-faced Western attitude applied to the European Union as well as other organizations. The EU established free trade agreements with the former socialist countries in the 1991-1993 period, when the supply side of their economies had just collapsed due to IMF austerity and World Bank structural adjustment. So the EU managed to dump all sorts of consumer goods and financial services on the former Comecon countries, while protecting itself against so-called sensitive products and the potential inflow of labor. Thus, EU countries built up a massive trade surplus vis-a-vis Central and Eastern Europe, including Hungary (Inotai 1995), whose chronic current account deficit has only been compensated by the inflow of foreign capital. (Hungary has been the leading recipient of foreign capital flows to Central and Eastern Europe in absolute numbers until the mid-1990s and in cumulative value per capita ever since. Since the beginning of transition, close to $20 billion in foreign capital investment arrived in Hungary, a country of ten million people.)

Phare aid has been largely used to prepare and assist the inward march of Western investment, without an assessment of the social needs of the target countries. The destruction of Hungarian agriculture in the early 1990s was also partly EC-inspired, inasmuch as representatives of French agriculture told the Hungarian government that they would not support Hungary's accession into the EU so long as they see the country as a potential rival in food and agriculture exports. Thus the right-wing Hungarian government of the time was even more enthusiastic about implementing its disastrous rural policy that disrupted the collective and state farm system and eliminated a third of the agricultural production of the country, just as the Eastern trade problems hit the hardest.

While much of the adjustment was justified by references to EU requirements, the date of future EU membership was postponed again and again. In 1990, it was officially expected to occur in 1996. At the end of 1999, a delayed target of 2002 was quietly abandoned. While Hungary has been praised by the EU and World Bank, the working people of the country did not notice any improvement in their living standards. Orbán, however, as chairman of the European integration committee of the Hungarian parliament in 1994-1998, proved to be the only one among the major party leaders to criticize the EU, pledging that his government would represent the Hungarian interest in accession talks (implying that the Socialist-Liberal coalition did not do that).

Ironically, although the apparent social misery gave rise to a nationalist electoral outburst, it did not severely undermine the general respect for the EU and the West in Hungary. Compared to the Czech Republic, where membership in the EU has never been very popular, and Poland, where the popularity of EU accession started to decline sharply in 1999, more than two-thirds of Hungarians clearly favor joining the EU. Despite all the disappointments, the EU still represents a promise of higher living standards to Hungarian people. Most Hungarians hope to live as part of a federal European state in the next millennium.

Costs of Delay

WHEN A REFERENDUM WAS HELD ON HUNGARY'S MEMBERSHIP IN NATO in November 1997, the advocates of NATO accession argued that membership in the military organization could accelerate, or even guarantee, membership in the European Union. In reality, however, NATO membership has contributed to a significant slowdown of the enlargement of the EU. First, the countries of the region are not considered to be helpless any longer. Once NATO is here to provide stability, EU officials in Brussels do not feel a great urgency to expand the union for the same function. Second, NATO membership for former socialist countries means that military expenditures must be increased in a steady way, out of the same funds that could otherwise be used to accelerate the structural reform necessary for EU accession. Third, the enlargement of NATO has increased the Atlantic military alliance and the geostrategic role of the United States in Central Europe. This encouraged the U.S. government to impose a violent solution to the Kosovo crisis, as a result of which Central Europe became a zone of conflict with substantial war damage and cross-border hostilities. The Yugoslav situation affects all the surrounding countries, including Hungary, in many ways.

Furthermore, this year another negative externality emerged for the countries of Central Europe in the person of Jörg Haider. The far right leader whose party became a junior partner in the Austrian government of Wolfgang Schüssel has made it clear several times that he opposes the prevailing course of European integration as well as the forthcoming enlargement of the EU to the east. Haider's Freedom Party managed to be the second largest force in the 1999 general elections because of the general anti-immigrant mood in Austria, despite the country's relative freedom from economic crisis or substantial joblessness in European terms. When the right-wing government was formed, Haider claimed that it would not oppose the enlargement of the EU but would seek to require that would-be members increase their real wages to the EU average. If we take into account that in recent years most of the international European discourse has taken it for granted that the first enlargement round would take place some time between 2002 and 2004, and that Hungary would be in that first round, Haider's message is identical with a straight rejection of eastward enlargement.

Meanwhile, Hungary's own right-wing government under the leadership of Orbán appeared as one of the least critical governments in Europe toward the new administration of Austria. Taking into account that the electorate of Switzerland already made a shift toward the far right, and that Bavaria has had a solid rightwing government, we are now witnessing the emergence of a new Alpine populism. A Stoiber-Schüssel-Orbán Axis (Tamás 2000) is emerging, one that could well evolve into an alternative power center to the internationalist Brussels core. Such a formation may powerfully express xenophobic and anti-enlargement voices within the EU and demonstrate at the same time that Central Europe is not in line with the political criteria of EU accession, so that the latter should be taken off the agenda.

The costs of delay in eastward EU enlargement are now apparent on two fronts, economic and political. The economic repercussions are such that applicant countries may not be able to sustain their hoped-for convergence with Western levels without the substantial external assistance they have sought. The degree of economic convergence of the last five years has been achieved on the ruins of the state socialist economy and society, and the short-term results were produced in the late 1990s at the cost of substantial social and environmental damage. It is often proposed that if the applicants cannot demonstrate full readiness for EU membership, they should spend some more time preparing. This is, however, a mistaken logic. Further delay of enlargement would not facilitate better preparation but the exhaustion of the self-produced convergence instead. And the impossibility of economic consolidation would serve as a case for abandoning enlargement.

Equally threatening are the political costs of further delay. If the EU does not make decisive steps towards enlargement in the foreseeable future, the end result will be the further weakening in the domestic positions of internationalist forces and finally the exclusion of the former socialist countries behind a new Iron Curtain á la Schengen. In this case, a new division of Europe would emerge for the following decades, and this time the responsibility of the West for that could not be displaced onto the Georgian man with the big moustache.

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Film Review

Fourth and Six Inches To Go: Oliver Stone's "Any Given Sunday"

Kurt Jacobsen

SAY WHAT YOU WILL ABOUT OLIVER STONE but no other American director has insinuated a pungent leftist view so successfully into mass market films. For his cinematic escapades (most incendiarily, *JFK*) Stone drew the twittery wrath of the pundit corps — and some dismayed lefties — who denounced him as a paranoid, a phony and a zany flake. Stone survived the scorn and, even more annoying to envious foes, emerged as a *People Magazine* icon too. It was as if the weirder one of the Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers suddenly leaped off the underground comics page and conquered Hollywood. Whatever is the world coming to?

In America, after all, gifted radicals routinely are marooned on the frugal fringes of the film biz or else, upon gaining a foothold on its giddy heights, gratefully go straight. Many an independent filmmaker garbed in a designer sneer and black leather gear cleaned up her act the instant she got a crack at a lavish Hollywood budget. Yet Stone looks like the real thing — a tenacious rebel with talent to burn who cannily infiltrated his mordant vision into this craziest of capitalist industries where, as screenwriter William Goldman indiscreetly disclosed, "nobody knows anything" about making hit movies. As a callow infantryman prowling around Vietnam Stone says that he "really saw life smack in front of my face." After that, "how do you go back to believing what they [authorities] tell you?"

Stone hit his artistic stride in 1986 with *Salvador*, a masterfully manic critique of US complicity in Central American atrocities, and *Platoon*, the spectacular start of his Vietnam trilogy. Soon he targeted "greed-is-good" *Wall Street*, contemporary anomie in *Talk Radio*, went way too easy on the lord of misrule in *Nixon*, lampooned media myopia (*Natural Born Killers*), and in *JFK* made up a bit of his own malarkey in order to challenge the "lone gunman" theory but even more so to flush out the sinister nature of the national security state in which most Americans obliviously reside. Give him credit. When other film makers typically take refuge in woolly-headed denouements — Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* blaming American misdeeds on psychic jungle rot or Neil Jordan's *Angel* boiling the Ulster "troubles" down to poetic personal feuds — Stone kept a steady bead on the predatory system that (in *Nixon*) he dubbed the "beast."

How does he get away with it? Good story-telling. His protagonists usually are confused, cranky and oftimes comic characters who come to terms with their own ample faults in the process of prying themselves out of the webs of power in

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which they are entangled. Stone also relies on pyrotechnic editing to save himself from churning out clumsy tracts. Mostly, it works. He's got reason to be unrepentant although lately he seems worn down. "It doesn't excite my passion to unveil corruption anymore," he confessed to a plainly gleeful *New York Times* scribe. "It's apparent everywhere around us. It's just part of life. I realize I can't do anything about it. It's there, it's always going to be there." Three box office flops in four tries did not elevate his mood. Yet, after a film noire interlude (the grotty little gem *U-Turn*), Stone gingerly approached one of the beast's many lairs again — this time the "bread and circuses" NFL where cave man masculinity confronts cold corporate wiles. There are juicy pickings here — celebrity, ambition, Caligula-like owners, drugs, hypocrisy — that were skewered deftly in *North Dallas Forty* two decades ago. Is it worth doing again?

OPEN ON A RAINY NIGHT GAME WHERE COACH D'AMATO (Al Pacino) is nursing his Miami Sharks, after a 7-2 season start, through a rash of injuries, team dissension, and a four game losing streak. His star quarterback (Dennis Quaid) has just been snapped in two, the second string QB is practically palsied, and the third stringer vomits every time he crosses a chalk line. A play-off berth looks like a mirage. Third stringer Willie Beamon tosses a go-ahead touchdown strike but a last minute fumble blows the game anyway. Dejected players kneel for an obligatory prayer but nothing less than a trip to Lourdes is likely to help. The players, of course, are mostly working class — or luridly lumpen — and volatile as hell.They shower with live alligators. Under an unholy blend of stress, steroids and bad bounces they soon descend from the cool camaraderie of well-paid chattel into an epidemic of brutal bickering. The team is like, well, a platoon.

Despite the trappings of rap music, modern duds and Range Rovers, Stone's film has a defiantly old-fashioned feel. I half-expected my old high school coach to trot out, an unlit stogie clamped between his yellow teeth, hollering "Make it hurt!" No act that does not inflict pain on oneself as well as on an opponent could possibly be a manly one.

Warriorhood is all. Yet this hoary theme sits very uneasily with the actualities of pro sports. These pneumatically muscled fellows, no matter how well paid, are disposable labor. "Warrior" in some circles is a good word (signifying someone who risks or sacrifices themselves for the community); "mercenary" never is. The fact that these players, whether they like it or not, are plainly mercenaries is a sticky problem that Stone sidesteps. Instead, he plays along with warrior myths — unable to resist a shot of blocking sled posts framed like blood-stained crucifixes against the setting sun. NFL hall of famer Jim Brown plays an assistant coach and adds gravitas to the gladiatorial arena (as do Dick Butkus and Lawrence Taylor). All that the practice scenes lack is a Spartacus outtake of bare-headed Kirk Douglas nimbly weaving his way through a row of swinging iron balls.

Stone's camera hugs the muddy scrimmage line, partly to capture these mighty men battering one other with playbook precision, and partly to hide the fact that few spectators occupy the stands. Close-ups of taped hands blotted with blood are a favorite visual ploy but the trench warfare is not very convincing. In action the players seem diminutive, underpowered and not all that quick. "I thought I would die," a veteran testifies, "when I first got hit in the Pros." The gridiron collisions look like they may sting but the sheer ordinariness of terrific pain doesn't come across (with the exception of a single hospital scene). Amid bursts of flashy editing, the film maintains a strangely dingy "look" as if something sleazy and mean is transpiring beneath the glitter — and there is.

The shaky moral center of this fable is coach D'Amato, an "old school" fossil who wryly summons interpreters for the nineties street slang his players speak. Stone's camera pans momentoes of victories and divorces, the shards of a life of a dedicated man "who gave up everything for football." D'Amato evidently represents a bygone era when pros always did as they were told and worked summer jobs too. Stone inserts ghostly images of leather-helmeted legends and on a desk is a prominent photo of Vince Lombardi grinning beside a younger D'Amato. Lombardi, as I recall, insisted that "winning is everything," which would make him an odd icon to tap for moral guidance. But D'Amato, who spends his own long dark night of the soul with a five grand a throw hooker, is no paragon either. The coach casts a steady mournful gaze on his team as if he knew the precise foibles and fate of each soul: there's nothing new under the spotlights. D'Amato patiently listens as a running back demands more carries in order to pile up impressive numbers and collect endorsement loot. Hey, it's all part of the game. Who can blame these guys? Pro life is short and the dollar is long. Treachery is afoot everywhere and the average sports professional is tip-toeing through more snares and temptations than Saint Anthony.

The owner recently croaked and bequeathed the Sharks to mammon-worshipping yuppie daughter (Carmen Diaz) who is scheming, like any other sane owner, to triple the value of the franchise by coaxing the city to cough up a new stadium. The team doctor (James Woods at his weasely best) shrugs off medical scruples for the glamour and girls that his cushy job brings him. From the mechanically slimy way he treats the athletes — particularly an all-pro linebacker with a deadly condition — you'd think he carried a power tool repair kit instead of a medical bag. The Byzantine plot intersects festering conflicts between management and the coach, owners and the city, coach and his staff and veteran players and the skyrocketing ego of rookie quarterback Willie Beamon. No sooner does Beamon enable the team to make the play-offs than he records a hot music video and becomes toast of the pastel-tinted town. Like Fast Eddie Feldson in *The Hustler* (a different era and a different sport) Beamon needs to learn "character." That's the personal level theme but please excuse the fellow if he is morally addled when even the slick dude with a Harvard medical degree cheerily says the sport is about "BMWs, money and pussy." How else are ghetto boys and working stiffs going to get near nouveau riche goodies without wearing a security guard uniform? There's a larger theme in which *Any Given Sunday* implicitly is embedded. Expendability and exploitability are the twin features of a one-sided work "ethic" that pro sports subtly infuse throughout American culture. Professional athletes play for high stakes — and the risk for them may be worthwhile — but this crass mentality has seeped down over decades into the treatment of employees in every occupation and income level. Why maintain your loyalty to brazenly uncaring employers, is no longer a question that only professional athletes face. Stone opted not to press home this point, but it's there nonetheless.

The better screen moments tend to occur off the field. At a celebration ball the rowdy players and hangers-on busily prey on one other and the star quarterback's wife, her dominance in the wives' pecking order under threat, snubs Beamon's naive girl friend. Later, a scene of this ice queen bucking up her dispirited veteran husband is a nifty little chiller. Then the beautiful yuppie owner strides so assuredly into the locker room that when she meets a nude (and dangling) player you wonder if it is his hand she is going to shake. It's nice to know that interracial dating is approved in the little utopia of the big leagues so long, as Beamon learns when he comes on to the owner, you don't step far out of your class. (The owner cannot even bring herself to say "beer" without a sneer.) Beamon's frothy ego alienates everyone but the media. He shoots off his mouth in a self-absorbed way that so often is mistaken for refreshing candor. An offended team mate chops the rookie's car in half and the Sharks lose home field advantage because his offensive line allow him to get mauled. D'Amato invites sulky Beamon for a tricky philosophical chat about balancing self-interest and team work. Beamon is bitter about being caught in college taking a cheap alumni perk and losing his shot at big pro bucks. How many black quarterbacks are there? How many black coaches or owners are there, he asks? I mean, where's his cut of all the corruption? It's not fair.

D'Amato is never stumped for a reply. Audiences are treated to a speech stemming from Stone's combat tour about those "six inches in front of your face" which, in the heat of battle, become the only reality that matters, a revelatory reality, even a religious experience. D'Amato preaches that there is something redemptive and cleansing about the eerie kind of clarity that comes when your body truly is on the line and you are honest with yourself even when all the rest of the world goes its own wicked way. Nothing necessarily changes but you. But is this Zen-like locker room plea credible enough to hang a whole movie on?

STONE COBBLES TOGETHER A FEEL-GOOD ENDING in which D'Amato outwits his boss, wises up the cocky quarterback and stalks triumphantly off to run an expansion team. It's sappy but it's good box office. You get the impression that this time Stone wasn't much concerned with probing the grim side. (Well, who says he always must?) Economics is treated as a side show instead of the central element it long ago became. On the field sports stay "pure," cocooned inside a money-grubbing machine of financial whims and fair-weather loyalties. Despite it all, the game remains the thing. The skybox elite still glance from time to time at the grubby goings-on on the playing field from their corporate aeries.

Book  Reviews

An Iconoclastic Radical

C. Wright Mills: Letters and Autobiographical Writings edited by Kathryn Mills with Pamela Mills. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000, 378 pp.

Reviewed by Dan Geary

C. Wright Mills was a major intellectual figure of the twentieth century. The author of the classic works *White Collar, The Power Elite,* and *The Sociological Imagination,* Mills was an important critic of American society in an era of postwar complacency and his writings and personal style had a significant influence on members of the New Left. Yet to this day, no serious biography of Mills has been published and there is much that remains to be learned about his life and thought. *C. Wright Mills: Letters and Autobiographical Writings,* edited by Mills' daughters, Kate and Pamela Mills, helps fill that void. Taken together with the informational headnotes provided by the editors, these letters serve as an informal autobiography. As such, they allow us to better understand the connections between Mills' life and his thought and give us an opportunity to reconsider his political trajectory.

Over the years, Mills acquired a legendary status. Still best-known as an iconoclastic Texan who rode motorcycles and wore leather jackets, his unique personal style set him far apart from other Columbia professors in the 1950s. These letters will no doubt help to spread the image of Mills as a fiercely independent maverick, an image that he consciously adopted for himself at an early age. Unlike the New York radicals who grew up belonging to youth socialist organizations and debating in the City College cafeteria, Mills met maturity as a loner. Born in Texas in 1918, the young Mills had few companions. Sent to Texas A & M (then a military college) because his father wanted to make a "man" of him, Mills found himself almost completely isolated. Collected here are two remarkable letters that he wrote to the school newspaper in his first year of college. In them, he criticized the hazing of freshmen and the unchallenged nature of authority and tradition on campus, calling A & M "a society which has sprung up on a false basis and is sustained on false principles of human conduct justified only by ignorance and narrow thinking." Against the stifling conformity that A & M represented, Mills praised the "men with 'guts'"

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who possessed “the imagination and the intelligence to formulate their own codes. . . who have the courage and the stamina to live their own lives in spite of social pressure and isolation.” Although Mills found more friends after he left A & M and moved on to finish his undergraduate degree at Texas, earn a Ph.D. at Wisconsin, and take professorships at Maryland and then Columbia, he retained this self-image as an outsider throughout his life.

Seeking to be an autonomous individual, Mills embraced craftsmanship, valorizing the independent artisan whom he viewed as a disappearing social type. From baking his own bread to becoming a certified BMW motorcycle mechanic, Mills emphasized learning to work with his hands as well as with his mind. Most impressively, Mills helped build or rebuild three houses over the course of a decade, beginning with a summer residence that he constructed in 1949 on an island in Ontario that he purchased with his wife at the time, Ruth Harper Mills. As a thinker, Mills fashioned himself an intellectual craftsman. As he wrote about *White Collar*: “It has to be a thing of craftsmanship and art as well as science.” This meant that his sociology had to be more than just social scientific theories and statistics. It had to express a personal vision. At one point, Mills claimed that he would “quit science and all that and write a novel,” and he wrote at other times about plans for short stories, a play, and even a screenplay. Though he never published any fiction, Mills’ sociology did “make society become as alive and as understandable and as dramatic as the best fiction makes the individual seem.” The poetic element that Mills consciously brought to his scholarship helped him attract a broader audience outside of his discipline even as it alienated some of his colleagues and helped make Mills an outsider in his own discipline.

The maverick persona that Mills adopted had its downsides. The value that he stubbornly placed on his own independence made it difficult for him to align with any political organization and led him to view himself as a one man political party. As he wrote in one autobiographical letter collected here, “I have never known what others call ‘fraternity’ with any group, however small, academic or political.” Mills’ fear of political affiliation was an impediment to forming the types of institutions necessary for social transformation. Moreover, Mills constructed his independence with a clearly masculine rhetoric. Distrust of political organization and an over-reliance on charismatic male authority were some unfortunate legacies that Mills passed on to the New Left that followed in his wake.

However, Mills’ self-image as an outsider allowed him to challenge disciplinary paradigms and create a type of sociology both more interesting and more socially relevant than most of what was written in his time. It also helped him remain politically radical at a time when a resurgent conservatism and a consolidated Cold War liberalism left leftists isolated. Many intellectuals who had embraced socialism in the 1930s and 40s, including Mills’ friends Daniel Bell, Dwight MacDonald, and Richard Hofstadter, gave up their radicalism by the 50s. Not afraid of being isolated, instead of rejecting his radicalism, Mills transformed it.

The letters in this collection provide support for the legend of Mills as iconoclast. However, it is too easy to paint Mills as a unique figure standing apart from his times. In doing so, we miss how Mills was representative of the historical period in which he lived. In fact, Mills’ writings are emblematic of the changes that left-wing thought underwent from the 1940s to the 1960s, that is, from the Old Left to the New.

We can identify three distinct phases of Mills' political development. His "Old Left" period began with his politicization in the early 1940s. In this phase, Mills' hopes for social transformation rested on building a strong and radical labor movement. While, by the late 1940s, other New York intellectuals followed a path of professionalization and deradicalization, Mills continued to expound a radical critique of American society in *White Collar* and *The Power Elite*. However, this radicalism viewed American society as one-dimensional and despaired of transforming it. Finally, in the late 1950s, Mills entered his "New Left" phase, in which he embraced an international social movement of the "young intelligentsia." These profound transformations in Mills' thought reflect the changing conditions for left-wing politics and make it clear that we have to view him as more than just a lone dissenter if we want to fully understand the importance of his life and thought.

Mills once wrote his friend Harvey Swados that "maybe we've had to get some of the 30s a little later." As an adolescent living in Texas, the social upheavals of that decade largely passed Mills by. In the immediate postwar period, however, Mills experienced a labor-based social movement first hand, just as the Age of the CIO was coming to an end. In the mid-40s, labor was on the move again. The 1945-6 strike wave was the most massive work stoppage in American history, it seemed to many that a labor-backed political party was in the works, and dynamic labor leaders like Walter Reuther captured the imagination of the American left. As head of the Labor Research Division at Columbia's Bureau of Applied Social Research, Mills engaged in a full-scale study of American labor leaders which became his first book, *The New Men of Power*, published in 1948. This was a work of political engagement as well as scholarship: Mills wrote Hans Gerth, his former mentor at Wisconsin, that the book contained a "radical program for America." In this period, Mills also became a contributing editor to *Labor and Nation*, a magazine edited by longtime labor radical J.B.S. Hardman. And Mills covered the 1947 UAW convention for *Commentary* magazine, gushing about the rank-and-file democracy of the union and the organic intellectuals who helped run it. The letters in this collection shed little light on Mills' short but intense stint as a labor intellectual. This is unfortunate because there are letters at the Mills archive at the University of Texas that do help us understand this phase of Mills' development better. For instance, Mills corresponded with UAW staff members like Research Director Nat Weinberg, who invited Mills to give a seminar to labor organizers on how to recruit white-collar workers, and wrote to *Commentary*'s Nathan Glazer, whom Mills accused of trying to water down the radicalism of his article on the UAW.

By the time he published *White Collar* in 1951, however, Mills had given up on organized labor. With the Cold War climate, a powerful business counterattack, and the increasing bureaucratization of the labor leadership that Mills pointed to in *The New Men of Power*, labor had become a powerful interest group rather than a social movement. Instead of trying to help organize white-collar workers, then, Mills critiqued the "labor metaphysic" which assumed the radical nature of the working class. In a letter included in this collection, Mills wrote that this loss of faith in labor left radicals without an identifiable agent for social change: "(W)e feel that those on the bottom . . . are also without leaders, without ideas of opposition, and that they make no real demands on power."

MILLS' ANALYSIS OF AMERICAN SOCIETY, RENDERED IN SUCH CLASSICS AS *White Collar* and *The Power Elite*, took on a static character: there seemed to be little chance of social transformation. In assuming the fundamental stability of the social order, Mills agreed not only with radicals like Herbert Marcuse who saw a "one-dimensional society," but with liberal intellectuals who proclaimed the "end of ideology" and discovered "consensus" as the key theme of American history.

In this phase of his political trajectory, Mills retreated from activist politics into scholarship and private life. With the loss of labor as agency, intellectual work assumed a larger significance to Mills as he wrote of the necessity of practicing a "politics of truth" that could at least offer a critique of society and hold out the admittedly remote possibility of changing it. This response was common to disillusioned radicals of the era and was epitomized by the title of the magazine that Mills' friends Lewis Coser and Irving Howe founded in 1954: *Dissent*. If thought was one critical refuge for Mills, personal style was the other. In this period especially, Mills' iconoclasm had a political content. As he wrote to his friend William Miller in 1948, "About the flamboyance: don't you love it? God [it's] the only way to live: the only personal answer to bureaucratic precision and form which . . . would stultify everything we do and are." If *White Collar* painted a bleak picture of an increasingly bureaucratic world without specifying how American society could be transformed, Mills' affected style offered an alternative, if only on an individual level.

Although there was little sense that the political system described in *The Power Elite* could be changed, Mills continued to search for an agency that could actually carry out his critique. For this reason, he was quick to identify with the New Left that emerged in the late 1950s. For Mills, however, the "New Left" did not mean the American student movement (which did not flourish until after Mills' death), but an assortment of non-Communist leftists around the globe. In his "Letter to the New Left," first published in the British *New Left Review*, Mills embraced a "young intelligentsia" consisting of students in Turkey and Japan, dissident intellectuals in Eastern Europe, civil rights protesters in the United States, and Castro's revolutionaries in Cuba. The latter group did the most to capture Mills' imagination. In 1960, Mills traveled to Cuba and wrote a mass market paperback, *Listen, Yankee*, consisting of letters written in the voice of a Cuban revolutionary arguing that Cuba was a potential alternative to both American capitalism and Soviet-style communism. As this collection reveals, in his New Left period, Mills made important contacts with left intellectuals around the globe, including Ralph Milliband and E.P. Thomson in England, Carlos Fuentes in Mexico, and Leszek Kolakowski in Poland.

This turn toward the "young intelligentsia" of the world corresponded to a similar internationalization of Mills' life and work. He first visited Europe in 1956, traveling to Munich to learn more about motorcycle mechanics at a BMW factory. After that point, he traveled widely in Europe, receiving a Fulbright to teach in Copenhagen in 1956-7 and taking extensive trips through the continent, including the Soviet bloc. In the late 1950s, Mills also embarked on a massive project in comparative sociology that he felt would take him six to seven years to complete and hoped would become his magnum opus. *C. Wright Mills: Letters and Autobiographical Writings* contains portions of another globally-minded project, "Letters to Tovarich," that Mills undertook but did not complete because of his untimely death. Mills intended to publish a series of letters to an imaginary

Russian intellectual to help ensure that alternatives to Cold War dualities would be sought among dissidents in both superpowers. By no means, however, did Mills' turn toward an international left solve the problem of political agency faced by radicals. The Cuban Revolution, like the labor movement before it, did not meet Mills' expectations and one can imagine that, had he lived longer, the implosion of the New Left would have left Mills with a similar sense of disappointment.

After C. Wright Mills died of heart failure in 1962, he was made a hero by the student movement coalescing around the SDS. From today's perspective, Mills' status as hero is problematic. His flamboyant autonomy not only made affiliation in larger organizations difficult, it also rested on a macho rhetoric of the sort that drove women in the New Left to start their own movement. The classic expressions of Mills' thought perceived the American social order as too hegemonic and tended to exaggerate the extent of alienation and lack of democracy in American life. Mills gave up on organized labor too quickly and didn't perceive the pitfalls that the Cuban Revolution and an international youth movement would come up against. Nevertheless, his writings and biography are well worth our attention today. Sociologists read *The Sociological Imagination* as the essential critique of the disciplinary paradigms of Mills' era. *The Power Elite* remains a scorching attack on the powerful minority that dominates American politics, *The New Men of Power* contains a still relevant analysis of labor bureaucracy and *White Collar* paints a picture of the "new middle classes" that should continue to engage us. Mills' writings combined clear, forceful arguments with vivid images and his works appealed to both academic specialists and a broader audience of educated Americans, something as rare and praiseworthy in his time as in ours. The steadfastness with which Mills retained his radicalism along with his ability to adapt it to changed circumstances should provide a model for leftists today. Finally, Mills can be looked to as an intellectual who tried hard to make the personal meet the political. *C. Wright Mills: Letters and Autobiographical Writings* highlights that intersection, which certainly would have pleased Mills, who committed his scholarship to finding the connections between biography and history.

The Politics of Tradition

IDEAS IN ACTION by Stephen Eric Bronner: Lanham, Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield, 1999

Reviewed by Michael J. Thompson

AT THE CLOSE OF THE CENTURY, political theory has splintered into a multitude of directions and currents. The need for organization of these diverse trends in political thought is clear, not only to address the current crisis of the left, which has moved away from canons of thought in general, but also to show the very texture of political thought throughout the century and the central impact ideas have had on political history.

Stephen Eric Bronner's *Ideas In Action: Political Tradition in the Twentieth Century,* is a provocative attempt to deal with this aporia in left political theory. More than a mere reconstructive project, it is critical as well. Bronner takes a broad, overarching view in his reconstruction of twentieth century political theory where the object is not merely to impart a sense of tradition into political thought, but also to tease out the architectonics of the various theoretical impulses and the implications which arise from various theoretical constructs throughout the century.

For Bronner, the notion of *tradition* is a central concept, organizing the manifold structure of twentieth century political theory. Stemming from the acute realization that political theory has become overtly estranged from politics itself — recalling the classic problematic divorce of theory and practice which has deep roots in German Idealist philosophy — Bronner sees tradition as a way of understanding and overcoming this estrangement. Tradition, Bronner argues, is the product of a *project,* one which stakes out a particular view of the world and which attempts to erect a system of political ideals and realize them practically, institutionally, politically. Ideals must constantly face the realm of necessity, and there is also the need to face other traditions which seek to install their own ideals politically. But for Bronner, this is the core concept through which various trends in twentieth century political theory can be understood and their specific intentions made clear.

Reviewing disparate trends such as liberalism, anarchism, communitarianism and conservatism, and the political manifestations inspired by those ideas such as socialism, fascism and communism, Bronner locates the linking theme between them as the different interpretations they put forth of democracy. Since different political traditions are defined by their own unique ideologies, it is the manner in which democratic theory is interpreted and espoused by each tradition, rather than the mere celebration of democracy, which is of critical concern. The divide between the *formal* and *substantive* aspects of democracy needs to be highlighted. Only then can the progressive, or conservative, manifestations of "democracy" be grasped.

Following this line of thought, Bronner sees liberalism, with its commit-

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ment to the rule of law and the fundamental ideal of the abstract equality of all citizens, and socialism, with its goal of economic equality and social justice, as the strains of tradition which the left should now be cultivating. In contrast to much contemporary political thought on the left, Bronner's position — by utilizing the notion of tradition which is generally considered a conservative tool against progressivism — gives ideas such as social justice and equality an historical ground, giving them the aura of a project.

But Bronner does not comment upon the recent attacks on the notion of tradition, both right and left. Specifically, we are not told how to resolve what Alasdair MacIntyre would term an "epistemological crisis" when a given tradition generates problems which it is no longer able to solve. Indeed, it is not hard to see that this is what has happened to a political liberalism tied to a capitalist ethos. But what of the inherent tension between liberalism's abstract notion of individual autonomy and freedom (negative freedom) and the need for social solidarity and the creation of social institutions which seek to promote socially oriented goals such as economic equality and social justice? It is not self-evident that the tradition of liberalism — or socialism for that matter — can rationally resolve these tensions as they are now constituted because its notion of the autonomous subject is similar to the libertarian notions of the free economic subject. It is perhaps better to argue, and Bronner is not in total opposition to this, that an alternative political system will also require an alternative ethical system which would transform our ideas about traditionally held concepts such as autonomy, solidarity, justice, right, freedom.

Bronner begins to gravitate toward these issues as he outlines his own theoretical position. The second half of the book reviews the traditions which have emerged over the course of the century to challenge mainstream political, economic and cultural orthodoxy: existentialism, Critical Theory, and postmodernism. From these intellectual movements, which ostensibly sought to reclaim subjectivity in the context of a reified culture, Bronner sees a movement away from the core political ideas of the Enlightenment such as universalism and equality. Although these movements impart a sense of liberation to the reified subject, the means by which this is achieved is through the refutation of Enlightenment values, often denying the material realm of politics and economics and the notions of solidarity and program needed to effectively, and practically, contest the various forms of injustice.

This climate of anti-Enlightenment thought has injured the tradition of socialism disabling it from effective strategies for change. Bronner's project is to reclaim these elements from the Enlightenment and use them to foster a new sensibility with respect to politics and culture. From Critical Theory Bronner appropriates the "hidden" Enlightenment tendencies such as the expansion of subjective freedom through an expansion of cultural experience and fresh institutional formations in a new, rational ordering of society.

This must take the form of an internationalist movement fused to a "cosmopolitan sensibility." On the one hand, Bronner argues, the trends of globalization structure new imbalances of economic and political power. On the other hand, there is a decreasing ability for labor, which is nationally situated, to confront the free, international movement of capital. An internationalist movement would not be merely justified on the grounds of empirical injustice, according to Bronner. Rather, fostering a cosmopolitan sensibility would allow world cultures to dialogue, coalesce and explode stubborn notions of particularism and cultural hegemony. Only in this way can cultures which have been previously ignored, forgotten or ravaged struggle to gain equality and recognition. Such a cosmopolitanism, Bronner argues, would not only expand horizons of experience for all involved, it would also provide a context within which ethical consciousness, with respect to global power inequities, could be created and provide social movements with an internationalist framework.

National self-determination and cultural autonomy would begin to erode as the extension of the liberal-socialist tradition — and the values of republicanism, equality and internationalism that it implies — roots itself within the sphere of "planetary life." Only through an international labor movement with socialist values can the seemingly permanent inequities brought on by wage and wealth disparities be countered. Class must be conceived as an international variable where labor's interests are given primacy, always clinging to an "institutional referent" which will translate socialist ideals from the realm of abstraction to concrete social and political practice.

BRONNER'S POSITION ATTEMPTS TO BRING TOGETHER the cultural, ethical and political economic spheres of social reality into a unified, coherent theory for action. Central to this is the ethical conviction, or set of ethical convictions, which sees inequality, disenfranchisement and disempowerment as unethical and unjust. However, Bronner does not provide a grounding for such claims. Instead, we are to relate to these ethical convictions out of an ethics of common sense. Bronner specifically notes that "[i]t is unnecessary to speak of a 'grounding.'" (332) But it should be seen that this can lead to a subversion of the ideal of universalism which he advocates. Without a grounding, any ethical project or tradition risks serious attacks from competing traditions. One tradition's conception of rationality may be seen as irrational from another's ethical-political vantage point. What is needed is an ethical theory which rationally defends against inequality in its various manifestations and can show that policies and traditions which do not foster a socialist conception of equality are inferior and/or irrational.

Bronner's position does not in any way imply ethical relativism, but it does not show itself to be immune from relativist attacks. Bronner's argument is a historical, rather than a philosophical one. He want to show that the tradition of liberal-socialism is superior to other existing traditions. However, it is not hard to argue that the concepts of equality and universalism should still have a rational and philosophical grounding. Universalism cannot be definite, in other words, without an ethical grounding because there is no overriding reason for all actors to accept it as a universal concept. It therefore cannot *be universal*. Without this grounding, other traditions and cultures can always argue against the forms of rationality the liberal-socialist position articulates. And for those actors who do not come to the same ethical-political position as those within the liberal-socialist tradition, there is no way to show how their position can be irrational or couched in interest. A rational grounding for universalism is therefore dearly needed, not unnecessary.

Bronner's project is still one of the boldest attempts at reconstructing a living theory of socialism produced in the final decades of the twentieth century. By insisting on the persistent link between politics and culture as well as that between ethics and political action, he has managed to provide the left with a theory through which it can reconstitute its vision. Internationalism, utopia, universalism, justice and equality, all take on new semantic and political dimensions as Bronner situates them within a renewed tradition of liberal-socialism which explicitly stretches back to the Enlightenment and its vision of freedom, democracy and progress. In an intellectual environment hostile to the ideas of universalism, tradition and progress, Bronner has made what are ostensibly familiar concepts radical and has recalibrated the tradition of socialism focusing its direction practically into the future which will, no doubt, dearly need new paths out of the oldest forms of injustice.

CORRESPONDENCE

A Distorted View of Judaism

To the Editors:

IN THE ARTICLE IN *New Politics* #28 , "Jewish Fundamentalism and Israeli Apartheid," David Finkel expresses a distorted view of Judaism guaranteed to offend any Jew with knowledge of his or her heritage.

He approvingly cites Israel Shahak's view that "the Talmud and other rabbinic texts demonstrate an absolute contempt for non-Jewish life, for non-religious Jews, for woman in general, for any form of secular intellectual endeavor . . . for anything resembling democracy — in short a detailed totalitarian Jewish code . . . " I cannot imagine a more sweeping condemnation.

Without engaging in a long, involved refutation, please consider that the Talmud and other rabbinic texts consist of tens of thousands of pages that express a wide range of views, some of them consistent with Shahak's characterization and some of them in direct contradiction. The *Talmud*, by its nature, allows for a variety of interpretations and opinions and even has an element of "democracy" in that the authoritative decisions were arrived at by majority vote among the rabbis in a particular academy.

Moreover, to describe the Jewish legal code as "totalitarian" is absurd when you consider that for the most part, the rabbis lacked enforcement powers beyond community pressure and excommunications, which were used sparingly. If we use the term "totalitarian" to describe Jewish law, what term can you use to describe fascism and Stalinism? Where is Shahak/Finkel's sense of perspective?

Even Finkel recognizes that all orthodox Jews are not cut from the same cloth when he praises "the late religious scholar" Yeshayahu Leibowitz. If Jewish law is so unremittingly reactionary, then how does Finkel account for someone like Leibowitz? The obvious answer is that Judaism has both chauvinistic and humanistic elements. Finkel is undoubtedly Jewish, but is so alienated from his roots that he uncritically accepts opinions that border on slander of his own people.

Can't *New Politics* do better than this?

BENNETT MURASKIN

David Finkel Responds

IN A BRIEF REPLY to Bennett Muraskin, any attempt at a properly "balanced" assessment of rabbinic Judaism, its legal system or its social practice in the context of the world it inhabited, is obviously out of the question. It is also far beyond my competence. I will restrict myself to a short comment on "roots." I identify my own Jewish roots primarily with those who have struggled in whatever ways they could to liberate our people from rabbinical authority — Spinoza, the militants of Jewish Enlightenment, the Bund, socialists and anarchists, etc. — and in the process advanced the cause of universal social justice. It is worth exploring, some other time, why most of today's Jewish establishment is less interested in these traditions than in the revival of *Talmud* study.

More important is to make Israel Shahak's views on the subject as clear as possible. Professor Shahak's original essay "The Jewish Religion and Its Attitude to Non-Jews" was stimulated by the fact that precisely the worst, most racist and retrograde features of the Talmudic and Jewish mystical traditions were being resurrected, with profound political and social implications. Here is what he wrote in 1980 (prior to the invasion of Lebanon and other subsequent horrors), in the journal *Khamsin*, outlining what he called "the road to a genuine revolution in Judaism":

> The maxim that those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it applies to those Jews who refuse to come to terms with the Jewish past: They have become its slaves and are repeating it in Zionist and Israeli policies. The State of Israel now fulfills toward the oppressed peasants of many countries — not only in the Middle East but also far beyond it — a role not unlike that of the Jews in pre-1795 Poland: that of a bailiff to the imperial oppressor.
>
> It is characteristic and instructive that Israel's major role in arming the forces of the Somoza regime in Nicaragua [and other Latin American dictatorships] has not given rise to any wide public debate in Israel or among organized Jewish communities in the diaspora . . . It seems that Israel and zionism are a throw-back to the role of classicalJudaism — writ large, on a global scale, and under more dangerous circumstances.
>
> The only possible answer to this, first of all by Jews, must be that given by all true advocates of freedom and humanity in all countries, all peoples and all great philosophies — limited though they sometimes are, as the human condition itself is limited. We must confront the Jewish past and those aspects of the present which are based simultaneously on lying about the past and worshipping it. The prerequisites for this are, first, total honesty about the facts and, secondly, the belief (leading to action, whenever possible) in universalist human principles of ethics and politics.