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NEW POLITICS is pleased to announce that Betty Reid Mandell and Mark Dow have joined its editorial board.

A Painful Announcement

Our indefatigable co-editor, Phyllis Jacobson, has suffered a serious stroke. As those familiar with *NEW POLITICS* know, Phyllis has played a singular role in the journal since its inception in 1961, soliciting articles, editing copy, cajoling authors to abide by deadlines, and handling all manner of correspondence and business details, all in addition to writing her own articles and reviews. She has been the vivacious public face of our efforts and the ever-charming voice on the other end of the receiver. All of us from *NEW POLITICS* are stricken by not having Phyllis at our side, and we know that many of our authors and readers will be very saddened to hear the news of her illness. (Friends who would like to visit Phyllis should email Julie at newpol@igc.org to make arrangements.)

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Phyllis's incapacity has made us somewhat slow in responding to email messages and inquiries, in returning manuscripts, and in processing subscriptions, though all this is now being set straight. Her volunteer work was, needless to say, a key element in constraining our costs, and her illness has imposed upon us the need to raise funds for a modestly paid office staff. A formal fund drive will be undertaken soon, but if those who anticipate contributing would do so now, and as generously as possible, it would relieve some of the pressure.

In addition to this added expense, the rising costs of publication and mailing oblige us to increase slightly the price of *NEW POLITICS*, while remaining well below that of comparable journals. Readers will notice that a single copy is now \$7. A four-issue subscription will now cost \$24 domestically; \$28 for all foreign subscriptions, including Canadian; \$34 for domestic institutions, and \$38 for all foreign institutions, including Canadian.

Daniel Singer, 1925-2000

We have just learned the terrible news that our dear comrade and friend Daniel Singer has died. It is not possible at this point to pay proper tribute to Daniel's unique contribution to the struggle for social justice, but our next issue will include appreciations of his life and work.

Election 2000: Infamy and Hope

Thomas Harrison

WITH BREATHTAKING RUTHLESSNESS AND CYNICISM, the Republicans stole the election. The Rehnquist faction on the Supreme Court handed victory to Bush, as Jonathan Schell put it, “in the dead of night in an opaque, anonymous opinion rendered by Justices who gave no oral presentation from the bench (as they usually do) but instead appropriately snuck out of the Court building through the garage.” The fix, evidently, was in from the beginning. Untold thousands of black Floridians were struck from voters’ lists to make sure the Democrats would not carry the state. If a re-count had nevertheless produced a slate of Democratic electors, the Florida legislature was ready to select a rival slate and the Republican majority in the House stood ready to certify it. And then, after this unprecedented coup d’etat, Gore told those who supported him to let bygones be bygones and rally behind the thieves.

Mass protest? Maybe at least some gesture, like having a Democratic boycott of the inauguration? Forget it! Gore and the Democratic leadership are absolutely allergic to anything that smacks of “instability” (think of the effect on Wall Street!), and the last thing they want is a new civil rights movement in the streets fighting to reclaim the right to vote. There *ought* to be a constitutional crisis, but the Democrats will see to it that there isn’t. Gore may have had apoplectic fits in private, but he is a good soldier for American capitalism and he knew his duty.

No, it will all be business as usual. As Bush announces his appalling cabinet appointments, with their promise of unlimited environmental pillage, billions for a new star wars boondoggle, another outrageous tax cut for the rich, congressional Democrats assure us they will be ratified. Even ultra-right troglodytes like Linda Chavez, the proposed Secretary of Labor, a hard-bitten foe of affirmative action, and John Ashcroft, the Attorney General-designate, a Bible-thumping enemy of racial justice and abortion rights, will not be blocked but only asked some “tough questions.” And why not? After all, it was Clinton who laid the political groundwork for all this by, for example, accepting the idea of reviving a missile defense system, albeit on a more modest scale, permitting vast inroads on our national forests and preserving the massively regressive tax structure put in place in the Reagan era with Democratic support. And it was the Clinton Administration which diluted affirmative action and undermined welfare programs.

Fortunately, in the face of this stomach-turning orgy of sanctimony and bipartisanship, one may also derive some consolation from the Nader campaign. Despite its relatively disappointing vote, despite its vociferous detractors, who

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just now are particularly audible, and despite Nader's own serious shortcomings, the campaign revealed that a sizeable nucleus for a progressive third party exists. Whether or not its potential to grow into a mass movement is realized will depend on many things. But at least a breakthrough seems to have been made toward independent left politics. If all goes well, the suffocating conservative monolithism of American politics may soon be blown apart.

Re-counts and Disenfranchisement

AS EVERYONE KNOWS, more than 20,000 Palm Beach County residents intended to vote for Gore but, because of a confusing — and probably illegal — ballot that looked more like a spatial reasoning test, either ended up voting for Pat Buchanan or spoiled their ballots by punching two holes. Less well known, because the media and the Democratic leadership have pretty much ignored it, is the pattern of voting discrimination and irregularities directed at African-Americans and other minorities. Large numbers of black voters were kept away from the polls by various means, or found themselves standing in line and unable to vote when polls closed prematurely. Many were falsely informed that their names were not on voting lists, that they were listed as convicted felons, or that they needed voter registration cards or two pieces of identification to vote. Minority voters were harassed by police and poll workers. Haitians who asked for Creole translators to help them vote were ignored or given Spanish translators. In Republican-controlled Duval County, which includes the city of Jacksonville, 26,000 ballots were disqualified, an estimated 60 percent of them cast by blacks; this was four times the number of votes disqualified there in 1996.

Some of this was undoubtedly due to ineptitude, confusion and clerical errors by poll workers. But there was also a deliberate effort by Florida's Republican officialdom to lower Gore's vote. Secretary of State Katherine Harris paid a private company, ChoicePoint, to prepare a "scrub list" of Floridians who could be "scrubbed" from the voters' rolls because they had supposedly committed felonies. Florida, like many Southern states, legally disenfranchises convicted felons, 400,000 of them, half of whom are African-Americans and most convicted of nonviolent drug offenses. Obviously the majority of these 400,000 could be expected to vote the Democratic ticket if they were allowed. But it turned out that 8,000 of ChoicePoint's list (mostly African-Americans, again) were not ex-felons; most had, like George W. Bush, only been convicted of misdemeanors. And it was "no accident," as they say, that ChoicePoint's board is dominated by major Republican funders.

Harris' scrub list only came to light almost a month after the election, but allegations of minority voter harassment and intimidation started surfacing soon after the polls closed. Nevertheless, these were not the issues that Gore and his managers chose to bring before the courts or draw to the attention of the general public; consequently, neither did the media. Nor did the White House show any concern; Janet Reno's Justice Department is not even officially investigating the situation but merely "assessing" it informally. No, Gore and his fellow DLCers refuse to "play the race card." Blacks voted 90 percent for the Gore-Lieberman ticket. Black leaders like Jesse Jackson guarded Gore's left flank by doing their best to crush the Nader campaign. And this is their reward. Apparently, Jackson threatened at one point to lead demonstrations in Florida,

and he was told by the Democratic National Committee to back off — meanwhile leaving the field clear for mobs of Republican congressional staffers who were flown down to intimidate vote counters.

The Democrats' fear of disruptive protest was consistent with the overall conservatism and defeatism that was displayed by the leadership in this election and, particularly since the Reagan era, has become the party's distinguishing feature. In the first few days after November 7th, a chorus of Democrats, led by Bill Bradley, New Jersey Sen. Robert Torricelli and former White House chief of staff Leon Panetta, began calling on Gore do the "statesmanlike" thing and give up "for the good of the country" or the "Constitution." Others, like former New York mayor Ed Koch, warned Gore not to insist too strongly or for too long that the GOP might have stolen Florida — it might shake the public's confidence in our magnificent two-party system. Of course, there was also some partisan calculation going on. Sen. Tom Daschle and Rep. Dick Gephardt were known to feel that the party's chances of capturing Congress in 2002 would be greater under a Bush presidency. But from the standpoint of the Democratic leadership, the main danger of continuing to challenge the election results was the possibility that prolonged confusion and uncertainty would undermine popular confidence in the system. The party's leaders do not want street demonstrations, nor do they want to give the world the impression that American "democracy" runs with anything less than clockwork precision. Therefore, the rabble are not to get involved. Everything must be done through the proper channels. In a "mature democracy" such as ours, the proper function of ordinary citizens is to vote and go home and leave the really important business of the nation — keeping down the standard of living (a.k.a. "preventing the economy from over-heating"), policing the world and creating optimal conditions for capital accumulation — to their betters. It is crucial that this business be carried on with as little fuss as possible.

As that much-revered statesman and outstanding Establishment intellectual New York Sen. Daniel Moynihan put it: "It doesn't so much matter who wins. The important thing is the legitimacy of the system." Of course, when Nader says it doesn't matter so much, the liberal pundits and Gore's "progressive" supporters scream bloody murder at the criminal recklessness of denying the absolutely essential differences between the two parties. But Moynihan and his ilk know better. True, he and fellow Democrats believe their party would do a better job of managing the system, but they realize it will be reasonably safe no matter which party occupies the White House or wields a majority in Congress.

Blaming Nader

BUT FOR THE PRO-GORE LIBERALS, this election was something akin to Armageddon, and Ralph Nader was in league with the Beast, no less. In the last months of the campaign — led by Gloria Steinem, Massachusetts Rep. Barney Frank, Michigan Rep. John Conyers, columnists Anthony Lewis and Bob Herbert, and many others — they went all-out to vilify Nader personally ("arrogant" and "egomaniacal" were two of the favorite epithets) and to persuade his supporters that "a vote for Nader was a vote for Bush." Nader voters were told that they would be responsible for an anti-choice Supreme Court and other horrors. After

it turned out that Nader's Florida votes may indeed have enabled Bush to carry that state (with considerable illicit assistance from Republican officialdom, as we now know), the liberals' rage and venom knew no bounds. AFL-CIO head John Sweeney called the Nader campaign "reprehensible," and there were threats of revenge from environmentalist leaders and liberals on Capitol Hill ("we won't forget this"). In contrast, none of them, at least in public, had much to say about the responsibility Gore and his team might have borne for the Democrats' poor showing — apart from complaints about the Vice-President's wooden personality and clumsy campaigning style.

This contrast was particularly unbecoming to Sweeney. Even Clinton's own former Labor Secretary Robert Reich has admitted: "No administration in modern history has been as good for American business as the Clinton-Gore team. None has been as solicitous of the concerns of business leaders, none has generated as much profit for business, and none has presided over as buoyant a stock market or as huge an increase in executive pay." Yet Sweeney professes loathing for a man who has worked tirelessly on behalf of working people for more than 30 years. True, Nader's strong support of the labor movement is of relatively recent vintage, and he has apparently been guilty of anti-labor practices in his own organizations. But these sins of the past pale into insignificance when compared to the glaringly pro-corporate, anti-labor and *current* record of the man Sweeney endorsed and poured labor's resources into electing. Reprehensible? A campaign that calls for doubling the minimum wage, paid family leave, a national daycare system, a real war on poverty, repealing Taft-Hartley, triple back-pay for workers fired illegally in organizing drives? That opposes NAFTA and the WTO and proposes universal, single-payer health insurance? And this sycophant has scarcely a word of criticism (whatever his "private" misgivings, reported by the press, which are politically worthless) for Gore, who offers nothing to labor and has served a Democratic administration more indifferent, when it is not outright hostile, to labor's agenda than any since Grover Cleveland's.

Nader's Achievement

WHAT DID THE NADER CAMPAIGN ACCOMPLISH? He got 2.7 million votes, and had it not been for that last-minute onslaught by the forces of lesser evilism, which included millions of dollars in anti-Nader ads by the Sierra Club, the League of Conservation Voters and NARAL, and a veritable blizzard of pleading and threatening emails to potential Nader voters, he would certainly have gotten more. How much more is hard to say. On the eve of the elections, Nader's support hovered around five percent in the polls, and in July it had stood at ten percent. The *Washington Post* estimated that there were more than five million would-be Nader voters who got cold feet at the last minute. If those five million had stood firm, that would have given Nader almost nine percent on November 7th.

But Nader's political appeal was actually far more extensive even than this. And his impact among young people, some of them still too young to vote this time, was clearly enormous. Polls indicate that as many as 20 million Americans were strongly attracted to Nader's program and agreed with his attacks on the two-party system. All of this shows pretty clearly that a mass base for a new progressive third party movement exists.

And what if Nader had gotten into the debates? Imagine how effectively he

might have exposed the fraudulence of Gore's appeal to "the people versus the powerful" for example, or Bush's attacks on "tax-and-spend liberals" and "big government" while the Republicans (and Democrats) continue to pour billions down the maw of the military-industrial complex. Nader could have ripped off both candidates' mantle of statesmanship and revealed them as the corporate lackeys they really are. But more than that, think how Nader would have changed the very terms and parameters of the debate, going beyond this or that government program to what is at the heart of it all — plutocracy versus democracy, rule by the rich versus rule by the people. What would Gore and Bush have said about *that*?

Had Nader been able to participate in the debates, he would probably have doubled or tripled his vote in November. But far more important would have been the educational impact of such a visible and dramatic confrontation. Even without significant media exposure, the Nader campaign changed millions of people's *consciousness*, including people who didn't vote for him in the end, by persuading them not only that the system is rotten from top to bottom but that something can be done about it. Had he been able to directly challenge Bush and Gore in a debate format — so different from the few interviews he was allowed on national TV — the political effect might have been enormous and long range.

"Plutocracy," "oligarchy" — these were the words Nader used. Nader is no socialist — he is not even opposed to capitalism and the market as such. His rhetoric is very much like that of old-fashioned American Populism and Progressivism. But Nader's campaign relentlessly drew attention to the problem of class rule. Not since Norman Thomas in the 1930s has a prominent candidate for the presidency made *this* an issue and forced people to think about it. But even by the 1930s, building an explicitly socialist movement rather than a broader, labor-based and ideologically populist or, at best, social-democratic party-movement was no longer a viable option. Today, a broadly populist program, including the limited but still quite radical critique of capitalism that Nader presented, is probably the appropriate transitional politics for an American Left. Anyone who attended the "super-rallies" (I was at the one in Madison Square Garden) must have sensed the immediate mass appeal of a radical-democratic, anti-corporate politics — an appeal that reaches far beyond the media caricature of pony-tailed Birkenstock-shod Greens. The Naderite program is one around which, potentially, millions can be organized and brought into motion — and, above all, broken away from the Democratic Party. Political independence, even around a nebulous left perspective, would represent an immense step forward if it were embraced by significant numbers of the oppressed. Within such an independent Left, and in the altered political climate it would inevitably create, explicit socialism could gain a hearing such as it has never had since the early decades of the twentieth century.

How to Fight the Right

IT IS ONLY AN INDEPENDENT LEFT, one without the ties to corporate interests that bind the Democratic Party, that would be free to combat conservative ideology, which is the thing that really powers the Republicans, and compels ever greater concessions from Democratic Party liberalism as well. A central component of this ideology is the belief that the demands of capital must always be met for

fear of jeopardizing investment and jobs, and this is never adequately challenged by the Democrats because they, with varying degrees of reluctance and enthusiasm, have accepted it. As long as a blindly pro-business ideology thrives in the current political climate, the Right — with all the *other* things it stands for, such as outlawing abortions, driving gay men and lesbians back into the closet, abolishing affirmative action — just to name the few issues on which the Republicans and Democrats still do differ — will always be on the offensive.

Since the 1970s, conservatism has become the dominant political trend in this country, and despite momentary setbacks, the tendency is for it to gain momentum. But the point is, the Democrats are part and parcel of this trend, not something fundamentally opposed to it. That is why, in the short run or the long run, but probably in the short run, we will lose even those things that the Democrats still defend -- the gains of the 60s and even the 30s — *if* we stick with the Democrats. To reverse this rightward trend, we have to persuade millions of Americans that it is not in their interest to bow to corporate power. The trouble is, right now most of the people we need to reach are politically paralyzed and deeply pessimistic about the possibility of standing up for their rights, or of effecting any sort of basic change. It won't be easy to overcome the debilitating effects of decades of unchallenged conservative supremacy, but in this presidential year, a start was made. Nader raised people's expectations and enlarged their vision. Gore inspired almost no one, and his drumbeaters on the Left did their best to quash any heightening of expectations by waging a disgraceful campaign based entirely on fear and hopelessness.

On the issue of reproductive rights, for example, the strategy of the pro-Gore liberals is blinkered, defensive and defeatist. Obviously, if a realigned Supreme Court overturns *Roe v. Wade*, this would be a huge setback for women. Meanwhile, however, in practice the right to have an abortion is already under threat. Abortions are now available in only fourteen percent of U.S. counties, largely because providers have been successfully intimidated by clinic blockages, phone threats, and outright terrorism. True, most of the counties where abortions are still easily available are the most populous ones, and women who live in the other counties can travel to another locale, for the most part. But the trend is clear, and it's not just a practical problem. Pregnant women are often afraid to seek abortions because of the conservative stigma still attached to this decision.

Conservative ideology is dominant in America today not because most people adhere to it in any finished form, but because there is no compelling and coherent ideological alternative. Instead, everything in our political culture conspires to bolster conservatism. Take "family values," a matrix of beliefs and attitudes that is heavily religious and traditionalist and inevitably subordinates, when it does not actually stigmatize, women — and homosexuals. Far from combating this ideology, and offering a more libertarian and inclusive alternative to it, the brand of "centrism" represented by the Democrats has for years basically accepted its permanent domination of public opinion and accommodated to it accordingly. Gore, when he was a senator, for example, gave a tremendous boost to the Far Right and put women's rights and all other democratic rights at grave risk by voting to confirm the ultra-authoritarian Antonin Scalia; and it was members of his party who allowed Clarence Thomas to be confirmed even in the teeth of the Anita Hill scandal. In this election we have seen Gore and Lieberman going out of their way to embrace family values and to further the saturation of

American political discourse with religious obscurantism. Far from combating the Right, then, the policies and rhetoric of Gore and the Democrats have consistently attested to its power and enhanced its aura of inevitability.

Meanwhile, abortion will not become more acceptable or widely available because of any appointments a President Gore might have made to the Supreme Court. *Roe v. Wade*, though still on the books, is being undermined at the grassroots. If there is any hope of protecting and expanding reproductive freedom as a practical reality for women, it lies in the revival of a militant, activist feminist movement, one that defends abortion providers, confronts America's Christian Taliban in the streets, and educates public opinion through its interventions. The single-minded and defensive focus on *Roe v. Wade* and the Supreme Court does not contribute to such a revival, nor does the subordination of the women's movement to the Democratic Party. And the same thing is true for other social movements. There needs to be less reliance on lobbying and gaining access to the powerful, and more emphasis on open struggle and direct, confrontational action. But above all, we need to begin now building a new political party that brings together and speaks for all these movements. Only with this can we persuade the millions of Americans who are presently confused and disoriented by fear and pessimism that there is an alternative that means business — one that argues with citizens, tries to win them over and grapples with the Right for political power.

Few Americans have any idea what a real progressive, campaigning, anti-corporate, militantly democratic politics even looks like. The Nader campaign — even though it was essentially only one celebrated individual running as the candidate of a small grassroots party, to which he did not even belong and which is invisible as far as most Americans are concerned — began to suggest the possibility of a new, participatory, labor-oriented, *independent* Left, and to argue forcefully that building such a party-movement is the only way to fight the depredations of the Right and the corporations. Despite all the many things that were wrong with Nader's campaign, he was, with occasional lapses, clear about this.

Nader's Flaws

THAT SAID, IT MUST ALSO BE ACKNOWLEDGED that the shortcomings of the Nader campaign were serious indeed, so serious that they may prove fatal to the prospects for an ongoing Naderite movement now that the elections are over. For one thing, in his opposition to globalization, Nader failed to distance himself sharply and clearly enough from economic nationalists, including right-wing nationalists like Pat Buchanan. This was and is a problem not just for the Nader campaign, but for the anti-globalization movement as a whole, dominated as it is by overtly nationalist union leaders who care only about American jobs. For another, Nader's discomfort with feminism, with the politics of gay rights, and with many of the concerns of African-Americans and Latinos, was all too obvious. On paper, Nader and the Green Party had excellent *positions* — for a woman's right to choose under all circumstances, for full rights to civil unions for same-sex couples, in favor of reparations for slavery, etc. The trouble was, Nader rarely *talked* about these things, except when pressed and even then usually in the most impatient and perfunctory manner. Often, he seemed to go out of his way to avoid uttering the word abortion.

Toward the end of the campaign Nader did make an effort to reach out more directly to people of color. He featured denunciations of racial profiling in his speeches, emphasized the idea of a Marshall Plan for the cities, and spoke more often to black audiences, including a well-publicized visit to Harlem. To be fair, this outreach was made more difficult by the strong ties many black political and religious leaders have to the Democrats; apparently, for example, the Nader campaign did try but failed to get invitations to speak at black churches. Still, some of these obstacles might have been overcome had there been greater will to do so — and above all, greater understanding that the problem of racism must be absolutely central to any principled and effective progressive agenda in this country. Nader should not only have spoken more often to audiences of color, he should have made racism a major theme of his campaign as a whole, because it's something white people need to hear and think about as well. And in the aftermath of the election, he should have put himself in the thick of the Florida events, leading demonstrations against voter racial profiling, joining Jesse Jackson and the NAACP and putting pressure on them to be more militant than they were. Instead, his invisibility during much of the Florida controversy lent credence to the supposition that he was somehow embarrassed that he had “cost” Gore the election — or even that he was just as reluctant as Gore to “racialize” the situation there.

Why did Nader maintain such a rigid, almost sectarian fixation on an anti-corporate campaign to the near-exclusion of so many vital social issues? It may be that he shares, in some curmudgeonly, half-conscious way, elements of the social conservatism to be found among many (mostly older male) leftists, who camouflage their retrograde attitudes with the claim that “identity politics” is crippling the Left — although most of these types were fiercely hostile to his campaign. He may have opportunistically calculated that it was best to relegate abortion, gay rights and similar issues to the pages of his web site in the interests of building the broadest possible base around a platform of anti-corporate populism. (Actually, these were the very issues that might have significantly broadened his base.) Nader's rhetoric often suggested that he wanted to frame his anti-corporate program in terms of “traditional values,” a rubric under which it is very difficult to contain unorthodox sexual orientations or a woman's right to terminate a pregnancy. Whatever the reasons, Nader's silences and evasions on the rights of women and racial and sexual minorities were unprincipled and politically disastrous.

For one thing, the campaign's avoidance of race, gender and sexual orientation, or its implicit tendency to treat them as “special issues,” made it easy for those, like Steinem, Jackson, Conyers and Frank, who are thoroughly and more or less comfortably enmeshed in the political Establishment and committed *a priori* to the Democratic Party — and would have opposed Nader even if he were perfect in these areas — to discredit the Nader campaign to their constituents. Jackson in particular loves to suggest that third party efforts like Nader's are a frivolous exercise in self-indulgence by middle-class whites — and that allegedly more serious and realistic minorities and the poor know they have to stick to the Democrats. The absurdity of this argument should be easy to expose: how “realistic” is it for the most oppressed to vote for a party that abolishes welfare, supports capital punishment and mass incarceration and pushes job-destroying globalization? Minorities and the poor are more victimized than anybody else

by the Democrats' collusion in a grossly unjust system. But Nader's disconnect-
edness from communities of color made it almost impossible for him and his
supporters to counter this bogus line of reasoning.

Nader's reckless dismissal of the importance of the Supreme Court and the
threat to *Roe v. Wade* understandably infuriated women (and men). He never
really tried to repudiate his 1996 dismissal of issues of sexism and heterosexism
as "gonadal politics," nor, as already mentioned, did he make much of an effort
to reach black audiences until the very end of the campaign. As a result, most
Nader voters, according to exit polls, were white males. Tragically, Nader him-
self helped insure that the overwhelming bulk of black, feminist, and gay voters
stayed in the Gore camp. But these voters should be in the vanguard of a new
progressive third-party movement, and unless Nader and the Greens change
their tactics, this movement will be still-born.

And yet, what the Nader campaign has shown, despite its political short-
comings and despite the relatively disappointing results of November 7th (them-
selves partly a function of the campaign's shortcomings), is that the time has
come for a progressive third party. Since the WTO protests in Seattle, a new
popular movement has sprung up. Left labor elements have formed coalitions
— shaky and still uncertain, it is true — with environmentalist youth and the
campus anti-sweatshop movement. In loose association with them are people
fighting to democratize the media. Within the African-American community,
there are movements against mass incarceration, capital punishment, racial
profiling and police brutality. Nader's ability to inspire and politically mobilize
tens of thousands of young people provided a glimpse of the potential for bring-
ing all these currents together around an electoral vehicle, one that can reach
into the living rooms of millions of Americans and get their attention.

Low-Expectation Liberalism

BUT AS YET IT IS STILL POTENTIAL. The dominant view on the Left is still what
Nader has called "low expectation liberalism." After the election, *The Nation's*
editorial (Nov. 27, 2000) somehow managed to "find a lot of hopeful evidence"
that "the Democratic Party now has a progressive opening to the future." It
suggested that the success of unions and black churches in turning out the vote
for Gore will show "which way Democrats must turn if they hope to regain Con-
gressional majorities two years from now." But this mass mobilization for the
Democrats was nothing new. For years labor and blacks have made up the core
of the Democratic constituency, and for just as long Democratic politicians have
ignored and betrayed them, knowing full well that they will vote for the Party
and work for its success no matter how little the Party does for them in return.
In 1996, union and minority voters were just as important in re-electing Clinton
as they were in nearly electing Gore in 2000, and yet there is no evidence what-
soever that this had any impact on the Democrats. This time, moreover, labor,
blacks, women and gays hardly even *asked* for anything in return. If Gore had
won the White House, he would have known that virtually his only "obligation"
to progressives was to see to it that the Supreme Court does not reverse *Roe v.*
Wade. That's it. He and his fellow DLCers, and most of the other Democratic
leadership as well, know exactly "which way they must turn"; with such meek,
undemanding supporters as the "progressive community" there's absolutely no

risk in turning further and further to the right.

The Nation actually believes it is possible for the Democrats to “choose” between their financial patrons and their working-class supporters. In fact, since the Democratic Party is little more than a fund-raising machine these days, and has always been led by politicians who see their first duty as shoring up the capitalist system, the “choice” is a foregone conclusion. This doesn’t mean that the Democrats cannot be forced to make concessions to their popular constituencies, but only under certain conditions — the pressure of mass upheaval, as with the labor upsurge of the 1930s and the civil rights, anti-war and womens’ movements of the 1960s and 70s, or the palpable threat represented by a third party, such as the Populists in the 1890s and the Socialists in the 1900-1919 period, that working people might break away. Only then can the Democrats be forced to move a little to the left. Even in its most “progressive” phases, however, even during the New Deal of the sainted Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Democratic Party has always been as thoroughly controlled by business interests as the Republicans. Never have labor, minorities and social movements had their own party, controlled by and accountable to them.

The Democratic Party is not reformable, and it’s all too obvious that the plans of Sweeney, Steinem, Jackson & co. to reform the party from within amount to little more than pious hopes. Significantly, their reaction to Gore’s defeat was to attack Nader, not to blame Gore for his inability to beat a smirking, ignorant, overgrown frat boy. Liberals are mostly a dispirited and increasingly cynical bunch these days. Few of them actually believe they’ll ever be able to influence the party. The editorials in liberal magazines exude a damp air of hopelessness and depression, with an occasional wan flicker of wistful fantasy (“now that the Democrats see how faithful workers, blacks, women, etc., are they’ll turn left!”). Actually they assume that the mass of Americans are so rightwing and hopeless that Clintonism is the best we can get.

Typical, among intellectuals, in this respect is Michael Kazin. In an article in *Mother Jones* (Sept./Oct. 2000), Kazin found grounds for admiring the President: Clinton “helped make at least a mild brand of social reformism palatable to mainstream audiences again” and enabled “compassion to gain a hearing.” Actually, polls show that the brutish, cold-hearted masses are a lot more compassionate than the White House, believing, for example, that the government has a responsibility to provide greater help for the less fortunate and that universal health insurance is a good idea. Kazin insists that whatever Clinton’s inadequacies may be, they are the fault not of him but of . . . the Left. *Our* weakness insured that Clinton “would follow a cautious, poll-driven course.” We are to blame for the defeat of the Clintons’ health care initiative: “only a scattering of grassroots activists tried to build pressure for the Clinton plan or for a single payer plan.” Here Kazin’s logic becomes truly tortuous. If, as even he admits, most Americans supported the principle of universal coverage, how were Clinton’s actions “poll-driven” on health care? In fact, they were driven by the need to head off and blunt any initiatives in the direction of single payer plans — so they were poll-driven, but not in the way he means. Kazin goes even further, arguing that when Clinton embraces “welfare reform” and “smaller government,” policies of which Kazin disapproves, he “stymies” the Right, rather than promoting and legitimizing it. Another example of the genre is Todd Gitlin, who wrote in *Salon* (Dec. 4, 2000) that the “Clintonian Third Way was a moderate means to a radical end — terminating

the Republican dominion that kicked in with Richard Nixon and solidified with Ronald Reagan . . ." For Kazin, Gitlin and others like them, "radicalism" has come down to one thing: keeping the Republicans out of office. To them, any electoral action independent of the Democrats is anathema; Gitlin has called Nader a "nihilist," and he and his friends at *Dissent* organized a vicious petition denouncing Nader's candidacy as a "wrecking ball campaign." That this sort of thing even *passes* for radicalism in serious discussion is itself a sign of how thoroughly conservative American politics have become.

The Democratic Party: From Bad to Worse

AS THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY MOVES STEADILY RIGHTWARD, all who stay onboard are condemned to follow its political itinerary. The frenzy of party loyalty we witnessed this year among liberals is part of a pattern: the worse the Democrat, the greater the hysterical demands from much of the Left to support him unconditionally and the more extreme their apocalyptic predictions of what will happen if he loses. This is a counsel of total political despair and abnegation; it simply renounces any further role for progressive politics. Fortunately, this year many progressives made the decision not to succumb to defeatism. But even among those who broke with lesser-evilmism and voted for Nader, the Democratic Party retains an unwarranted legitimacy.

The Democratic Party has always played an especially insidious role in American politics — that of taming and co-opting popular movements that threaten the system from the left. Most progressives, including many Nader supporters, believe that the Democrats were once a kind of people's party and tend to see its decline as a recent phenomenon. Even at its most liberal, however, in the 1930s and 40s, the Democratic Party was fundamentally a political alliance of corrupt Northern big city machines and racist Southern rural machines, both at the service of capital. Labor and the party's liberal activists were never more than a subordinate element. Socialists used to call the Democrats the "party of war and racism," and even though the Party abandoned its longstanding support for segregation more than 30 years ago, it can take full credit for the Vietnam War. Vietnam, it is true, shook the Democrats and brought about a brief lurch to the left under McGovern. But afterward, it was all downhill: Carter, Mondale, Dukakis. The tendency was toward closer and closer alignment with the Republicans on the issues most crucial to the well-being of U.S. capitalism: taxation, trade, military spending, foreign intervention. But the natural tendency of voters when offered nothing but conservatism is to prefer the real thing — the Republicans — to a half-hearted facsimile. This led to the formation of the DLC, dedicated to throwing overboard all that remained of the Party's liberal past. In 1992 their moment came, and eight years of Clintonism were the result.

Even by the debased standards of Clintonism, Gore is pretty conservative. In his brief bid for the presidential nomination in 1988, he championed huge increases in military spending, was closely identified with the Likud government in Israel and surrounded himself with prominent neoconservatives. Within the Clinton administration, Gore was always on the right wing. And his choice of Lieberman — who has flirted with school vouchers and social security privatization and is a notoriously loyal servant of Connecticut's insurance companies and de-

fense contractors — had great symbolic importance. Not only was it a reassuring gesture to the Democrats' corporate backers, but also a sign of where the Democratic Party is heading and what it is preparing to abandon tomorrow.

This year Clinton's liberal supporters often expressed outrage at the idea that there is "no difference" between the Republicans and Democrats. Nader was certainly wrong to belittle the differences that still do exist, as already mentioned — abortion, affirmative action, as well as a greater openness (no small matter) to gay men and lesbians. But consider the vast areas on which there is now fundamental agreement, except for weak dissent by a mere handful of Democrats and the odd Republican. Both accept the current system of election financing, a flagrant form of legal bribery. On "defense" and foreign policy, there is something close to unanimity: the United States must maintain a huge nuclear arsenal; full support for Israel, no matter how many Palestinians it massacres, and also for the oil despots of the Middle East; "constructive engagement" with the dictators of China; continuing the cruel sanctions against Cuba and Iraq; and massive military spending (currently \$300 billion a year), with both Gore and Bush calling for increases. This grotesque waste of resources by itself excludes the possibility of any significant social spending and therefore guarantees the perpetuation of poverty, racism, wretched schooling and mass ignorance, environmental and infrastructure decay. Under either Gore or Bush the poverty-level minimum wage will not increase more than a buck or two, while executive salaries will (barring trouble on the stock market) continue to grow exponentially. Neither party is the least bit interested in doing anything that would actually save endangered species from dying off, prevent timber companies from continuing to mow down our national forests, or restrict oil drilling in Alaska. And although Gore once had a reputation as a far-thinking environmentalist, a Gore presidency would not have even begun to do what it takes to reduce greenhouse emissions and reverse global warming.

The rights of lesbians and gay men? When Gore was in the Senate he denounced homosexuality as "abnormal" and voted against the repeal of the District of Columbia's anti-sodomy law. The overwhelming majority of national Democratic politicians agree with Republicans that gay people should be denied marriage, spousal, social security and pension benefits, and immigration and visitation rights. Both parties insist that stricter punishment and judicial murder (a.k.a. capital punishment), not a real war on poverty, are the only answer to crime, and they raise no objections to filling up the jails with nonviolent drug offenders and victims of the sadistic "three strikes" laws. Clinton's presidency has converted most of his fellow Democrats to the Republican position that no cash assistance should be given to poor single mothers and their children. Despite his proposals for a "patients' bill of rights" and other modest reforms in the delivery of health care, Gore fully agreed with Bush that health care must remain in the hands of private enterprise. And both parties are, of course, enthusiastically committed to globalization and free trade at all costs. There was a time when the Democrats and Republicans differed on some of these issues, but no more. Nader was certainly right to draw attention to this.

Non-Third Parties

THE NADER CAMPAIGN HAS ALSO SHOWN UP THE SHALLOWNESS of the New Party and

Labor Party strategy — the idea that a third party can be built by focusing exclusively on the grassroots and endlessly deferring independent campaigns for national office. In less than a year of active campaigning, Nader and the Greens have done more to raise people's consciousness and build a third party movement than ten years of efforts to pass ballot initiatives and elect people to school boards and city councils. The point is not that local elections and ballot initiatives are unimportant, but that they cannot be a substitute for electoral initiatives that reach far more people and inspire them to feel part of a growing *national* alternative. Moreover, Nader was clearly *serious* about independent politics. Though he occasionally declared that his campaign would strengthen the liberal wing of the Democrats, he refused all proposals to compromise on the issue of political independence — such as not campaigning in swing states, or not running Green candidates in contests where Democrats might be hurt. This seriousness contrasts sharply with the perspectives of the Labor Party and New Party leaders — though not necessarily with the hopes of their memberships. The Labor Party's leaders seem far too reluctant to break with their more conservative counterparts in the union bureaucracy to enter the electoral arena. The New Party was always explicitly viewed by its leaders as no more than a pressure group, and in the aftermath of the Supreme Court's decision to uphold state laws banning party cross-endorsements, or "fusion," some of them have shifted their hopes to New York's Working Families Party (WFP), which is little more than another ballot line for the Democrats (New York is the only state that allows cross-endorsement).

Two years ago the WFP endorsed a lifeless Democratic hack, Peter Vallone, for governor. This year they went all out for Hillary Clinton's Senate bid. The WFP has a modestly liberal program (very modest: they demand increasing New York's minimum wage to a mere \$6.75 an hour and have the nerve to call it a "living wage") and is supported by some of New York's key unions, so with lots of money and volunteers it was able to blanket New York City (at least the part I live in) with literature that promised that after the election Clinton would realize she could not have won without the WFP and thereby conclude she had better start fighting for universal health insurance and other progressive reforms pronto. Actually, she knows for sure that the folks who run the WFP would have supported her no matter what she did or said, and will do so six years from now even if she spends her entire Senate term in a drunken stupor — consider the illustrious career of her predecessor, Moynihan, who could count on labor's full-throated hurrahs even after he sobered up long enough to help torpedo Hillary Clinton's feeble health care initiative.

Among the leaders of the Labor Party, the New Party and the Working Families Party, there are people with no interest in anything other than acting as a pressure group on the Democrats. But these organizations contain others, more numerous undoubtedly among the rank and file, who have already taken the first hesitant steps toward political independence. Out of these organizations may come the builders of a new progressive third party. Nader and the Greens have taken the initiative, but unions, community organizers, the big environmentalist, feminist, civil rights and gay rights organizations — or significant sections of them — must become involved if such a party has any hope of achieving critical mass. Labor, in particular, can contribute serious numbers and resources, and it is crucial to win sectors of the labor movement to the idea of a

real third party — not the ineffectual half-way houses currently represented by the Labor Party, New Party and WFP. Critics of this view often object that third parties have been tried before, on numerous occasions, and have never worked. But trying to turn the Democratic Party into a people's party has been tried for much longer and by far more people than were ever involved in third party initiatives — and *this* is an experiment that has failed over and over again. It is sheer madness to keep flugging this dead horse.

An Historic Opportunity

THE NADER CAMPAIGN WAS AN EXTRAORDINARY OPPORTUNITY — an opportunity for progressives to tap into popular disillusionment with the two party system and to take advantage of a well-known and highly-respected candidate. Except for a handful of small unions, such as the California Nurses Association, labor let it pass, and so did feminist, environmentalist, gay rights and black and Latino organizations. Worse, many of their leaders worked furiously to crush the Nader campaign. They were the real “spoilers.” Whether or not these leaders have succeeded in killing the new party at birth remains to be seen. Also unclear at this point is the extent to which Nader's own mistakes and political blindspots have retarded and will continue to inhibit the emergence of a significant third party.

There are grounds for optimism, though, because a breakthrough, however modest and uncertain, has been made. But building a third party requires clarity. Even among Nader supporters there was a quite widespread, and contradictory, wish to both build a third party and avoid “hurting” the Democrats. In the weeks before the election, as panic mounted at the prospect of a Republican victory, many Naderites proposed “strategic voting” — voting for Nader only in states considered “safe” for either Gore or Bush, in other words, states where Nader couldn't affect the electoral vote. The logic of strategic voting is fatal to third party politics, however, because it clings to the premise that we can only build one when and where it will not threaten the Democrats. This is impossible. A progressive third party must win mass support from non-voters, who make up half the population and are overwhelmingly poor and working class and disproportionately minority. But it must also eventually win over the bulk of the Democratic Party's base, which is predominately less affluent and heavily non-white as well. Obviously, insofar as former Democratic voters vote for a new party, Democratic candidates may lose and Republicans may win. This is regrettable because Republicans *are* worse than Democrats. But how else can a third party grow large enough to defeat *both* Democrats and Republicans? So, yes, a serious effort to build a progressive third party means accepting the short-term likelihood of electing Republicans — not because this is desirable but because there is no other way.

During the campaign, those progressives who admired Nader and believed in what he stood for but opted for Gore liked to describe their choice as a vote of consequence rather than a vote of conscience, or voting with their head rather than voting with their heart. But there was nothing hard-headed or realistic about voting for Gore, and its consequence is the continuation of a brutal, unjust and ever-worsening status quo. Voting for Nader was the most tough-minded realism; it was a recognition that bringing about change requires clarity, consistency and radicalism.

The Nader Campaign and The Future of the Greens

Howie Hawkins

THE THREE PERCENT VOTE FOR RALPH NADER in the 2000 presidential election fell short of the widely publicized goal of five percent. Five percent would have qualified the Green Party for public funding for its 2004 presidential convention and campaign. But falling short may have been a blessing in disguise for the Greens by forcing them to continue developing their own self-reliant organizational infrastructure and financing.

By every other measure, Nader and the Greens advanced their primary purpose of building the Green Party as an alternative to the corporate parties. The Nader campaign multiplied many times the number of people now invested in the Green Party as voters, contributors, volunteers, and experienced campaigners.

Four hundred and sixty-three thousand signatures were collected to put Nader on the ballot in forty-three states and the District of Columbia. Nader's vote guaranteed ballot qualification in future elections for the Green Party in twenty-one states and D.C. These jurisdictions cover about seventy-five percent of the U.S. population. While refusing all PAC contributions, the campaign held over 600 house parties and raised nearly \$8 million in small contributions. 150,000 volunteers are on the databases of the national campaign and the state and local Green Party organizations to which they were referred. 25,000 student volunteers registered tens of thousands of new voters. Exit polls indicate the campaign brought out about one million new voters who otherwise would have not voted.

Some one hundred campaign staff were hired for two offices in D.C. and nineteen field offices in various states, with every state having at least one paid field coordinator. With the help of this field staff, over five hundred local Green groups and nine hundred campus Green groups organized and distributed eight million pieces of literature and one million buttons, bumperstickers, and yard signs. Two unions — the California Nurses Association and the United Electoral workers — endorsed Nader outright. UAW and Teamsters leaders publicly flirted with Nader, if only to send Gore a message on trade issues.

Nader campaigned in all fifty states, the only presidential candidate to do so. His campaign rallies were the biggest by far for any candidate, with 15,000 at Madison Square Garden in New York City, 14,000 at the Target Center in Minneapolis, 12,000 at the Fleet Center in Boston, and 10,000 each at the Pavilion in Chicago, the Coliseum in Portland, and the MCI Center in Washing-

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ton, D.C.

The campaign brought two lawsuits against the Commission on Presidential Debates, which despite its official-sounding name is a private organization jointly created and controlled by the Democratic and Republican parties. The first suit claimed that corporate funding of the Commission is in violation of the 1907 law banning corporate contributions to federal candidates. This lost in the trial court, but an appeal is being considered. The second pending suit deals with Nader's exclusion from even witnessing the Boston and St. Louis presidential debates, where Nader had tickets for admission and Fox and Pacifica news broadcasts wanted his on-site commentary. Eleven more lawsuits were initiated to challenge barriers to ballot access. The campaign also successfully defended itself from a lawsuit by Mastercard, which objected to a Nader TV-ad parody of the familiar Mastercard commercial by claiming it had a trademark on "priceless."

As for other Green Party candidates, 266 of them won thirty-two of their races, bringing the total number of Greens holding elected office to seventy-six in nineteen states, all of them municipal or county offices. In losing races for state and federal office, the Greens showed growth. They still have a long way to go to beat the two corporate parties, but results showed the Greens are becoming the principal opposition party in many of the essentially one-party districts that are gerrymandered by the corporate parties to create safe seats for their incumbents.

An encouraging result was that the independent left-wing populist, Nader, received six times more votes than the independent right-wing populist, Patrick Buchanan. In the last comparable four-way race for president in 1948, Dixiecrat Strom Thurmond slightly out-pollled the Progressive, Henry Wallace, with both receiving two percent of the vote. Another way to put Nader's Green Party candidacy in perspective is to note that the Socialist Party's Eugene Debs received more than three percent only once in his five runs for president, and that was six percent in the four-way race of 1912, when the Democrats won easily because the Republicans split between Taft and Roosevelt. The Socialists' few thousand local, state, and federal, elected officials by 1912 well surpassed where the Greens are now. But Nader's three million votes give the Greens the opportunity to organize their voters into local Green Party organizations that can begin to have the same kind of impact in the coming years.

Corporate Media Attack Nader

ALTHOUGH NADER IMMEDIATELY SURGED AHEAD OF BUCHANAN once he was included in the polls, for months the media still spoke of a three-way race in which Buchanan, not Nader, was the third candidate. Once it became unavoidably clear that Nader was a factor, his candidacy was always framed in terms of how it would help Bush defeat Gore. *The New York Times* set the tone with a June 30th editorial declaring Nader's candidacy "a self-indulgent exercise that will distract voters from the clear-cut choice represented by the major party candidates." *The Times* ran five editorials on this theme over the next five months. Even though Nader was polling between four and seven percent in the fall, and sixty-four percent wanted him in the presidential debates, a study of network nightly news coverage for Labor Day through mid-October found that the net-

works had 211 stories on Gore, 214 stories on Bush, and only four on Nader.

Along with the 500 press releases, the campaign issued scores of position papers.¹ But what news coverage there was invariably focused on Nader's impact on the Bush-Gore horse race, not on Nader's platform. Meanwhile, the pro-Democratic opinion journals began constant attacks on Nader in July, after he got a bump in the polls following the Green Party convention. Their basic approach was to scare progressives with the Right. The closer it got to the election, the stronger the vote-for-Nader-is-a-vote-for-Bush refrain became.

Alongside this Right Scare theme, there was a Red Scare sub-theme. An article by Jonathan Chait in *The New Republic*, whose publisher, Martin Peretz, is close to Al Gore, initiated this line of attack. It was then recycled in columns by James Lileks for Newhouse News Service, Anna Quindlen for *Newsweek*, and many others. These articles distorted the Platform and the Program of The Greens/Green Party USA (GPUSA) to make the Greens sound like authoritarian Communists and flaky vegetarians at the same time. Abolition of the U.S. Senate was taken out of its context in a plank calling for a unicameral Congress elected by proportional representation to make the Greens sound anti-democratic. An "economic democracy" plank calling for conversion of the largest banks and corporations to more humanly-scaled cooperatives and public enterprises was rendered as "Nationalization of the Fortune 500," with allusions to a Soviet-style command economy. A call for inclusion in public health education programs of curricula covering the ecological, anti-hunger, and health benefits of vegetarian diets was termed "mandatory indoctrination in vegetarianism." Chait said Nader did not really support the Green platform and was engaged in a Clinton-style "triangulation" between the Greens on his left and the Democrats on his right. In fact, Nader had endorsed a different but largely compatible platform drafted by the Association of State Green Parties (ASGP) and had the full support of GPUSA as well as ASGP.²

In the end, however, it was clear to the Nader campaigners on the ground that the Right Scare, not the Red Scare, was winning over the wavering liberals. Apparently this was also clear to the Democrats, because they concentrated on the Right Scare message in the last weeks of the campaign.

Gore's Corporate Agenda Obscured

WHILE THE CORPORATE LIBERALS IN THE MEDIA INDUSTRY slanted news coverage and editorials against Nader, the institutional liberals of the Washington-based lobbies stumped as Gore surrogates. In the last weeks of the campaign, the Sierra Club, the National Organization for Women (NOW), the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), and other liberal groups spent more than six million dollars on ads aimed at winning Nader voters over to Gore. Preferring "access" and symbolism from the Democrats to substantive policies, the institutional liberals attacked Nader as a "spoiler" and an "egomaniac." Even though Nader's thirty-five years of realizing a wealth of progressive legislation and litigation more than equaled the combined resumes of his detractors, not to mention those of Bush and Gore, these critics called Nader "politically naïve."

Gore assembled a group of former Nader's Raiders for Gore, led by Toby Moffet who had long ago sold out and become a paid lobbyist for Monsanto. Greens referred to them as Nader's Traitors. Congressman Barney Frank ap-

pealed to lesbian and gay voters, providing cover for Gore's support of Don't Ask, Don't Tell and the Defense of Marriage Act. Gloria Steinem, NOW, and NARAL focused on abortion rights, obscuring Gore's record as the principal Senate sponsor of the Hyde Amendment, which banned Medicaid abortions, and his pandering to the right by calling for a ban on late-term abortions during the campaign. Ironically, while NOW maintained an anti-Nader section in one part of its website, another section was selling a Nader book, *Why Women Pay More*. The Washington-based peace lobbies also went after Nader voters, hiding Gore's call for more military spending than Bush, as well as the Democratic platform's militaristic warning against very modest Republican nuclear disarmament proposals. Jesse Jackson and other black Democrats campaigned against Nader, diverting attention from the great reduction in civil rights litigation by the Justice Department under Clinton/Gore compared to Reagan/Bush; from the War on Drugs, which had incarcerated over a million African Americans and disenfranchised their vote; and from Gore's attempt to eliminate federal affirmative action in hiring and contracting under his "Reinventing Government" program. With AFL-CIO president John Sweeney leading the charge, many labor leaders attacked Nader as a spoiler while imposing no consequences on Gore for his support of NAFTA and WTO.

Perhaps the most hypocritical of the institutional liberals was the Sierra Club's Carl Pope. While Pope attacked Nader, Congress passed and Clinton signed a slew of anti-environmental riders attached to appropriations bills in the last weeks of the campaign. These riders delayed work on global warming, clean drinking water standards, and environmental justice claims. Two funded damaging water projects in southern Colorado and North Dakota. Another overturned a judge's order protecting the endangered Steller Sea Lions' habitat in Alaska. Another blocked new rules to protect National Parks from unrestricted snowmobiling. Pope and other Washington-based environmental lobbyists continued to castigate Nader in the weeks after the election for spoiling Gore's election. Meanwhile, Gore's environmental appointees sabotaged the global climate talks in The Hague with demands that the U.S. be able to count its forests as carbon sinks so that it could increase its carbon releases.

Liberal opponents of Nader also mobilized a cyberwar against the campaign headquarters and all the Green email lists and addresses they could find. MoveOn.com, the group that had mobilized cyberspace in defense of Clinton during impeachment, took the lead. The campaign headquarters received 50,000 copies of a MoveOn.com form letter in the last week of the campaign, sabotaging its ability to respond to supporters' requests for information and help. Although deleted as fast as they came in, one staffer did notice that the Communist Party USA sent the form letter, no doubt feeling they were doing their part in building an anti-fascist popular front with the New Democrats against the old Republicans.

While the institutional liberals tried to shore up the left flank of the Democratic coalition, many prominent activists fought back. Barbara Ehrenreich made the case for a Nader vote to the women's movement. David Brower, the dean of U.S. environmentalists, campaigned for Nader and, just before he died at the age of eighty-eight on November 5th, cast an absentee ballot for Nader. A number of well-known black activists spoke up for Nader, including Randall Robinson, Mel King, Manning Marable, Ron Daniels, Gerald Horne, Cornell West, and

Danny Glover.

Not every Democrat attacked Nader. Some converted to the Greens or began making overtures. Matt Gonzales, a Democrat running for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, switched his enrollment to the Green Party in the middle of the campaign, saying he could no longer stomach the Democrats' hypocrisy on economic justice and gay rights issues. He won his seat against a Democrat backed by Mayor Willie Brown's corporate soft money machine. Cynthia McKinney, an African-American Democratic congressional representative from Atlanta, has hired Green Party members on to her staff and sent video greetings to a post-election ASGP meeting in which she talked about working together for proportional representation, justice for still-imprisoned victims of COINTELPRO, and a democratic restructuring of the global economy.

The biggest fear of the Nader campaign was that his media presence would disappear during the major party conventions in August, leading his support to wither in the stretch after Labor Day. Nader's media coverage and support did slump in September. But after he was excluded from the first presidential debate on October 3rd, his support immediately jumped to seven percent. Nader held his own at between four and six percent in the polls through October. By the last weeks of the campaign, Gore could no longer ignore him, nor could the media. The tracking and exit polls show that their negative attention cost Nader two or three million votes in the last days and probably the five-percent benchmark. Besides these very public attacks, there were also ominous overtures from the "highest levels" of the Democratic administration promising funding for Nader projects if he swung his support to Gore, and threatening destruction of his funding base if he did not. He did not, and immediately after the campaign there was another torrent of commentary about how Nader was now a pariah with no friends left in government or in his traditional funding base. But every assault has only seemed to stiffen Nader's commitment to building the Green Party as an independent alternative to corporate politics.

The experienced campaign managers that Nader had initially tried to hire declined, fearing they could never work again for Democrats if they worked for Nader. So Nader hired activists from Nader-affiliated advocacy groups, the Greens, and recent social movements. Generally in their twenties and thirties, racially diverse, and predominantly women, they ran a campaign that political columnist David Broder judged the best of the presidential campaigns. Dismissing the Green Party as a "collection of oddballs," Broder said Nader's "greatest feat was shifting the focus of his followers to....a useful fiction, Nader's invention of the Green Party as a scourge of special interest government...."³ In fact, this was no late strategy shift. Building the Green Party as a permanent independent political force was something Nader and the Greens had discussed as a central goal in June 1999 when they first considered his 2000 candidacy.

The Future of the Greens

THE NADER CAMPAIGN HAS LEFT THE GREENS WITH THE RAW MATERIALS for an independent, progressive political party that is a substantial force in American politics. The task now is to build a precinct-by-precinct organization that can counter corporate media hostility and corporate funding for major party candidates with a palpable, personalized Green presence at the grassroots. The Greens have the

150,000 campaign volunteers to start with. Beyond that are a core of nearly three million voters who withstood the strong campaign directed at them to vote for the lesser evil in a very close election. And beyond that are the ten million voters who, polls indicate, wanted to support Nader as their first choice, and an additional ten million who “would consider voting for Nader,” according to a Zogby/MSNBC poll in the spring.

To do this massive organizing effectively, the Greens will need to transform the way they have handled their political differences. ASGP/GPUSA competition has slowed down the organizational development of the Greens, preventing the development of an effective funding base, staff support for organizing, and a political culture in which differences can be debated and voted upon instead of used as weapons in the organizational competition. This transformation may be at hand. Negotiating teams from the two groups hammered out a proposal in Boston the weekend before the first presidential debate. ASGP dissolves, and a statutory Green Party based on party committees elected in primaries is created by the state Green Parties. GPUSA becomes Greens USA (or some other non-“party” name) and continues to operate as a dues-paying membership organization for Green Party activists, as a national federation of Green Party clubs. The proposal does not create unity in the sense of a merger, but hopes to create harmony between the party’s statutory committees and the movement’s membership organizations. The proposal has gone back to both groups for approval.

Nader’s focus on economic class issues did more to bring class politics into the Greens than Left Greens were able to do in the previous fifteen years. The Greens will now have to build upon these declared positions with practical campaigns. If the Greens are going to develop into a party that can challenge the corporate parties, they are going to have to reach the non-voters concentrated in the lower two-thirds of the income distribution. With Nader’s encouragement, Greens are beginning to open storefront offices to help neighborhood people access public services and fight city hall. Greens hope to convince working people that they are on their side with deeds and not just words.

The Nader campaign has been criticized for being color- and gender-blind and trying to subsume all oppression under the rubric of class. This criticism is more a legacy of Nader’s narrower focus in 1996 than a realistic description of the 2000 campaign. A look at the speeches, press releases, and position papers on the Nader web site helps to dispel this criticism. But it persists in part because while Nader, and his vice-presidential running mate, Winona LaDuke, may have said the right things, the corporate media rarely reported them. The campaign did make concerted efforts to appear in communities of color. Right after the nominating convention, Nader campaigned in housing projects in South Central Los Angeles. He spoke to the NAACP convention for restoring enforcement of civil rights and affirmative action programs, for reparations for slavery, and for a Marshall Plan for the cities. He addressed a Harlem meeting hosted by Reverend Al Sharpton on the last day of the campaign. But these events were exceptions to the usually unsuccessful attempts to speak at churches and community centers where patronage and preferment ties to the Democratic Party made Nader unwelcome. The campaign was weak in linking up to the activist organizations in communities of color that could have mobilized more support.⁴ These are alliances that must now be developed if the Green Party is to expand beyond its core base of well-educated white activists.

The post-election struggle in Florida between Bush and Gore exposed official racism in the suppression of the black vote, partisan bias, and general incompetence in the whole election process. Nationally, Gore won the popular vote, but Bush won the electoral vote and therefore the presidency. These developments create an opportunity for the Greens to push to the center of political debate many of the pro-democracy reforms they have been advocating, including strong enforcement of the Voting Rights Act, abolition of the Electoral College and its replacement by direct election of the president using instant runoff voting, proportional representation in legislative bodies, D.C. statehood, and voting rights for ex-felons and prisoners. Nader continues to push for public funding of public elections and is now calling for a People's Debate Commission to open the presidential debates to third parties. The Greens are already participating with other organizations in the Independent Progressive Politics Network in a Pro-Democracy Campaign to push these reforms.

NADER IS LEAVING OPEN THE OPTION OF ANOTHER RUN FOR PRESIDENT. In the meantime, he has kept the core of his campaign staff on to convert the campaign organization into one that can support the Green Party in a number of ways. Nader wants to help the Green Party link up with other citizen groups to fight together on issues like utility deregulation, living wages, and universal health care. He wants to help recruit good candidates for the Green Party. Along with the People's Debate Commission, his most ambitious idea is a Congressional Accountability Project with paid field staff in congressional districts to watchdog representatives, disseminate information, mobilize around congressional legislation, and leverage the 3 million Green votes into an independent influence on Congress. Some activists are calling on Nader to participate in a Shadow Cabinet that provides ongoing commentary on the new administration's policies.

During the Reagan/Bush years, liberals and radicals tended to coalesce in support of Democratic candidates to defeat the right. The Rainbow Coalition epitomized this tendency. In the 1990s, the Clinton/Gore administration showed that the Democrats hardly qualify as even a lesser evil. They enacted a more conservative program than the Republicans had been able to enact, from welfare cuts and budgets balanced on the backs of working people to a dangerous erosion of civil liberties and a new military build-up. The Nader campaign divided liberals from radicals to a degree we have not seen since the late 1960s with the escalation of the war in Vietnam. This time the division is over independent politics. The liberals remain committed to a gradualism through the Democratic Party that does not even offer progressive reforms, but merely claims to put a brake on Republican regression. The radicals have declared for a complete break with corporate politics, for political independence from the corporate power structure and its parties. The question now is, can radicals go out and organize the base that came together loosely around the Nader candidacy into a viable alternative political party? The opportunity is here. The Green Party is poised to be the electoral arm of the new left movement that surfaced in the Seattle demonstrations against the WTO at the end of 1999.

The Greens are also in a position to link up with the grassroots of the older progressive movements that the established labor, civil rights, women's, peace, and environmental organizations represent. These movements have withered

at the grassroots because their liberal leadership has traded leadership “access” to the power structure for popular power based on mass action. Ralph Nader, on the other hand, who could be considered the last principled liberal, is going the other way. After a career as an extremely effective public interest lobbyist, he explains his turn to electoral politics as necessary because the citizen groups have been shut out in Washington by the overweening influence of corporate money. He frequently said during the campaign that “democracy is the great problem solver” and that the key is to “help people band together as consumers, workers, taxpayers, and citizens to act on their own behalf.” The rank and file of the liberal organizations may be open to a new independent mobilization because their leaders are more concerned with lobbying than organizing. Perhaps the most important thing the Greens can do now is to connect with these rank-and-file activists and develop issue-driven campaigns with them that re-energize their movements and bring them into the Green Party.

NOTES

1. Nader’s press releases, position papers, and speeches can be found at www.votenader.org.

2. James Lileks, “Look Behind Nader’s Plan,” *Newhouse News Service*, July 13, 2000; Anna Quindlen, “Nader and the Push for Purity,” *Newsweek*, August 28, 2000; Jonathan Chait, “Slick Ralphie: Nader Learns to Triangulate,” *The New Republic*, July 10 & 17, 2000. The GPUSA platform can be found at www.greenparty.org and the ASGP platform at www.green-party.org.

3. David Broder, “Nader Running the Best Campaign,” *Washington Post*, November 5, 2000.

4. Ron Daniels, “Nader, Green Party Bungle Chance To Reach Blacks,” *The Black World Today*, October 17, 2000, www.tbwt.com/views/rd/rd_10-17-00.asp.

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An Interview with Daniel Lazare

A Real Constitutional Crisis

Interview by Kent Worcester

Kent Worcester: *In a recent statement in The New York Times, an emergency committee of concerned citizens, including Eric Alterman, Ronald Dworkin, Paul Newman and Sean Wilentz, said that the uncertain results of the election are threatening to produce a constitutional crisis that challenges the legitimacy of our national political process. Are we in the midst of a constitutional crisis?*

Daniel Lazare: I would quarrel with their statement by saying that it's not threatening to — we are in a constitutional crisis, which I welcome. The important point is that the ancient machinery is breaking down, and the most fundamental task of democracy — which is to run a clean, honest and most important, accurate election — is not being met. The system is just falling apart as it tries to go about this task. The thing I would quarrel with this ad, is that it's focused on the Palm Beach county vote. First of all, it's very important to point out that the election's already been decided, we already have a winner, that winner is Al Gore. I didn't vote for Al Gore, I voted for the Socialist Workers Party candidate. But Al Gore has won a plurality of the popular vote, and according to international democratic standards he should be president. The Electoral College is a meaningless holdover, a completely woebegone piece of 18th century machinery, and I think the important thing for democratic reformers to do is to point up the impossibility of this machinery, its undemocratic nature, and hence its inapplicability to the current contest. Gore won the election, and therefore Gore should take office.

KW: *Gore won the election on democratic grounds rather than constitutional grounds, but most of the time Americans believe that the Constitution is our instrument for democracy.*

DL: Of course, and this is showing the fallacy of that approach. The Constitution has broken down on a number of grounds. The machinery has proved inadequate in terms of counting votes, and number two, the Electoral College has diverged from the popular vote, which is intolerable. In a democracy, the people decide, and the people have decided. They cast a plurality of votes for Gore.

DANIEL LAZARE is the author of *The Frozen Republic: How the Constitution Is Paralyzing Democracy* (Harcourt Brace, 1996), which *The Nation* criticized for its "idealistic majoritarianism." His second book, *America's Undeclared War, a study of U.S. urban policy*, is due from Harcourt this spring. He is also at work on a book about the electoral college for Verso. KENT WORCESTER is a member of the New Politics editorial board.

KW: *How concerned are you about the issues surrounding the votes in Florida per se — the confusing butterfly ballots or the returns in predominantly black districts that were disqualified in large numbers?*

DL: I'm very concerned. I think the inability to hold a competent election is a damning indictment of the American system. It's damning when you have this high number of wasted, discounted, disregarded votes, which the system is too clumsy to tally. That's very important. But the point is that the final outcome cannot hinge on the final vote in a few counties in Florida, because, as I said before, it's been decided nationwide.

KW: *Let's talk about the Electoral College for a minute. Advocates of the Electoral College say that it ensures that candidates seek support in smaller states and that the geographic spread of the country is represented in the democratic system. How do you respond to that?*

DL: The geographic spread is represented at the expense of the demographic structure of the country. The Electoral College, as everyone knows at this point, awards electors from each state according to the number of people as sent to Washington in both the Senate and the House. So, therefore, the seven smallest states, which elect only 1 representative to the House each, see their clout trebled, because they wind up with three electors, one for each representative plus the two senators they send as well. The next six smallest states, which elect two representatives, effectively have their clout doubled for the same reason, because the two senators they elect, and I believe it's the next four or five which elect three congressmen, have their clout increased by two-thirds. This is undemocratic, it's a violation of the principle of one person/one vote, one of the ineluctable principles of political democracy. And it's intolerable, and the fact that it's more unchangeable now than it was two centuries ago is even more intolerable.

KW: *Why is it more unchangeable now than it was two centuries ago?*

DL: Because according to Article 5 in the Constitution, the amending clause, thirteen states, one-fourth of the states plus one, can veto any constitutional amendment. In 1790, the population ratio of the largest to the smallest state was 11 to 1, today it's 62 to 1 or better. Thirteen states representing as little as 4.5 percent of the population can veto any constitutional amendment, whereas, similarly, thirty-eight states representing less than 50 percent of the population can ram through any Constitutional amendment, so that this requirement is increasingly divergent from any coherent concept of democracy. It allows tiny minorities to veto the popular will, which is undemocratic and a powerful force in favor of the status quo, by the way.

The Electoral College & Democracy

KW: *Some people have suggested that the Electoral College be reformed, that it be constituted on the basis of House of Representatives membership, thus doing away with the automatic two votes for the Senate. Is that the kind of reform that would make the Electoral College more responsive to the will of the majority?*

DL: It would certainly be a step in the right direction, only a small step though. The important point is that it's unreformable. If at least seventeen states have their clout in presidential elections significantly magnified by the Electoral College, you can assume that at least thirteen states will veto any effort to do away with this undemocratic provision. It's unchangeable. You have a situation where a mechanism will simply not do the bidding of the democratic majority. A majority of the U.S. population lives in just nine states, believe it or not, and there's no way that those nine states can make their feelings known through these ancient, Madisonian mechanisms.

KW: *Federalism implies that each state offers a distinctive political environment or political culture. Was that argument once true but is no longer true? And aren't there advantages to federalism in that it allows states to go in different directions and experiment with different kinds of policies?*

DL: Well, I've never been much of a fan of pluralism. But first of all, to put this on a realistic footing, the question of each state having its own distinctive brand of politics was obviously a very self-serving argument from the point of view of those southern states in 1787 which already felt beleaguered and hemmed in by the more dynamic economies of the northern states. "Distinctive political cultures" was obviously a euphemism for the right to hold slaves in perpetuity. I'm all in favor of the concept of states as laboratories of democracy, but I'm not in favor of the idea of American-style federalism when it becomes a mechanism for fragmenting and atomizing the popular will and impeding the emergence of any kind of coherent, democratic point of view.

KW: *Critics of constitutional reform say that if you give equal weight to all votes, if you nationalize the vote system, you will increase the scope for ballot fraud, and the scope for challenges to each and every vote.*

DL: That's untrue — if you nationalize the voting system, you nationalize the election system, which means first and foremost creating a nonpartisan, honest, federal mechanism for the conduct and oversight of elections. Americans would demand and presumably receive an honest, efficient mechanism for the conduct of elections from coast to coast. This is what other countries take for granted, but America is stuck with a nineteenth-century system based on an incredible fragmentation, a localist system of stupendous inefficiency just ripe for abuses and foul-ups. These people couldn't organize a two-car funeral, much less put together a coherent, meaningful, honest election.

KW: *What about Nader? Although constitutional issues weren't at the heart of his campaign, he certainly raised democratic reforms, such as same-day registration, longer hours for voting, public financing of elections, and so on. Why didn't Nader get your vote as somebody who believes in constitutional and political reform?*

DL: Well, I'm not a green, I'm a socialist, I'm a red, and I don't especially like Nader either personally or politically. I don't like the Green Party platform very much. I don't believe in decentralization. I think this election has shown the horrors of decentralization. I'm a democratic centralist who believes we have to put together efficient, centralized, democratic mechanisms for running society.

Green talk about community control is really just pernicious nonsense, as I believe this election has shown.

KW: *On the other hand, the Nader phenomenon went way beyond the actual Green platform. It opened up space for debate on all kinds of issues that the two parties were intent on keeping out of the political process.*

DL: It represented a small opening-up, I agree, but I think it's still very important to cast a vote for the socialist alternative and to emphasize, as schismatic or sectarian as it sounds, the difference between a green and red critique of the American democratic process.

KW: *So as a quote red, rather than a quote green, you would support the establishment of a parliamentary system? Can you do that within the framework of the Constitution, and are there voices on the political spectrum that now support a parliamentary system?*

DL: The answer is no, you cannot move to a parliamentary system within the current framework. A parliamentary system rests on a completely different philosophy, a completely different concept of democracy. I would say rather that it rests upon democracy period, whereas the U.S. Constitution is a pre-democratic document that only incompletely, and contradictorily, incorporates democratic ideas. The Founders were living both on the edge of the modern era and on the edge of the modern world. People have argued as to whether they were conservative or radical; I think they were an extremely heterogeneous body, and I think in some ways they were very progressive in fighting for national unification. By the same token, they just lived in a different ideological world from our own. All sides of political debate in 1787 regarded democracy as a variant of mob rule, that democracy equaled anarchy equaled disorder. There was simply no concept of a democratic order emerging. This is a nineteenth century concept that derives from the Jacobins, the Utilitarians, and the Marxists, who in the 1870s in Germany invented the concept of the mass party. Any modern notion of parliamentarism rests upon the principle of the *demos* establishing a coherent, rational order, something that the American system holds is the last thing democracy is capable of achieving.

Legitimacy, Clean-Up & Reform

KW: *Should this election be viewed as illegitimate?*

DL: I think it should be viewed as illegitimate. I think whatever outcome results will be unsatisfactory to one side or the other. I think the legitimacy of the presidency is being called into question in this election, and I cannot see how it can be resolved one way or the other. After all, if Newt Gingrich was unwilling to acknowledge the legitimacy of Bill Clinton's election in 1992, as in fact he was, his Republican successors on Capitol Hill will be doubly or triply unwilling to acknowledge the legitimacy of an Al Gore presidency under such circumstances. Similarly, I think it's obvious that Gore's supporters would never acknowledge the legitimacy of a Bush presidency solely on the basis of the Electoral College.

KW: *Did the Framers intend for the U.S. system to be structured around two parties?*

DL: No, no. The party system was a product of the 1790s. Everyone in Philadelphia in 1787 was of one mind in decrying any move towards factionalism or party politics. That concept was alien to the original concept of American government, and it was viewed with fear and distaste across the board. Someone like George Washington for example, his whole concept of a statesman-like role was to be above mere factional squabbles, which were seen as inherently, intrinsically corrupt.

KW: *Until this recent election crisis, whenever the concrete workings of the political system came up it would be framed in terms of campaign finance reform. Are you interested in campaign finance reform?*

DL: Oh, it's a very important area, but I just think that issue is also insoluble under the present system. In a highly balkanized, fragmented system where you have two houses of congress, the presidency, each of which is extremely opaque from the point of view of the individual voter, the results are extremely inefficient; therefore, this is a happy hunting ground for lobbyists of all sorts. The only way to limit the pernicious effects of money and behind-closed-doors lobbying is by radically simplifying the governing mechanisms and by making them transparent. When they're both simplified and transparent, this kind of back-door lobbying or influence-wielding becomes extremely difficult. Therefore, it's not simply a matter of regulation, as liberals phrase it; if it's going to be real, it has to be part of a meaningful restructuring of American government, and more than restructuring, a meaningful re-thinking of American government.

KW: *But who has a stake in that kind of political reform? The two parties have a stake in the existing system, although it might be reformed to one degree or another. Presumably, law schools and the lawyers they produce have a stake in the existing system. And the Reform Party failed in its effort to reform American politics. Where's the constituency for democratic, parliamentary politics?*

DL: The constituency is obviously the people at large, but more importantly it's the working class and the lower-middle class, the whole vast category known as working Americans, who have been victimized by the economy of the 90s and by the deteriorating political and social environment, and have been shut out of power by the galloping corruption in Washington. Most people have a direct personal and political interest in cleaning up American government and strengthening or reforming or restoring to some semblance of good health American democracy.

A Rare Political Opening

KW: *Are there organizations they can join or petitions they can sign? Or is this something that might emerge as a result of the contradictions that exist with the existing constitutional system?*

DL: I think the constitutional crisis that we're seeing is a political opening, a rare political opening. It's one of the most important political openings we've

seen in decades, if not longer. Just to cite a historical analogy: in 1832, Britain had its famous reform bill. It represented a very important re-constitutionalization of the British polity. Within five years after that reform bill, the British working class entered politics in a direct, undisguised fashion with the Chartist movement. I think that the constitutional crisis we're seeing now could be the first opening of the door to a reconsideration of the Constitution and some kind of re-constitutionalization of the United States, which in turn could open the door to the American working class entering politics in a similarly direct and unencumbered fashion. And that, I think, will be the source of a revamping of American politics.

KW: *Is the first significant constitutional crisis since the Civil War?*

DL: I think it potentially could be the most significant constitutional crisis since the Civil War. In searching for analogies with regard to Watergate, the Vietnam War, the New Deal, etc. — each of those was solved within the confines of the existing constitutional framework. I think that this problem, while it can be contained, it can be bottled up, it can never be resolved within the existing framework, because as I said before, I can't imagine what kind of solution can come out of this mess that will somehow impose legitimacy on whichever candidate is chosen president, legitimacy in the eyes of both Republicans and Democrats. I think whatever happens, one party will see the other as a usurper, and will go into a kind of —

KW: *Cold war?*

DL: A kind of a cold-war-style rebellion. On Capitol Hill, I see a deepening gridlock, an ever more poisonous atmosphere, but most important of all, I don't see any way this division can be resolved under the existing framework.

KW: *Some readers will say, yes, but nobody in American politics actually talks outside of the constitutional framework. There are plenty of voices for democratic reform and change in the United States, but almost no one talks critically about the Constitution itself, in its entirety. An editorial board member wondered if this isn't the equivalent of trying to rewrite the laws of gravity.*

DL: Well, it's an incredibly impoverished point of view, because the laws of gravity are natural laws. The Constitution is not a natural law. It was not created by God, unless you're a believer in 18th-century natural law ideology. It was not imposed by nature. It is an artificial construct made by mortal human beings. The first task of reformers, of democrats, of socialists, is to expose the mortality of this framework, to show that it's not supra-political, it's not meta-political, it's a product of politics, and therefore it can be changed through politics. I can't think of anything more dangerous than somehow contributing to this myth of the unchangeable, unassailable, unknowable Constitution.

KW: *This still leaves us with the question of how we go about re-constitutionalizing U.S. politics. Do we form citizens' committees, publish books and articles and pamphlets? Do we start a third party or join an existing third party? What's the means by which these kinds of big questions about the Constitution can be raised?*

DL: Well, we have an organized labor movement, a working-class movement. In other countries, organized labor would have taken a more active role in a crisis like this. Organized labor would have seen its role as a political role, one of representing and protecting the interests of the working class. And at some point, the unions must face the fact that protecting democratic interests means fighting for a more coherent and modern definition of democracy. It means opposing the Electoral College, which, as we've seen, is a complete affront to any notion of one person/one vote. And if the fact is that the Electoral College is unchangeable under the existing constitutional mechanisms, then it's going to force the organized labor movement to essentially challenge it directly and frontally. This is a time for the labor movement to fight for a new concept of law in this country.

The Constitution as a Prison

KW: *But I know there are people who would say, look, for all its flaws, the Constitution has provided the framework within which the U.S. has achieved tremendous social stability plus economic growth. Compared to, say, France, which has gone through five republics in a comparable period, the U.S. for all its limitations as a democratic country has survived and weathered many storms, and defenders of the Constitution will say the U.S. will survive this political crisis because the Constitution is so beautifully organized that it can handle any temporary emergency.*

DL: What does that word "handle" mean? The British constitution survived unchanged any number of crises in the 18th century. It could endure, it could "handle," it could absorb these shocks, but whether it does so to the satisfaction of working Americans is another question. Of course America has endured. It's a major economic power. But looking back over the history of the American republic, in the 19th century we saw one of the most horrendous military episodes, the Civil War, we saw Pax Britannica, we saw genocidal policies toward Native Americans, we saw slavery, which not only persisted in this country a full generation longer than it did in the British West Indies, but also was resolved in an extremely unsatisfactory manner. As everyone knows, ex-slaves were pushed down into a kind of serfdom that in many ways is even worse than the original slavery that persisted until the 1960s, right into the post-war era. And, of course, we also know that blacks to this day are grievously mistreated, denied their rights. We've seen a whole resurgence of the old Jim Crow policies, especially in the drug war and capital punishment. So yes, it's possible the Constitution will endure. The Constitution of the Venetian republic endured for a thousand years, but by the end it was corrupt, rotten, and sclerotic. So the American Constitution could endure as well, but it will endure to the increasing detriment of the working people who live under it.

KW: *But some progressives would say that at least with this Constitution you have the First Amendment, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, separation of church and state, which has been blurred in recent years, but at least the Constitution does provide some room for progressive views, and for autonomy from an oppressive state.*

DL: But what's the point of a First Amendment if no one has an opportunity to translate progressive views into reasonable, realistic political action? It's a completely immovable political structure. It's a perfect prison, one in which you're able to say whatever you want to say, to speak your mind fully, and full knowledge that whatever words you utter will have no political effect whatsoever. So I think that progressives who take this line are pursuing the most defeatist strategy imaginable.

KW: *Is part of the argument over the Constitution an argument about different forms of identity? The Constitution encourages Americans to see themselves as members of a particular state, and what's implicit in your argument is that city-dwellers are penalized within the framework of the Constitution while rural interests are favored. Is part of your thinking that Americans who live within the most populous states and regions should begin to see ourselves as urban residents, as city people?*

DL: Yes, that is part of my viewpoint. I think the Constitution has to be seen as an anti-urban document, on any number of grounds. First of all, in the most elementary, mechanical way, it exaggerates the clout in the Electoral College and in Congress of the small, underpopulated, mostly Western states. Of the ten smallest states, only two, Rhode Island and Delaware, are urban to any significant degree, so in that very simple, mechanistic way it essentially strengthens rural interests over urban ones. But even more important, the Constitution reflected the agrarian ideas of the great majority of the Founders who were afraid of things like capitalism and urbanization and who wanted to create an essentially agrarian kind of democracy, one which would be slow-moving, deliberative and conservative. This is the essence of the Jeffersonian theory of the republican polity. So the whole theory of checks and balances, of a tripartite government, essentially reflects an agrarian theory of republican politics. An urban theory of democratic politics is one that is by definition majoritarian, it's fast-moving, it's excitable, it's dynamic, as opposed —

KW: — *And accountable* —

DL: And accountable, of course. As opposed to the static, slow-moving, conservative rhythms of the Jeffersonian polity. In a fundamental way, this is an anti-urban document that is against the interests of the urban majority in this country. There's a direct correlation between the constitutional structure of the United States and its social structure, the fact that its cities are among the worst in the world, that it is incapable of putting together a coherent urban policy, that its urban residents are so maltreated and are viewed as second-class citizens, etc.

Democracy vs. Popular Sovereignty

KW: *But I still have to ask: how does one go outside of the constitutional framework? How do you build a politics around problematizing the Constitution?*

DL: The problem, I think, with green ideology, the trouble with American democracy, is it tries to separate democracy from popular sovereignty. There's no coherent concept of popular sovereignty in the U.S. constitutional system. I think it was Blackstone in the 1760s who defined sovereignty as supreme, irrepress-

ible, absolute authority, and popular sovereignty implies a Jacobin concept of the *demos* as not the subject of law but the maker of laws, a force which exerts control over the whole of society. Any attempt to change American politics outside the constitutional framework means the creation *ex nihilo* of a sovereign force to counter this non-sovereign or anti-sovereign political framework, in which the closest thing to a sovereign force is an abstract body of law. Green ideology views sovereignty in Foucaultian terms as essentially oppressive and tyrannical, in a way that's not too dissimilar to the Jeffersonian view. Any kind of Jacobin/Marxist tradition would see sovereignty as, number one, unlimitable, and number two, would believe that liberty could only be achieved through popular sovereignty, not in opposition to popular sovereignty. Freedom is only achieved as society democratizes itself and creates a democratic structure that incorporates these values. Such a structure implies a heightened sense of popular sovereignty, not a diminished sense of popular sovereignty.

KW: *Isn't there a danger in going too far in the opposite direction, in a majoritarian direction that doesn't allow for any protection of political minorities?*

DL: Of course there's a danger — there's always a danger — but there's also a hope as well. I believe that the creation of a truly democratic society will of course lead to the creation of a political structure that structures debate and politics in such a way that the rights of democratic minorities are fully respected by all sides. But as I said, this kind of structure can only be created through a triumph of popular sovereignty, not through the prevention of popular sovereignty.

KW: *So what's a constitution for, if not to mitigate the impact of majority will?*

DL: A constitution is a mechanism by which a sovereign people structure their political environment, by which they determine what kind of society they want to have. They create the mechanisms with which to achieve these goals, and they make clear their aspirations and their principles. But a constitution cannot be over a people, it cannot be a force that acts upon democracy. It must be a product of democracy, rather, a mechanism by which democracy organizes itself.

KW: *So would it be correct to say that what you would like is a second American republic.*

DL: Oh, absolutely. And I would also emphasize that in the struggle for a second American republic, political democratization cannot be separated from democratizing society.

Postscript: The Fabric is Torn

KW: *Last night (December 13th) Al Gore conceded the election, and George W. Bush became the country's president-elect. This followed the U.S. Supreme Court's split decision to prevent a Florida recount. What are the most salient aspects of the past couple of weeks from your perspective?*

DL: The single most salient aspect is the huge tear that the crisis opened in the constitutional fabric. Senator Bob Torricelli, the New Jersey Democrat whose

ruthless fundraising represents all that is most corrupt about American politics, was quoted by *The New York Times* as saying that American government and the Constitution “are more fragile than we might have imagined.” Precisely. Although both sides are now determined to get back to business as usual, the underlying weakness of the system has been exposed.

KW: *Is the constitutional crisis now over? Obviously there will be partisan fights in Washington, and legal challenges to different aspects of the electoral process. But is there any reason to believe that something fundamental has changed in U.S. politics?*

DL: Nothing has changed, and yet everything has changed. The atmosphere on Capitol Hill is angrier than anyone can remember, but also more nervous. Every crisis — Iran-Contra, impeachment, and now this — leaves the system a little weaker than it was before. Hence, people can’t help worrying about the next crisis down the road.

KW: *How would you characterize the response of progressives and the left to the constitutional implications of this election? Have you come across anything that has made you especially hopeful or enraged?*

DL: On the far left, perhaps the most amusing comment came from the Spartacists who, in the November 17th *Workers Vanguard*, described the electoral breakdown as “at this point more like a tempest in a teapot than a political crisis for the bourgeoisie.” Some teapot! In the rad-lib portion of the spectrum, the most interesting thing was the complete absence of Ralph Nader and the Greens. Nader had included a call for electoral reforms in his campaign platform, yet when the crunch came he was nowhere to be seen. I’m not aware of a single public statement on his part concerning the Electoral College or the incompetence of the Florida election officials. Good lawyer that he is, Nader obviously feels he has no “standing” in the dispute between Bush and Gore. He maintained a low profile. Evidently, he views things like political campaigns through strictly bourgeois lenses as something that ceases the moment an election is held. Rather than viewing a campaign as a year-round struggle, he obviously sees it as something that terminates on Election Day, just as the Founders said it should more than two centuries ago. *The Nation’s* call for abolishing the Electoral College in its December 25th issue was commendable, but what are we to make of the editors’ description of the College as “the most undemocratic institution of all”? Have they forgotten the U.S. Senate? If the Electoral College gives small-state voters three times as much clout in presidential elections as those in large states like New York or California, the principle of equal state representation gives them as much sixty times as much clout in the upper house. The problems with the system go much deeper than those good liberals are willing to admit.

Welfare Reform

The War Against the Poor

Betty Reid Mandell

I GO TO THE HOMELESS UNIT of the Boston Department of Transitional Assistance (a.k.a. the Department of Welfare) as a volunteer for the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless to tell people that they still have rights, and to help them get the help they are entitled to. They are entitled to less and less as welfare reform is implemented and as rents skyrocket. Once upon a time, welfare gave assistance to unemployed people who had used up their unemployment compensation. No more. Once upon a time there was rent control in Boston. No more.

The Homeless Unit feels like a war zone of refugees. I feel like a war reporter as I tell their stories. There is a war going on against the poor, and most fiercely against people of color. The DTA treats all of its clients as unwelcome guests whom the host wants to get rid of as soon as possible, and the host is not subtle about it. Clients are not allowed to eat in the waiting room, not even give bottles to babies. If clients park in the parking lot of the Burger King next door, they are towed immediately. When I discuss this with the security guard (one of four, including two State Police), he grouches about clients who don't read the (small) sign on the door telling them not to park in the Burger King lot, and says it's their fault if they get towed. (These people are homeless and strapped for cash, and it costs \$50 to reclaim their car.)

At a meeting of the Mass Coalition for the Homeless where we discuss our work, I say that it would be so easy to solve these problems for the clients. DTA could easily afford to put signs in the parking lot to tell clients where to park. And forbidding homeless families to eat while they are waiting for shelter, sometimes for an entire day, is cruel. A lawyer from Greater Boston Legal Services agrees that it would be easy to be humane to clients, but the DTA follows a policy of "calculated cruelty" to intimidate people and discourage them from asking for help.

HERE ARE STORIES THAT PEOPLE TOLD ME. They are fairly typical of normal days at the Homeless Unit, days full of unrelieved misery:

A woman with three children is looking for a decent shelter. Welfare placed them in a motel in Malden (a suburb of Boston), which she said is a terrible place. It is drug-

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infested, and couples come in for a couple of hours for sex. It is dirty and smells. She slept with two of her children in a double bed that sagged in the middle. They promised to bring in a cot but didn't. Her children are going to school in Boston, and she works at Terradyn in Boston from 3 to 11 p.m. Her 18-year-old daughter takes care of the two younger children while she works. She had been living in one room in a rooming house but complained to her landlord about his not making repairs. In revenge, he called the Department of Social Services (DSS, the child welfare department) and accused her of neglecting her children because of the living conditions at the motel. The DSS worker was going to file a neglect petition, but after she visited the motel, she said that the family should not have been placed there.

A man who was looking for shelter for himself and his son was placed in a shelter in Holyoke (150 miles west of Boston). His son goes to school in Boston, and he works in Boston. He was very upset, because his son will have to leave his school, and he will have to leave his job.

Congress and the President yanked the safety net, never very strong, out from under people, and Congress doesn't even want to know about the misery it has caused. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRA), passed by Congress and signed by President Clinton in 1996, ended welfare as an entitlement and gave money to the states in the form of block grants, leaving the states to do pretty much what they pleased with the program. The federal program is called Transitional Aid to Needy Families (TANF), but states give it a variety of names — Temporary Assistance to Families of Dependent Children (TAFDC) in Massachusetts, W-2 in Wisconsin. The federal law set a life time limit of five years for receipt of TANF, but the states were allowed to set shorter time limits and many of them did. The federal law allowed states to force mothers to find a paid job when their child was as young as one year. Some states set the age higher, but in a state such as Massachusetts which has a two-year time limit but does not enforce paid work until the child is 6, if the family hits the two-year time limit, they are off, regardless of the age of the child.

In May 1999, Senator Wellstone introduced a bill that would require the Department of Health and Human Services to collect data on families leaving welfare to show how families are faring: whether they are working, how much they are earning, whether they continue to receive Medicaid and Food Stamps (to which they are likely to remain eligible). The amendment failed by a vote of 49-50 (R 4-50; D 45-0).

The shredding of the safety net, the low wages, and the high rents have resulted in increasing numbers of people seeking refuge in the Homeless Unit. It is not a kind refuge. The PRA praised the virtues of work and family responsibility, but it didn't say that work should pay enough to support a family, nor did the majority in Congress care whether it did or not. In November 1999, Senator Kennedy offered a bill to increase the minimum wage by \$1 over 2 years. It was defeated by a vote of 50-48 (R 50-4; D 0-44).

The annual income for a worker at the minimum wage is just over \$10,000. A study by Wider Opportunities for Women showed that a mother with one child in Boston needs to earn \$15.28 an hour (over \$30,000 a year) in order to make ends meet. Employed former recipients of welfare and recipients combining work and welfare earn, on average, between \$8,000 and \$10,800 a year. The maximum TAFDC grant for a family of 3 in Massachusetts is about \$7,000 a year.

The median cost of a two bedroom apartment in Boston in 1999 was about \$16,000 a year. The minimum wage is not adequate to afford the Fair Market Rent anywhere in the United States. Housing subsidies help poor people pay the rent, but by 1997, 5.4 million working people in the nation paid over half of their income on housing or lived in severely substandard housing, but received no government housing assistance. No doubt there are many more now.

Work First Isn't Working

SO IT IS CLEAR WHY THE HOMELESS UNIT IS GETTING BUSIER. The Work First philosophy of the Personal Responsibility Act isn't working. It wasn't really about instilling personal responsibility or strengthening families. It was really about kicking people off the welfare rolls as fast as possible and giving people as little help as possible. Workers across the nation regularly harass and intimidate clients, and withhold information about benefits to which they are entitled. Welfare departments across the nation are meaner than ever before. They are sanctioning large numbers of families, i.e., reducing or terminating a family's cash assistance grant, for failure to comply with a welfare program requirement. A study by the General Accounting Office showed that in an average month in 1998, 135,800 families (or 5 percent of the average monthly caseload) were being sanctioned, with about 23,100 under a full-family sanction and receiving no cash assistance.

Officials who supported the PRA are crowing about how well it has been working because it has drastically reduced the welfare rolls, which was their goal. Welfare rolls have shrunk from 14.1 million households in January 1993 to 6.3 million in December 1999 — a drop of 56 percent, or 7.8 million households, two-thirds of them families that were previously being helped. No one knows for sure how many of these 7.8 million got jobs.

Estimates of how many recipients are working after leaving welfare vary from state to state. A 1999 Associated Press review of 21 state studies showed that the percentages of people who were working after leaving welfare ranged from 35 percent in Mississippi to 75 percent in Florida. Most states hovered between 50 percent and 65 percent. Many people returned to welfare soon after leaving — between 19 percent and 30 percent, according to a 1999 Government Accounting Office survey.

What has happened to the unemployed? Some follow-up studies show them to be in the lengthening lines at food pantries and food kitchens, and in the welfare Homeless Unit. Some probably returned to live with abusive partners whom they had been able to leave when they received welfare. Youth workers report that children are going hungry and begging has increased. Soup kitchens and food pantries are swamped, often unable to give food to those who need it. Some people have probably gone into prostitution, theft, or other illegal activities. Some are scraping by on odd jobs that formerly supplemented an inadequate welfare grant, but now constitute their entire income, such as baby sitting, housekeeping, cooking, hair styling, and snow shoveling.

One of the most common reasons for case closings during welfare reform has been sanctions by the welfare department. A client may be sanctioned from the rolls for any of a number of bureaucratic reasons. Clients are sanctioned for failing to return a form on time, for failing to fill out a form correctly, for not

coming to a meeting with a worker (even when the meeting conflicted with required community service activities), for not cooperating with work or community service requirements, and often because of the worker's mistake. I met one mother of two children in the welfare office who said that the younger child was a "Family Cap" baby for whom she did not get any money. As I explored her situation, it became clear that the DTA had designated the child as a Family Cap even though (s)he was born before the mother applied for welfare.

Some states and organizations have been doing follow-up studies, and we can begin to see the broad outlines of what's happening. A study by Families USA tells us that states have stripped more than a million low-income American parents, mostly single women, of health insurance. When removed from the welfare rolls, they were dropped from the Medicaid rolls as well. The PRA did not impose penalties on states for failing to follow the law. President Clinton, who signed the law, and Al Gore, who urged that the law be passed, are now supporting a new federal program to reduce the number of uninsured children, apparently ignoring the fact that the welfare law they supported increased the number of uninsured children, as well as their parents. Governor George W. Bush's Texas had one of the biggest declines in the Medicaid rolls — 46 percent, as compared to the average of 27 percent in the major welfare states included in the study.

Welfare reform has also reduced the number of people who receive food stamps. States have been neglecting to tell people that they are still eligible for food stamps when they leave the welfare rolls, and many people who have not been on welfare don't realize that they are eligible. Food stamp participation has declined by 11 million people — nearly 40 percent — since 1994. An Urban Institute study found that only 42 percent of families that left welfare but had incomes below the food stamp eligibility limits continued to receive food stamps.

Poverty Hurts Women and Children Most

POVERTY STRIKES HARDEST on children, single mothers, people of color, and immigrants. One-fifth of children live below the poverty line — thirteen and a half million children. Seventy-four percent live in working families; 5.8 million of them live in extreme poverty in families with incomes below \$6,500. Over one-third of Black and Hispanic children are poor. Twenty-five percent of non-citizens are poor, as compared to 11.4 percent of citizens.

A study by the Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that about 17 percent of all children in the country, or roughly 12 million, faced hunger in 1999. More than 21 percent of all black people went hungry or lived on the edge in 1999, the highest percentage of any racial group. A large percentage of Hispanics, 20.8 percent, faced a similar situation. By contrast, only 7 percent of non-Hispanic whites went hungry or were what the report called "food insecure." Single mothers with children were the most vulnerable to the problem, with nearly 30 percent of such households reporting food insecurity. In areas where housing costs are especially high, as in Boston, there are higher rates of poverty.

Most welfare recipients who got jobs did not get out of poverty. Women leaving welfare for work earn on average \$7 to \$8 an hour. Much of their work is temporary and part-time. About half of women on welfare don't have even a high school education, so they are not likely to find high paying jobs. Many of them have a hard time even finding a low paying job. The Personal Responsibil-

ity Act doesn't allow for more than a year of higher education, and that has to be vocationally oriented.

The incomes of 10 percent of homes headed by single mothers have dropped 14 percent since the 1996 law was signed. Virtually every other group in the nation has seen its income rise during the economic boom. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities reported that the poorest 20 percent of single mother families saw their incomes plummet between 1995 and 1997 as welfare reform kicked in.

Reform Hits Immigrants and Linguistic Minorities Hardest

THE ANTI-IMMIGRANT SENTIMENT OF LEGISLATORS resulted in repressive immigration laws and severe cutbacks in funding for welfare. The PRA was the most severe toward legal immigrants, cutting off their access to most benefits. (Illegal immigrants never had access to those benefits.) While denying federal help to legal immigrants, states were allowed to either give or deny noncitizens cash assistance, Medicaid, block grant benefits and other state and local public assistance. Some states, including Massachusetts and New Jersey, have done so, but state benefits are often lower than federal benefits. In July 1997, Congress voted to change the law to restore some of the benefits to people who entered the country before the law was passed in August 1996, but they did not restore food stamps.

This harsh law has resulted in severe hardship for immigrants. In 1997, 49 percent of non-citizen children were without health insurance vs. 19 percent of citizen children. Parents sometimes believe that their children are not eligible for health and food programs. Food stamp utilization for children in immigrant households from 1994-1997 declined 37 percent, versus a 15 percent decline for children living with native-born parents, according to a USDA study. Over half a million legal immigrants remain ineligible for food stamps due to the 1996 welfare law. Many parents fear repercussions with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) if they apply for benefits. Despite working full-time, immigrant families cannot take part in programs that were created for working poor families, and immigrant women's weekly earnings have been falling since 1970.

Immigrants who are applying for a green card must document a constant work history during their stay in the U. S., making it all the more imperative that they find work. Many immigrants are in a bind because they couldn't get authorization to work due to the several year backlog at the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Many welfare offices and other social service and health agencies do not provide translators. Community-based organizations often have to accompany clients to appointments at the welfare office, where they often wait hours to meet with a worker. Workers often do not refer people to ESL classes. One community service worker said, "We have a lot of clients who don't know English so that they're not able to complete forms and attend training and things so they're not really at a level where they're even able to take advantage of the few things welfare is offering."

Racism in the Welfare System

WHEN AFDC WAS BEGUN AS PART OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT IN 1935, the program was mainly for white widows, excluding most people of color. In the South-

ern states particularly, black mothers were forced off the welfare rolls in order to work in the factory or the fields, or as domestic workers. It was not until the War on Poverty and the welfare rights movement in the 1960s that large numbers of black mothers received welfare. It then began to be perceived as a program for black mothers.

President Clinton, in explaining his decision to repeal sixty years of social policy said: "The poverty population of American was fundamentally different than it is now When welfare was created the typical welfare recipient was a miner's widow with no education, small children, husband dies in the mine, no expectation that there was a job for the widow to do or that she ever could do it, very few out-of-wedlock pregnancies and births. The whole dynamics were different then." Gwendolyn Mink comments on this: "What can he have meant? That if the welfare population were still 89 percent white and 61 percent widowed as it was in 1939, welfare would not need to be reformed?"

The racial mythology of welfare "cast the welfare mother as Black, pinned the need for reform on her character, and at least implicitly defined Black women as other people's workers rather than their own families' mothers. Racially charged images of lazy, promiscuous, and matriarchal women have dominated welfare discourse for quite some time, inflaming demands that mothers who need welfare — though *perhaps* not their children — must pay for their improvident behavior through work, marriage, or destitution."

Because they are disproportionately poor, a disproportionate number of African-American and Latina mothers are on welfare. In 1994, adult recipients of AFDC families were 37.4 percent white, 36.4 percent black, 19.9 Latina, 2.9 percent Asian, and 1.3 percent Native Americans. Of unmarried mothers who received welfare, only 28.4 percent were white. "Hence, the burdens that welfare law imposes on mothers because they are not married are burdens that fall especially heavily on women of color."

Since welfare reform began, high proportions of minority families are leaving welfare, but white families have been leaving at a faster rate. This makes the racial mythology of welfare more insidious than ever. Probably white women have left welfare to go to work sooner than women of color because they were more likely to have the necessary education and skills. In 1997, the racial composition of the rolls was 37 percent black, 22 percent Hispanic, and 35 percent white.

Welfare mothers are keenly aware of the increasing stigma associated with receiving assistance, and many feel the effects of racism. Single mothers, particularly African-American and Hispanic women, speak of policies to isolate people of color. In Lisa Dodson's study of mothers on welfare, "one group of women discussed what they called 'healthy fear syndrome,' which is the fear of public offices, of case workers, and of giving up information about themselves or their children Latina mothers spoke of cultural bigotry, of 'anti-immigrant' sentiments expressed through both immigration and welfare policy. We heard a woman, who had been on welfare and is now working in a health center, speak of a national trend toward 'our own brand of ethnic cleansing.' . . . Above all, most respondents and some providers spoke of the specter of the Department of Social Services as more threatening than any other public office. This agency was viewed as waiting for women who 'are being set up to fail' so they can then remove their children from their custody One mother suggested there was a conspiracy to systematically take poor children away from their families."

Thank God and Work

PAT GOWENS OF THE WELFARE WARRIORS IN MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN, where Governor Tommy Thompson oversees the almost total dismantling of welfare, tells of the sign posted on the YWCA Works' time clock on the city's northeast side, where single mothers made poor are forced to work in unpaid labor for the YWCA:

Work

If you are poor . . . work.

If you are rich . . . continue to work.

If you are burdened with seemingly unfair responsibilities . . . work.

If you are happy . . . keep right on working.

Idleness gives room for doubts and fear.

If disappointments come . . . work.

When dreams are shattered and hope seems dead . . . work.

No matter what ails you, work.

Work faithfully . . . work with faith.

Work is the greatest remedy available.

Work will cure both mental and physical afflictions.

Thank God every morning when you get up that you have something to do which must be done whether you like it or not.

Being forced to work and forced to do your best will breed in you temperance, strength of will, contentment, and a hundred other virtues which the idle will never know.

The YWCA, one of five private agencies that administers Wisconsin's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program (called W2), created a for-profit branch of their agency to accommodate the massive profits that W2 is generating. In 1999 the YW earned over \$7 million in profit from their W2 clients. They require women on welfare to work at unwaged jobs at the YWCA itself. They have also purchased a plastics factory, Generation Plastics, where they mandate single mothers to work for them for free in exchange for their state welfare grant. Pat Gowens says that "women partially disabled with asthma, diabetes, lupus, heart disease, back injuries, and mental illness are forced to take infants and toddlers on the bus to day care, then take the bus to the YWCA's plastic factory, or the YW's welfare offices to work off their children's welfare support check. Single mothers with infants as young as 3 months old must travel across town to the YW plastics factory to work for no pay, no benefits, no vacations, no meaningful experience."

The federal government doesn't penalize states for kicking people off Medicaid or food stamps, but it does penalize them for not getting people to work. The PRA requires recipients to work thirty hours a week and penalizes recipients who do not conform to this requirement with reducing or terminating their grant. If a state does not meet the work participation rates, it loses a percentage of its block grant. Because states must enroll fifty percent of their caseloads in work outside the home, ever increasing numbers of recipients will have to seek employment immediately after receiving benefits. The law requires states to ease work requirements where child care is unavailable and a state must continue to provide benefits to a mother whose child is under six years of age if she can prove that she cannot find suitable child care within a reasonable distance from her home. But the state's definition of "suitable" and "reasonable distance"

may not be the mother's definition.

Officials' preoccupation with making people work is obsessive. "Work First" is the mantra. "Any job is a good job," says the director of the DTA in Massachusetts. There is federal money for training people on the job, but not before they get a job. If states do pay for education and training, most states prefer short term training courses that lead to low paying jobs.

A few states use state money to support more education. Maine, for example, subsidizes parents to go to four-year colleges under their "Parents as Partners" program. But in Massachusetts, one of the most punitive states, funds for education and training through DTA have been largely redirected from substantive programs to résumé writing and mock interview "job readiness" programs. Recipients are discouraged from pursuing programs that might lead to increased skills and higher earnings and are instead pressured into taking any job that comes along.

The job search program is sometimes used as punishment. In Massachusetts, for example, if someone is granted an extension of the two-year time limit, she is required to spend 20 hours in a job readiness program, even if she already has a job! Here is the story of a woman living in a family shelter for the homeless. She has a part-time job, but the DTA complicates her life enormously by its housing and job search requirements.

I work as a home health aide and have to get up at 4:45 in the morning to be to work by 6:30, three days a week. I'm also trying to finish a program to get my associates degree in nursing, and find an apartment so I can get out of the homeless shelter where I live. I'm looking for a place, but it's hard to find anything. I only make \$200 a week, and most two bedrooms are \$700 a month. I tried to find a studio, but most landlords don't want kids in a studio. I also need to buy a car to be able to get back and forth to school (I've been borrowing a friend's car but can't for much longer) and they keep giving me a hard time, telling me I don't need a car and I should be saving money. But I live in Lowell and go to school in Lawrence, and I have a four-year-old! Do you know how hard that would be to get back and forth without a car and still do the housing search and all the other things we have to do at the shelter. We have to turn in forms that list where we looked for housing each week, and we have to have twelve, no matter what. If the landlord doesn't return your call, it doesn't count. Even if there are only six listings in the paper, they tell you that's not enough, that you have to try harder. It's so degrading. You know, besides being homeless, we have other issues, and we should be treated with respect. I have low self-esteem, and it's really hard to keep myself going, but they just keep piling more things on us. There are all these mandatory meetings —that you have to go to even if they don't have anything to do with you. Like going to these employment sessions — on how to get a job. I already have a job! But I still have to go — because it's mandatory. You know, anybody could end up in this predicament — it's not because we made bad choices. That's the way life is. Some people are lucky, and some are not. And a pat on the back would be so much better than constantly putting us down.

Welfare recipients who have not found a job are placed in community service work (workfare) which is usually menial work such as raking leaves, picking up garbage, washing dishes in a school cafeteria. In some cities, workfare workers have replaced regular workers. Although the law prohibits the direct substitution of welfare recipients for currently paid workers, some localities have gotten around this by not renewing expired employment contracts with paid workers. In many localities, low-wage workers have been displaced by

workfare “trainees” working off their welfare benefits at less than the minimum wage — sometimes as little as \$1.50 an hour. In Baltimore, a thousand workers had lost jobs to welfare trainees by mid-1997, despite the fact that city workers had only two years before won a city ordinance guaranteeing a living wage to anyone employed under contracts with the city. In New York City, thousands of workfare participants now do the work once done by higher-paid city workers.

Inadequate Supports for Working Mothers

THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT DID NOT GRANT MONEY for child care for working parents, and the lack of child care has become a major obstacle to employment. In Massachusetts, which has allocated more money for child care for working parents than many other states, there is a long waiting list for child care vouchers (13,332 in Massachusetts in 1998), and there are not enough child care facilities to meet the need. Child care for children with specialized needs is almost non-existent. It is also hard to find child care for older children. Parents report that patching together safe, reliable, and child-positive care is “a job in itself.” Many of the jobs the mothers get require part-time, before-school, after-school, evening, swing-shift, and week-end schedules. “Child care is seldom taken care of with one arrangement, rather it often requires many arrangements: a combination of family, neighbors, formal care, and sibling care. Of course, any of these arrangements can break down, and often do. Then child care becomes, in the words of one young mother, ‘giving that child the rules, locking the door, and praying while you’re at work.’” Mothers are frantically juggling schedules that require getting children to child care or a school and picking them up, while holding down a job or two, sometimes three, in order to survive. They have little time for the children, and less for themselves. Many children have to fend for themselves while their mothers work.

Much of the child care is low quality. A study by the General Accounting Office “found that 59 percent of low-income children attend early childhood centers that fail to provide the full range of child development, health, and parent services needed to support their school readiness.” Some women put their children in informal care, for which DTA pays \$2 an hour, and while some of this care is good, much of it is not. Lisa Dodson’s study tells of one woman who cared for 11 children, ranging in age from 5 to 13, in a one-bedroom apartment.

Many of the older girls in families are pressed into service to care for the younger children while their mother works, which of course impedes their own schooling and development.

The cost of child care is a major drain on a working parent’s income. The average annual cost of child care in a day-care center for a four-year-old child in Boston in 1997 was \$7,904. A woman earning only \$10,000 a year can’t pay that without a child care subsidy, and there aren’t enough subsidies. Only one out of 10 children in the nation who are eligible actually receive them.

Transportation is also a major problem for low-income working women. Two-thirds of all new jobs are in the suburbs, but three-fourths of welfare recipients live in rural areas or central cities. Ninety-four percent of recipients don’t own a car. When they do own one, it is an old clunker that constantly breaks down and needs repairs. If they own a better one, it is counted as an asset which could disqualify them for welfare. A study of transit service from a point in

Boston in which a high population of welfare recipients lived to the high-growth areas for entry-level employment found that more than 43 percent of the employers representing 66 percent of existing jobs could not be reached within two hours — even though most of the city's welfare recipients live within one-half mile of public transit. Furthermore, public transportation services offer inadequate hours of operation and infrequent service. And it is expensive. For example, a one-way fare from Boston to a nearby city of Waltham via commuter rail costs \$2.25 or \$72 for a monthly commuter rail pass, a big bite out of the income of someone earning \$6 an hour.

The “work first” philosophy of the PRA has meant that thousands of women have had to drop out of college and training programs in order to get a low paying job. Many had to drop out even when they were within a few months of completing a program that would have helped them to get a well paid job. In Massachusetts, which implemented in 1995 a harsher two-year time limit on welfare than the federal five-year time limit, 36 percent of welfare recipients who were in community colleges dropped out between 1994 and 1996, and an even higher percentage who were in four-year colleges dropped out. (The state's welfare reform law only allowed two-year programs, not four-year colleges). Many women are even prevented from entering a GED program to get a high school degree, or an English as a Second Language (ESL) program where they could learn enough English to get a job. And there are not enough ESL programs to meet the need. Hispanic women face particular difficulties under welfare reform. Hispanics are the most undereducated of major U. S. ethnic-minority groups. Hispanic children are less likely to be enrolled in pre-school programs, and, by 1995, had a high school drop-out rate that was three times higher than whites and two times higher than African Americans.

The jobs that welfare mothers get are often part-time and temporary, and do not provide health insurance. While they and their children are eligible for Medicaid for a year after they leave the welfare rolls, many of them are not aware of this, and even those who do get Medicaid for a year are left without any insurance after the year is up.

In 1999, about 42.5 million Americans — 18.4 percent of the non-elderly population — had no health insurance. About 90 percent of uninsured children are in families with a working adult. There are 13.9 million children who lack health insurance.

Some of the children dropped from the Medicaid rolls because of a parent's employment could get coverage under the Children's Health Insurance Plan, passed by Congress in 1997 to give health insurance to children in families whose income was too high to qualify them for Medicaid and too low to afford private insurance. But 40 states have failed to use all their funds under that plan and will have to turn the money back to the federal government. California and Texas account for more than half of the unspent money — \$590 million and \$446.3 million, respectively. Together, they have 29 percent of the nation's 11 million uninsured children

Disabilities

POVERTY IS VERY BAD FOR YOUR HEALTH, both physical and mental. Poor children are at a higher risk for any number of health problems, including attention-deficit disorder, asthma, dental disease, and injuries resulting from accidents or physical abuse and neglect. They score lower on developmental tests, and they have a

higher mortality rate. They also have higher levels of depression and antisocial behavior, particularly under conditions of persistent poverty. Low-income adults are also at greater risk for health problems. Predictably, both the mothers on welfare and their children have a high rate of disability. This interferes with the mothers' ability to get a paid job, both because of their own health problems and because they need to stay home to care for disabled children.

There are numerous studies, both national and state, that document the disabilities of welfare recipients. A report to Congress in 1999 highlighted the problem on a national level. While the Department of Health and Human Services admitted that "there are no completely reliable estimates of specific family needs among welfare families," they say that "recent studies suggest that as many as 27 percent of adults in the caseload have a substance abuse problem, up to 28 percent have mental health issues; up to 40 percent have learning disabilities or low basic skills; and up to 32 percent are current victims of domestic violence." An Urban Institute study showed that almost half of parents receiving welfare either said that they were in poor general health or scored low on a standard mental health scale. One-third said that their health limits their ability to work. Of those parents who were kicked off welfare because of failure to comply with rules, from one-fourth to one-half in various states say that they were unable to comply with the rules because of their health condition. In Wisconsin, where AFDC has been almost completely dismantled in favor of work programs, among those mothers who reported a personal disability or the disability of a family member, 23 percent were not employed, were not in a W-2 work training placement and did not receive either Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or a kinship care payment.

Many women who are kicked off the rolls for noncompliance with the rules simply didn't understand the rules. An Iowa study found that almost three out of ten people who were sanctioned for noncompliance cited their lack of understanding of program rules. This was assumed to be a mark of limited intelligence, yet even a rocket scientist would have trouble understanding welfare rules, which keep changing. Most of the workers don't understand all the rules.

The most common mental health problems are depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and general anxiety disorder. In Michigan, one-quarter suffered from major or clinical depression, while in Utah over two-fifths did. Forty-eight percent of the mothers in California were depressed, and in Florida, 52 percent were. What appears to many people as "laziness" is actually a sign of depression.

Many parents have learning disabilities, including up to one-half of recipients in Washington state. In many cases, women are not aware of their learning disabilities, and in most states there are few attempts to diagnose and help women to overcome their disabilities.

Some disabled parents receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), but the program has been cut back since the Reagan Administration, and eligibility rules are extremely restrictive. The SSI rules were designed to serve those who have the most severe disabilities. Most of the parents have disabilities which do not qualify them for SSI but still restrict their ability to work. If the TANF program used the definition of disability included in the Americans with Disabilities Act, many more women would qualify for assistance. The federal welfare law expressly provides that the ADA applies to all activities funded with

TANF funds, and these standards are the ones that states should use. The definition of disability under ADA rules is: a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of the person.

The “Family Values” Strait-Jacket

FORCING PEOPLE INTO THE LABOR MARKET was only one objective of the Personal Responsibility Act; another was to enforce the “family values” agenda of conservatives on poverty-stricken families. The first paragraph of the Act begins: “Marriage is the foundation of a successful society.” Thus it codifies the claim that marriage is the best antipoverty policy. Gwendolyn Mink sums it up:

The PRA is, then, a moral strait-jacket, conceived and enacted to disjoin rights from welfare and thus to intensify the disciplinary function of social policies affecting poor women. To accomplish both the economic disfranchisement and moral disciplining of poor single mothers, the PRA makes national government the source of rules governing intimate matters.

Charles Murray led the charge against unmarried teenage mothers, blaming them for all the ills of society and advocating cutting off support for them, including support from the fathers of their children, so they will finally learn not to have children. The man seemed crazed by thoughts of fecund teenagers. Congress did not go so far as to cut off all support for them, but the Personal Responsibility Act puts severe restrictions on the conditions under which they can receive welfare. They must finish high school and live with a relative or another responsible adult. Many are doing that, but many have taken themselves off welfare and disappeared from the official radar screen. Nobody knows how they are surviving. Advocates speculate that they fear having their children taken from them by the state and have gone underground.

The PRA gives bonuses to the five states that are most successful in reducing their illegitimacy rates. Conservatives feared that such a bonus might reward states with the most abortions, so they said that only states that do not have an increase in their abortion rate would be eligible for those bonuses. The bonuses were presumably to reduce “welfare dependency,” but they are not targeted to welfare recipients or to any particular age group or economic background, and there is no requirement that the states document what, if anything, they have done to reduce out-of-wedlock births. In effect, they simply reward demographic changes that would have occurred anyway, according to Michael Kharfen of the Department of Health and Human Services.

To reinforce “family values,” the PRA requires states to punish mothers who do not convince child support agencies that they have told everything about their children’s fathers. If a mother fails to cooperate to the state’s satisfaction, the state must reduce her family’s grant by at least 25 percent and may deny it altogether. Mothers have even been penalized when they don’t know the father’s Social Security number. States can exempt mothers who have been subject to abuse at the hands of the father from reporting his whereabouts, but not all states do. Even when mothers have cooperated fully with the state in obtaining a support order, the law does not obligate states to secure payments. Many mothers complain that the state does nothing to secure support, even when it knows where the man is. And the mother no longer benefits from the support that a father pays. Previously the law allowed mothers to keep \$50 per month support

money that would not count against her grant.

People disagree on the child support issue. Many people, including some middle-class feminists, believe that the state should force all fathers to support, regardless of the mother's wishes. They assume that this would help to solve the need for welfare. "Screw the guys to the wall and make them pay for the baby they helped to create," said one advocate of this position. Others, including myself and most welfare recipients, hold the view that the choice of whether to enforce a support decree should be left up to the mother. "Let the mother wash that guy right out of her hair if she wants to," said one advocate of this position. Advocates of this position argue that it is the state that should be punished for not enforcing support orders when the mother wants support from the father, rather than punishing the mother for not giving information to the state.

Voicing her opposition to mandatory paternity establishment and child support provisions, Gwendolyn Mink says that they "mark poor single mothers as a separate caste, subject to a separate system of law. The system of law under which they live penalizes their moral choices, prescribes intimate associations that may be unwanted, and infringes rights guarded as fundamental to the personhood of all other citizens."

Being required to establish paternity is very risky for many mothers, for whom association with the father of her children can be dangerous both for her and for the children. Since legal action for child support often precipitates or exacerbates abuse, the state forcibly exposes poor mothers to violence. A very high proportion of welfare mothers have been subjected to domestic violence. Several studies have found that between 50 and 80 percent of welfare recipients nationwide were current victims of domestic abuse. Children are also likely to be abused when the mother is abused.

In her study of poverty-stricken African-American families' treatment of their children, Carol Stack found that families helped each other out with child rearing. Even when the father of a child was very poor, he generally maintained loving contact with the child and gave it whatever he was able to. Furthermore, his relatives helped to care for the child and provided both emotional and financial resources when the mother needed them. Stack argued that mandatory reporting requirements would destroy the resources that the child got from the father and his relatives. Fathers who are not able to support their child on a regular basis would be likely to break all contact with the mother and child if they feared punitive court action.

Child support is not an alternative to welfare when fathers are themselves poor. In 1989, the average annual child support award for poor mothers was only \$1,889. One analyst commented that, for poor fathers, "child support collection has turned into an income transfer program (for) lawyers and welfare bureaucrats."

In their zeal to make fathers pay, Congress and the President subjected all welfare fathers to a police state, "where they are subject to liens, withholding of wages, credit investigations, and exposure to employers, among other sanctions. They further indenture poor fathers (as well as irresponsible ones) in work programs ordered by courts and state agencies." Depending on what state he lives in, a delinquent father may lose his driver's, occupational, and recreational licenses. If he owes more than \$5,000, he may lose his passport.

A Thousand Fading Points of Light

I WRITE A SECTION OF *SURVIVAL NEWS** CALLED "SURVIVAL TIPS" to inform low-income people of benefits and resources that are available to them. I am finding that there are fewer and fewer resources. The welfare department is cutting back on benefits, and agencies are running out of money.

In her survey of 42 community-based social agencies in 18 states and the District of Columbia, Ann Withorn found that agencies were having a hard time dealing with the effects of welfare reform. They report that more of their constituents are employed, but they see them still poor and struggling. One respondent said, "current policy forces people into dead end jobs; once the welfare supports are gone, these jobs are NOT sufficient to provide for any family with more than one child. Much of the work is dangerous and has adverse health effects."

Some agencies described being swamped with requests. Education has become an unallowable activity in many areas, prompting a number of agencies to lose constituents who were attending programs such as GED and literacy classes. There is less demand for life skills and parenting classes and one mental health agency representative said that they do not know what to do because so many people fail to show up for therapy appointments. Although constituents might be employed, many still want and need services such as substance abuse counseling, parenting assistance, literacy courses, and mental health services, but have a harder time accessing and prioritizing these services.

One agency reported, "people are asking more and more of us at a time when we can do less and less." Respondents spoke of frustration that funding is directed only to employment-related services. One person said that the state is subsidizing companies in an effort to increase job slots instead of giving money to service providers who could give people education and training and help with personal and family problems so that they are able to work.

There is an increase in worker burnout because of frustration over not being able to meet people's needs. Some agencies are triaging clients, serving only those they deem "most likely to succeed." Agencies report great frustration in working with the welfare department and in getting accurate information from the department.

Withorn concludes that "even with the full effects of welfare reform as yet unknown, it is becoming clear that community services as we knew them may have ended along with welfare as we knew it." Only a handful of programs have organized politically by taking constituents to meet with legislators, or to attend hearings or conferences aimed at responding to the changes. Many are fearful of losing their local or state contracts if they organize. Several are faith-based, with a reluctance to become involved in controversial actions. The organizations that are most likely to organize are those with a more community development, as opposed to a service approach, and with a strongly expressed "empowerment" philosophy.

A survey of agencies in Dorchester, Massachusetts, a low-income section of Boston, also found an increase in need for service. The director of an after-school program in a settlement house reported an increase in hunger among the chil-

**Survival News* is a welfare rights newspaper published by Survivors, Inc. For information about subscribing, write to 95 Standard Street, Mattapan 02126, phone 617-296-4276, e-mail: masswelf@aol.com.

dren she cares for. They have instituted a new policy of providing big snack days on Mondays and Fridays. "Mondays because the kids are just coming off the weekend at home, and Fridays because they are storing up for the weekend." A food pantry is getting so many requests for food that his agency has capped the number they will serve, and refers to other food pantries. Elders often line up at 6 a.m. to get food.

Agencies report a significant increase in foster care and in child abuse. The child welfare department reported a 10 percent increase in reports of abuse and neglect in 1997. Demand for child care has increased, and there is an increase in dependence on informal, unlicensed child care. Women are dropping out of programs due to lack of child care. Some use teen drop-in centers for child care. Staff members reported that more children were hanging out at the club for as long as possible, because the "parent know at least the kids are in a building." She also reported that many teens who used to come no longer do, because they are at home caring for younger siblings. Youth workers report a disproportionate decline in participation by teenage girls and young women. More and more children can't afford the modest \$15 membership fee of one youth center, and no longer have the money to go on camping trips and other weekend and day trips that required minimal fees.

Despite the overwhelming evidence that the thousand points of light are flickering and some have gone out, George W. Bush is still enamored of them. He praises private initiatives and character building to deal with welfare. He has appointed as his domestic advisor Steve Goldsmith, the former mayor of Indianapolis, who sponsored a program called the Front Porch Alliance. This program seeks out local organizations in Indianapolis which provide social services, but go beyond that to build character. It reflects the philosophy . . . that the most effective poverty fighters were those that not only delivered services, but imparted values such as personal responsibility — values that produce character change in individuals and families." Their organizations are given mini-grants from \$500 to \$5,000, and they have to search out further funding for themselves from foundations or community development block grants. Most of the organizations are faith-based groups such as churches.

Both Jeb Bush, governor of Florida, and George W. Bush want to implement the Front Porch Alliance elsewhere. Jeb Bush has initiated Front Porch Florida, an attempt to implement some of the Indianapolis program's ideas on a larger scale. And George W. Bush picked a Front Porch rally in Indianapolis last July as the site for the first major policy speech of his presidential campaign. In that speech, Bush pledged that as president, he would look first to value-based groups to help needy people, and he would try to replicate Front Porch nationwide.

It is not likely that this will have any major impact on relieving the vast need that welfare reform has created. In fact, many churches have opposed welfare reform and are among the strongest allies in fighting it. A coalition of 59 Catholic social service agencies, calling themselves the NETWORK Welfare Reform Watch Project, did a two-year study of people affected by welfare reform. Their study, *Poverty amid Plenty: The Unfinished Business of Welfare Reform*, is a devastating report of the misery caused by welfare reform. The Unitarian Church has a welfare monitoring project which documents the misery that welfare reform has created, and sponsored a conference about welfare reform in September, 2000, where they developed strategy around TANF reauthorization

and lobbied Congress.

While officials crow over their success in reducing welfare rolls, they are beginning to realize that the rolls have reached a plateau and the people remaining on the rolls have multiple problems that prevent them from getting or keeping a paid job. In his campaign speech, Bush called for the “next bold step of welfare reform — a greater reliance on religious groups and charities to save and change lives.” He also proposed to improve access to health care, expand home ownership, and encourage savings. Al Gore’s proposal to fight poverty is to compel absent fathers to pay child support and to change the tax code in order to eliminate the “marriage penalty” and allow married couples to earn more money but stay eligible for the full earned-income tax credit. He has also proposed giving a five-year Social Security credit to women who leave jobs to raise children. This may help with their retirement, but it won’t help them while they are caring for their children. Neither Bush nor Gore seems aware of the deeper problems of welfare reform. During last winter’s presidential primary debates, Gore said, “We passed tough welfare reform, which I think has worked.”

States Are Not Spending Federal Money

UNDER THE 1996 LAW, LARGE SUMS OF MONEY WENT TO THE STATES in the form of five-year, fixed, block grants. Much of it was to be spent to help with the many difficulties in moving people off welfare and in to work. As much as \$7 billion in those funds sits in state treasuries, unused rather than being funneled into child care, transportation and other programs. Some states are even using the money to cover other state expenses not related to welfare. New York, Wisconsin and Texas, for example, are diverting large sums into either paying for tax cuts or for local programs for those who clearly are not poor. The states argue that they have lots of “extra” money because those five years’ worth of payments are fixed at 1994 levels while their welfare rolls have gone down, so they can use this money to replace portions of previously state-financed programs. Advocates fear that if this money is not used for the purpose of helping people on welfare, when the bill comes up for reauthorization in 2002, the federal government will reduce payments to the states under the assumption that the states don’t need it. The General Accounting Office is looking into whether states are using welfare money from Washington to replace money the states now spend on anti-poverty programs.

Some states have used the funds to help people. Some states have used TANF funds to establish programs to provide housing assistance to families attempting to make the transition from welfare to work. Twelve states have expanded health care for the working poor, and some others have spent federal dollars to increase education and transportation opportunities for the poor. Most states, however, have done little, except get tough.

Mothers Are Workers

THE PRA IGNORED THE FACT THAT MOTHERS ARE ALREADY WORKERS. Caretaking is work, even though it is unpaid. The AFDC program was a form of wages for caretaking. Gwendolyn Mink mourns that “the best of early welfare policy — social recognition for mothers’ caregiving work — had disappeared from welfare policy and discourse.” While more mothers are working than ever before in the

U.S., affluent mothers (and, increasingly, fathers) often still choose to stay home to care for their young children. Mothers who depend on welfare do not have that choice. Mink says that “in impairing their capacity to meet their personal responsibilities as parents, the PRA thus repudiates them as mothers.” When economists measure the value of caretaking work, the amount is well above the poverty line.

The 1997 White House Conference on Early Child Development publicized research that showed the importance of spoken language on infant and child development. The conferees urged parents to spend more time with their children and to seek stimulating providers if they must work outside the home. Some advisors to President Clinton, citing the findings, called for tax incentives to make it easier for parents to stay home. But no one called for incentives for poor mothers to stay home. Quite the opposite; “one Clinton official insisted that when it comes to welfare families, wage work is more important than care-giving, the moral discipline of mothers more important than the intellectual growth of children.”

Liberals have argued for more supports to make it possible for welfare mothers to work, but “except for welfare rights activists and a handful of feminists, no one has defended poor mothers’ right to raise their children, and no one has questioned the assumption that poor single mothers should *have* to work outside the home.” In 1973, a task force convened by President Nixon’s secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare recommended that subsidies to AFDC mothers could be justified as payments for non-market work rather than as a dole in lieu of “work,” since they found that family care-givers, usually women, routinely spend an average of 40 hours a week on housework. Despite this recommendation, “Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, Southern Democrats, and others drummed up hostility toward caregivers who need welfare because they are poor and parenting alone.”

Gwendolyn Mink sees a crack of hope in this discourse. Republicans recently tried to pass a bill to require work of public housing tenants. Democrats voted to exempt from this requirement single parents with children under age six. Some argued that compulsory work constituted involuntary servitude and that it disrespected the work performed by caregivers. One Democrat, who had supported workfare the year before, said, “The truth of the matter is I think we should be encouraging mothers and families to take care of their children in their homes and valuing that as a society. . . .”

What Is To Be Done?

THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT HAS AN EXPIRATION DATE of October 1, 2002. By then — five years after states are required to have new welfare policies in place — Congress will decide whether to reauthorize the existing law or replace it. Grassroots welfare activist groups are focusing their battles on the national target of reauthorization. “The welfare reauthorization battle promises to be a battle on many fronts: time limits, education, child care, health care — not to mention even more divisive goals like wages for stay-at-home moms and ending workfare outright. But the first step, organizers agree, is to change attitudes toward the poor.” Only 2.3 percent of Americans are on welfare, down from 5.5 percent in 1993. They are among the most politically powerless citizens. Clearly

they need a lot of allies to win any battles.

As Gwendolyn Mink says, we do indeed need to end welfare — “but as poor mothers experience it, not as middle class moralizers imagine it.” The means-tested AFDC/TANF program has always been stingy and punitive. As the late British welfare scholar Richard Titmuss said, “Programs for the poor are poor programs.” Whatever programs we work for should be universal programs, inclusive of *all* people, not just poor people; otherwise the programs take on the stigma that is always directed at poor people.

There are 3 million children receiving Social Security because a parent (usually a father) worked and retired, died, or became disabled. Their mothers also receive Social Security. Most people aren't even aware of these numbers. Nobody pays attention to how the mothers are behaving and certainly nobody suggests that they should be kicked off Social Security if they don't find work. If caretaking were defined as work, single mothers (and fathers) could be included in the Social Security system and paid for their caretaking work. The family allowance (sometimes called children's allowance) in most European countries approaches this system as it is paid to every parent, not just poor parents.

At the same time, we need to work on improvements for all workers including an increase in the minimum wage, paid family leave, guaranteed child care, comparable worth policies, decent unemployment compensation, universal health care, a full employment policy, investment in education and vocational training, and aggressive enforcement of anti-discrimination laws. As Gwendolyn Mink says, “This end to welfare will take us down many paths, all leading to gender justice.”

In the present political climate, wages for caretaking seems like a utopian goal. Even many people on the left do not support it. A member of Democratic Socialists for America writes in his defense of voting for Al Gore that Gore might support school credits to be counted as work requirements, and is also “likely to support further expansion of the earned income tax credit which could serve as a basis for a more redistributive and universal guaranteed income program than AFDC.” The Earned Income Tax Credit is only for parents who are in the paid labor force. While welfare activists agree that it should be expanded, it is not payment for caretaking work in a parent's own home.

Ralph Nader has proposed a guaranteed annual income, a proposal that was first put forth in the 1960s by Robert Theobald. While Congress is far from supporting it, Nader deserves credit for keeping it on the national agenda. President Nixon proposed a version of a guaranteed annual income called the Family Assistance Plan, which would have given \$1,600 to every family if it had been passed. George McGovern was called hopelessly utopian for proposing a \$600 guaranteed annual income. Europeans have been discussing a Basic Income since the 1980s. It would be a universal allowance to every member of the society, unattached to employment status. No country has adopted it, but it is still under discussion.

People will not even begin to change their attitudes until they are made aware of what is happening with welfare reform. Newspapers are beginning to run a few articles about it, but in general they have ignored welfare under the assumption that the welfare “problem” has been solved. A study of coverage of welfare issues by California newspapers found that welfare reform is not deemed newsworthy by California's major dailies. Welfare reform was often heralded as

a success and the main measure of success is declines in caseloads.

However, the myth of welfare reform's success may be beginning to erode. A national poll conducted for Jobs for the Future reports that only 19 percent approved moving people off welfare into jobs as quickly as possible if the jobs offered little chance of advancement. If people were still in poverty after leaving the welfare rolls, 52 percent would not feel that welfare reform had been a success. And 69 percent said that a family of four needs at least \$35,000 a year to make ends meet. The public might be ready to support stronger job supports and removal of time limits that are forcing large numbers of people into poverty if they are better informed about the effects of welfare reform.

Welfare activists have been trying to get the truth out to the public as much as possible by speeches, articles and books, letters to the editor, and talk shows on radio and TV. The welfare rights organization that I belong to, Survivors, Inc., is collaborating with *Sojourner*, a feminist newspaper, to try to get more media coverage. *Sojourner* publishes a regular column called "Welfare Beat."*

Most middle class feminists have not supported the struggle against mandatory work for welfare recipients. They have struggled to get equality in the work place for themselves and assume that all women should be in the paid work force, even single mothers who are forced to be in the low paid work force at the expense of caring for their own children. Most of the women in Congress who were supported by the feminist Emily's Fund voted for the PRA.

This may be changing. When the Legal Defense Fund of the National Organization for Women first sent out a solicitation for funds for their welfare rights work, they received so much hate mail that they did not send out another solicitation for a couple of years. When they tried it again, they found a much more sympathetic response from their members. There is a group of academic and professional feminists who call themselves "The Committee of 100" that has been active in the struggle, and is currently developing strategy around the Congressional reauthorization of the PRA.

Activists have been struggling to improve their own states' welfare systems and have sometimes been able to win small victories. There are several campaigns on welfare reform on both regional and national levels. Groups in seven western states formed the Western Regional Welfare Activist Network (WRWAN) in 1997 to serve as an information and strategy clearinghouse. In 1999, they declared reauthorization as its main focus. Among its targets are: the federal five-year time limit and some states' shorter time limits; denial of benefits to immigrants; and grant levels that don't even approach the meager sums of the AFDC era.

The Welfare Law Center in New York City sponsors an internet discussion list on welfare which links welfare rights activists nationwide. They share information and advice and strategize together on how to combat welfare reform. The Welfare Law Center has compiled a list of all the activist groups that they can find. Dirk Slater, their circuit rider, meets with low-income groups across the nation to give them computer information and advice.*

Working Massachusetts,** a coalition of labor unions and welfare activists, sparked a campaign called "Welfare Made a Difference." They plan to spread stories of people's experiences with welfare via speakouts, lobbying and a pub-

*Their Web site is: www.sojourner.com.

lished collection of stories. The campaign now involves 80 groups across the country. Liz Accles, national organizer for New York's Community Food Resource Center, says that the goal of the campaign is to "challenge the notion that if you provide welfare, you're doing bad things to people. We're trying to say if you do it and do it well, the government could eliminate poverty." One of the speakers at the "Welfare Made a Difference" speakout in Boston was Bobby Haynes, the president of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO. He told of how he'd risen from poverty with the help of government programs, from the GI Bill to public housing to welfare. "I can't imagine, in my wildest dreams, having that happen if you grew up in the '90s," he said.

On a national level, a coalition of 100 groups in more than 40 states has formed, called the National Campaign for Jobs and Income Support. Spearheaded by the Washington-based Center for Community Change, the campaign's focus is to "advance a progressive agenda" in the coming welfare debate. They held their Kick Off meeting in Chicago in May 2000 for over 1,000 grassroots activists from across the nation.

If we are unable to persuade legislators that caretaking work deserves a living wage, as seems likely in the foreseeable future, they might at least be persuaded to remove the requirement for mothers of children under six years of age to enter the paid work force, and to remove time limits. Before the PRA was passed, the AFDC program did not force those mothers into the paid work force, and this policy received widespread support until the conservatives began their demagogic campaign to demonize welfare mothers. In the two years we have before Congress reauthorizes the bill, we need to educate legislators and the general public about the many barriers that single mothers face in entering the paid work force, and about their continuing poverty even when they get a job. At the same time, we need to educate them about the importance of caretaking. They are beginning to recognize the need for middle class parents to receive some recompense for caretaking. Now we need to show them that poor women also deserve this choice. Our goal must be to eliminate poverty, not to eliminate single mothers and their children from the welfare rolls, and to make it possible for single mothers to care for their own children.

A fully footnoted version of this article can be found on the New Politics website, www.wpunj.edu/newpol/. For a paper copy of the footnoted version, send \$3 to cover costs to New Politics, P.O. Box 98, Brooklyn, NY 11231.

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“Race Relations”: The Problem with the Wrong Name

Stephen Steinberg

Which deception is most dangerous? Whose recovery is more doubtful, that of him who does not see or of him who sees and still does not see? Which is more difficult, to awaken one who sleeps or to awaken one who, awake, dreams that he is awake?

— Søren Kierkegaard

IN *THE FEMININE MYSTIQUE*, PUBLISHED IN 1963, Betty Friedan came up with an ingenious formulation for the malaise she detected among middle-class suburban housewives. She called it “the problem that has no name.” Implicit here is a critique of sociological practice. Except for a few pieces by those rare women in American sociology — for example, Helen Hacker’s 1951 article on “Women as a Minority Group” — the categorical subordination of women was not even on the radar screen of the sociological establishment. “Sexism” had not yet entered the sociological lexicon. The idea that women were consigned to uphold the patriarchal family and the suburban dream was beyond the sociological imagination. The relegation of women to traditional roles was accepted by the male professoriat as an unquestioned fact of life.

Thanks to Daniel Horowitz’s biography (*Betty Friedan and the Making of The Feminine Mystique*), we now know that Friedan was no ordinary housewife who arrived at her epiphany through experience and introspection. She was a seasoned political activist who had been schooled in radical thought at Smith College in the 1940s, worked as a labor journalist for two decades, and was steeped in the feminist thought and politics of the 1950s. By the 1960s Friedan was also a suburban housewife, but she brought a conceptual and ideological lens to this experience that allowed her to see clearly what was opaque to most others. Friedan knew better, but as a skillful rhetorician, she refracted social reality through the lens of the average suburban housewife when she wrote that this was a “problem that has no name.”

Race in America presents quite another situation: a problem that has been *misdiagnosed* and *mislabelled* — a problem with the *wrong* name. The term that has dominated sociological discourse on race for seven decades is “race relations.” Ponder for a moment the implications of applying this designation to the subject at hand. In the 1930s, when Robert Park introduced “race relations” into the sociological lexicon, blacks were a totally downtrodden people. All but

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13 percent fell below the poverty line. Three-quarters lived in the South where they were denied elementary rights of citizenship, were subjected to an all-encompassing system of racial segregation, and were threatened with violence and death for even minor deviations from a debasing system of racial etiquette. During the 1930s there were 119 lynchings. Yes, Robert Park had a point: “race relations” were a problem. Small wonder that mainstream sociology still celebrates his perspicacity!

How is it that we apply such benign language to such a malignant problem? It is rather like diagnosing a melanoma as a skin rash, and prescribing a topical salve. Putting the wrong name on a problem is worse than having no name at all. In the latter instance, one is at least open to filling the conceptual void. In the first instance, however, words lead us down a blind alley. They divert us from the facets of the problem that should command our attention, and as the analogy to melanoma suggests, they lead to remedies that are ineffectual or worse.

Sociology can hardly be accused of turning a blind eye to the problem of race. As Franklin Frazier pointed out in 1947, the first two treatises on sociology in America concerned race (actually, they were pro-slavery tracts), and sociology has since produced an enormous body of research and writing on race and racism. But is this a case of seeing and still not seeing? What is the conceptual lens that the sociologist brings to the study of race? Does it illuminate or does it obscure? And what are we to say of a field whose very name — “race relations” — is already an artful obfuscation?

What terminology would more accurately capture the essence of race in America? The right name, I submit, is “racial oppression.” This in fact was the term used by Marxist writers in the 1930s, and it entered sociological parlance in the 1970s with the publication of Bob Blauner’s *Racial Oppression in America*. Unlike “race relations,” “racial oppression” conveys a clear sense of the nature, magnitude, and sources of the problem. Whereas the race relations model assumes that racial prejudice arises out of a natural antipathy between groups on the basis of difference, “racial oppression” locates the source of the problem within the structure of society. Whereas “race relations” elides the issue of power, reducing racism down to the level of attitudes, “racial oppression” makes clear from the outset that we are dealing here with a system of domination, one that entails major political and economic institutions, including the state itself. Whereas “race relations” implies mutuality, “racial oppression” clearly distinguishes between the oppressor and the oppressed. Whereas “race relations” rivets attention on superficial aspects of the racial dyad, “racial oppression” explores the underlying factors that engender racial division and discord. Whereas the sociologist of “race relations” is reduced to the social equivalent of a marriage counselor, exploring ways to repair these fractured relationships, the sociologist of “racial oppression” is potentially an agent of social transformation.

As Thomas Pettigrew suggested in 1964, the ultimate fallacy of the race relations model was that it placed more importance on reducing prejudice among whites than on improving conditions among blacks. Think about it: here was a praxis that ministered to the oppressor rather than the oppressed! In effect, black aspirations for deliverance from poverty and racism were put on hold while whites underwent a therapeutic transformation. What clearer evidence that sociologists, despite their best intentions, have practiced white social science?

I hope it is clear that I am raising issue not just with the term “race relations” but with the entire paradigm that the term represents. Other terms of discourse are equally problematic. In 1984 Barton Meyers, a psychologist at Brooklyn College, wrote an incisive paper entitled “Minority Group: An Ideological Formulation.” Meyers argued, much as I do here, that the term “minority group,” coined by Louis Wirth in 1945, presents “a distorted understanding of reality,” whose effect is “to make obscure, especially to subordinate groups, the prevailing system of power and the intentions of the powerful.” Needless to say, his proposal to expunge “minority group” from the sociological lexicon, and to substitute “oppressed groups,” has fallen on deaf ears. Is it that we hear, but we still do not hear?

The terms “prejudice” and “discrimination” are also ideologically laden. Marxists have long argued that prejudice and discrimination are the mere epiphenomena of *systems* of racial domination. Oliver Cox wrote sardonically: “If beliefs per se could subjugate a people, the beliefs which Negroes hold about whites should be as effective as those which whites hold about Negroes.” The tendency in social science has been to reify prejudice, to treat it as a problem unto itself, and to pretend that racism could be ameliorated by disabusing whites of the distorted beliefs that they harbor about blacks. This set of assumptions has given rise to a stream of redundant studies, conducted over five decades, that chart the prevalence and distribution of prejudiced beliefs. We measure — with meticulous care — but we measure the “wrong” things, or more exactly, the epiphenomena of racism. Or we measure the right things — glaring inequalities between blacks and whites in wealth, status, and power — but we attribute them to the wrong causes: to deficits in human capital or to aberrant or dysfunctional cultures that are said to perpetuate poverty from one generation to the next.

“Discrimination” suffers from the same problem. Instead of focusing on the historical and structural processes that reproduce racial inequalities from one generation to the next, discrimination is reduced to the level of discrete acts by discrete individuals. However, far more is involved here than individual acts of discrimination, even as they constitute larger aggregates. We are dealing here with the systematic exclusion of an entire people from whole job sectors through all of American history. To describe this as “discrimination” is to trivialize the issue, to elide its institutional character, and again, to obscure its magnitude and sources. I prefer the term “occupational apartheid,” which captures the *systemic* character of the problem, and provides a logic for affirmative action — which is aimed, not at atomized individuals, but at large-scale organizations, such as corporations, unions, and universities.

As I argued in *Turning Back*, the racial crisis of the 1960s provided stark proof of the failure of the race relations paradigm to explain, much less do anything about, the forces that were tearing American society apart. This opened up the canon to radical and minority voices that had long been cast to the periphery. In *Racial Oppression in America* Blauner explicitly rejected the race relations model and, picking up on the rhetoric and politics of Third World movements, he used the term “internal colonialism” to describe the encapsulation and plight of blacks and other Third World groups in America. Another key conceptual innovation was proposed in a book that was a collaboration between a political activist and a political scientist. In *Black Power* Stokely Carmichael

and Charles Hamilton drew a distinction between “individual racism” and “institutional racism.” The latter, they said, did not depend on intentional acts of racial animus, but was embedded in established and respected institutions of society. Here was a truly revelatory way of looking at racism, one that avoided the reductionist tendencies within sociology, and that treated racism as a systemic problem that required systemic change. Despite these theoretical advances, the insurgent sociology of the 60s never developed a full-fledged alternative paradigm. Reflecting the racial backlash in the society at large, mainstream sociology has reverted to the language and logic of “race relations.”

Like the Confederate flag, the race relations paradigm has endured the challenges of history. A recent study published in *Race and Society* examined the 34 course syllabi included in the 1997 edition of the ASA's publication on *Teaching Race and Ethnic Relations*. All but one course had prosaic titles such as “Minority Groups,” “Minority Relations,” “Race and Minority Relations,” “Race and Ethnic Relations,” and for a new but equally obfuscating twist, “Race and Ethnic Diversity.” The exception was a course entitled “White Racism,” which aroused fierce controversy when introduced at the University of Connecticut.

One might argue that the Chicago sociologists who pioneered the study of race were “products of their times.” But why is it that sociologists are still wedded to these same obfuscating categories seven decades later, as though the Civil Rights Revolution never happened? Why is a course entitled “White Racism” seen as a provocation? Why has sociology failed to develop a discourse that illuminates, instead of obscures, the systemic character of racism?

Like Cox and Du Bois in an earlier time, the proponents of a critical sociology on race are reduced to carping from the sidelines. It is fundamentally a question of hegemony: of which perspectives prevail; which command resources; which are central to intellectual discourse, both inside and outside the academy; which are influential when it comes to the formation of public policy. To pursue the question of hegemony, one would have to examine the web of relationships among elite universities, professional associations, government, the media, book publishers and book review editors, “dream teams,” and those all-important foundations — which together constitute a power elite that has a decisive influence on discourse, intellectual production, and social policy.

Nowhere is the hegemonic status of the race relations paradigm more evident than in the recent report issued by the advisory board for President Clinton's Initiative on Race. The initiative itself illustrates the schizophrenic split between social reality and the construction of that reality that is endemic to the race relations model. Here is a President who helped to instigate and enact the repeal of welfare, removing billions of dollars of subsidies to poor minority families; who signed a crime bill that has increased the prison population to over two million people, two-thirds of them black and Latino; who promised to “mend, not end” affirmative action, and yet did little or nothing to oppose Proposition 209 in California, and presided over the quiet dismantling of affirmative action policy.

Instead of public policies to attack structural racism, Clinton provided us with the spectacle of a national conversation on race predicated on the assumption that dialogue “helps to dispel stereotypes,” and is “a tool for finding common ground.” However, these bland assumptions are not politically innocent, as Adolph Reed argued in his column in *The Progressive* (December 1997):

The problem isn't racial division or a need for healing. It is racial inequality and injustice. And the remedy isn't an elaborately choreographed pageantry of essentializing yackety-yak about group experience, cultural difference, pain, and the inevitable platitudes about understanding. Rather, we need a clear commitment by the federal government to preserve, buttress, and extend civil rights *and* to use the office of the Presidency to indicate that commitment forcefully and unambiguously. As the lesson of the past three decades in the South makes clear, this is the only effective way to change racist attitudes and beliefs.

The report finally issued by the Commission represents at once the nullification of the 1968 Kerner Commission Report, and the reinstatement of the race relations model as the intellectual framework for race policy in America. Whereas the Kerner Report confronted the nation with the harsh reality that it was "moving toward two societies, one black, one white — separate and unequal," the Franklin Report provides a reassuring illusion of "One America in the 21st Century." Whereas the Kerner Report presented the grisly facts about racial inequality and racial conflict, designed to galvanize the nation to action, the Franklin Report is replete with platitudes about "accomplishments, challenges, and opportunities."

The most glaring point of difference pertains to social policy. The Kerner Report concluded with 73 pages of policy recommendations that envisioned a comprehensive program of economic development and social reconstruction targeted at poverty areas and racial ghettos. Not only does the Franklin Report lack any major policy initiatives, but there is no sense of crisis that the three pillars of anti-racist public policy — affirmative action, school desegregation, and racial districting — have all been gutted, effectively bringing the Second Reconstruction to an unceremonious end.

It is true that the Franklin Report includes an endorsement of affirmative action, albeit a tepid one, along with a litany of proposals for reforming housing, health care, education, and criminal justice. Its main emphasis, however, is on bridging the racial divide through dialogue. Nero has been subjected to the judgment of history for fiddling while Rome burned. In this case we are asked to dialogue — and the Commission's report provides us with a dazzling array of alternatives: One America Conversations, Campus Weeks of Dialogue, State-wide Days of Dialogue, meetings, forums, conferences, public service announcements, and visits to the One America Web Site. Finally, the Franklin Report concludes with a section entitled "Ten Things Every American Should Do To Promote Racial Reconciliation."

It is as though Durkheim concluded his masterpiece with "Ten Things That Everybody Should Do to Avoid Suicide." Or Weber offered ten tips for succeeding in business. Or Marx advocated a WPA-style jobs program for the lumpen proletariat. If the President's Advisory Board on Race has displayed an abysmal failure of sociological imagination, who are we to blame but the sociologist of "race relations" who has betrayed the promise of sociology's intellectual tradition by reducing social facts down to the level of individual predispositions? What can we hope of a Presidential commission or the public at large if sociologists, despite their assiduous labors, still do not see that good race relations are unattainable — indeed, inconceivable — unless there is a basic parity of condition between the black and white citizens of this nation?

The Al Aqsa Intifada: **Taking Off the Masks**

Tikva Honig-Parnass

ON SEPTEMBER 28, 2000, ARIEL SHARON, THE LEADER OF THE LIKUD, the man responsible for the bloody Lebanon war and the massacre at Sabra and Shatilla, entered the Al Aqsa compound in Jerusalem, accompanied by 1000 Israeli policemen. This visit was followed the next day, after the prayers in the Al Aqsa mosque were over, by clashes in which Israeli police and border guards killed 7 and wounded 200 Palestinians. Sharon's provocative visit triggered the explosion of violence throughout the '67 Occupied Territories and inside Israel, in which over 150 Palestinians were killed, 13 of whom were Palestinian citizens of Israel, and over 3500 were wounded. Many of these were killed by snipers who aimed their weapons at the upper parts of the body, mainly at the head, but also at the chest and the abdomen. "By this, it may be assumed that the Israeli soldiers had received the order to shoot in order to kill. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that in a few severe events, the Israeli security forces prevented Palestinian ambulances and medical teams from pulling out the wounded" (Amira Hass, *Ha'aretz*, 10/3/00). Israel put under siege all the cities, towns and villages of the West Bank and Gaza, as well as the entrance and exit from the borders of the Palestinian Authority (P.A.) by sea, land and air, using tanks, anti-tank missiles and gunship helicopters, attacking civilians and P.A. institutions and headquarters in Ramallah and Gaza.

Barak's Proposal for Surrender at Camp David

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND THE INTENSITY OF THE RESULTS of Sharon's provocative visit without returning to the principles of Barak's policy which led to the final status agreement, and which, together with the U.S., Barak tried without success to enforce on Arafat at Camp David. All these paved the way both to Sharon's provocation itself, to the reaction in the territories and in Israel, and to the atrocities that the Israeli army and police have been committing. Moreover, it is Barak's policy up until Camp David and the agreement proposed there, not the actual outbreak of violence, which are responsible for the end of the Oslo process. As Professor Baruch Kimmerling says, "If anybody is responsible for the burial that was held for the Oslo Agreements, including a possible chaotic collapse in the areas of the Palestinian Authority — it is Barak" (*Ha'aretz*, 4/10/00).

At Camp David, Barak arrogantly demanded that the final settlement would include the Palestinian declaration of "the end of the conflict and that they had

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no further claims from Israel." This demand implies that the details of the Israeli-American dictate was "an historic compromise" between the "two national movements" to which the Oslo Agreement pretended to strive to reach. As readers may recall, the issues which constitute the "Palestinian question" and, therefore, the only ones that can be the basis for "an historic compromise," were postponed until the talks on final status. But the Israeli-American proposal, which was presented to Arafat at Camp David, did not even include a minimal solution to these issues. Barak repeated his former rejectionist positions, which he had declared in his election campaign eighteen months before. These are positions that actually say, "Either peace according to Israel's terms — or war." And Arafat had no alternative but to choose the only way open to him: to walk out of Camp David.

The following are the main points in Barak's proposed agreement of surrender. First, the absolute and categorical rejection of the Palestinian Right of Return, which is in accord with the positions of all Israeli governments since the end of the 1948 war. (Barak suggested a few hundred returnees every year during the coming fifteen years.) Indeed, a concession on this issue would present a negation of the central aims of Zionism from its very beginning, namely, the establishment of an exclusively Jewish state. Therefore, the Oslo Agreements, as well as the proposal for a final settlement, were precisely designed to liquidate the refugee question, to disperse the refugees throughout the Diaspora, and thus to remove the Palestinian national problem from world consciousness. The refugee problem is the core of the Palestinian national question (which was the rationale behind the foundation of the PLO), a reality acknowledged by all Palestinians, wherever they might be. Precisely because of this, Barak could not but reject the Right of Return, and Arafat could not but insist on this right.

Neither did Barak at Camp David retreat from his other positions regarding the final status solution, namely, the refusal to withdraw to the borders of June 4, 1967, and maintaining Israeli sovereignty over the settlements and 80 percent of the settlers on 20 percent of the West Bank area. (He even demanded an additional 8 percent on a lease for 99 years.) Both the Labor and Likud governments have taken great advantage of the postponement of border issue until the final talks in order to carry out a massive wave of settlement building, designed to determine the Bantustan character of the enclaves comprising the future Palestinian state. As Amira Hass testifies: "Even in these very days, bulldozers are working overtime to manage to determine additional facts in the 61 percent of the West Bank area, which is still under the military and security control of Israel [Areas B and C]. Under the cover of the 'State Lands' category [whose designation is defined as 'for the good of all residents'], the plans to build two parallel, unequal infrastructures in the West Bank, are being completed in great haste, including roads, water, electricity, telephones, sewage, and future development. One is excellent, efficient, wide, secure, and connected to Israel, for the Jews, the other- inferior, reduced, restricted, contracted, for the Palestinians" (*Ha'aretz*, 9/27/00).

In addition, the haste to establish facts in Jerusalem and its surroundings utterly negate Israel's claim that Barak is willing "to make extreme compromises" in Jerusalem, as well as the opposition's accusation that Barak is "dividing Jerusalem." "In the midst of the talks, when the differences in opinion on

the future of Jerusalem seemed to become smaller, an irreversible geo-political fact was established in the form of "The Eastern Ring Road." This road is designed to cut off Arab Jerusalem from its hinterland and to firmly determine the severing of the Northern canton of the Palestinian state from the Southern, to ease the connection between the settlements and the Jewish city, and to prevent the Palestinian communities, strewn all along this road, from developing, since their lands were confiscated. Likewise, the hasty building within the range of the city and in the settlements surrounding it, is actually aimed at presenting a new "status quo," to which the Palestinians will have to "adapt themselves" if they wish to achieve any agreement in Jerusalem (Meron Benvenisti, *Ha'aretz*, 9/28/00).

These facts clarify the cunning game with which Barak chose to proceed at Camp David, attempting to convince the world of his willingness to make "extreme compromises." He turned Jerusalem, and in fact the whole question of Israeli sovereignty over the Al Aqsa compound, into the red line from which Israel could not retreat. To this political aim, he adopted the claim that under the Al Aqsa mosque are buried the remnants of the Temple, and he emphasized their importance as "national symbols" and "Israeli sanctuaries," about which Kimmerling comments, "[by these] Barak meant the relics of a Jewish ritual temple, which may be buried under the central mosque of Muslims, to whose symbols he showed no sensitivity" (*Ha'aretz*, 10/4/00).

In fact, the Al Aqsa compound has been in the full ownership of the Palestinians since the '67 occupation. The Islamic Waqf does what it pleases there, and Israelis hardly ever visit. General Moshe Dayan determined the pragmatic policy regarding the compound, receiving the approval of the Chief Rabbinate, who represented the trend in Judaism that forbade entrance to the Temple Mount until the coming of the Messiah. The extension of the Zionist colonization project by the '67 occupation led to increased adherence to religious symbols within Israeli society. These were now needed, even more than before, for the legitimization of the occupation in the name of the "historic-divine right," and also for the strengthening of the national identity of the collective, for which Zionism had failed to provide secular criteria for defining its boundaries (thereby adopting the religious criterion which characterizes a Jew according to the Jewish origin of his/her mother).

Focusing then on the Temple Mount as the "red line" for Israel's "concessions" was meant to give the impression that an agreement had already been achieved on the remaining central issues owing to "Barak's great willingness to make concessions that Netanyahu had not been willing to make"; then the accusation could be made of Arafat that "for the sake of a few meters he was willing to relinquish the Peace Agreement with Israel" (Ben Ami, Minister of Internal Security and deputy Foreign Minister). But this is not so. Without concessions regarding Jerusalem, Netanyahu also was prepared to sign a settlement with the Palestinians. Moreover, as Kimmerling estimates, "Barak made less efforts towards the Palestinians than did Netanyahu, who carried out the Hebron Agreement" (*Ha'aretz*, 10/4/00). Recall that with the evacuation of Hebron, Netanyahu implemented the second of the three withdrawals which the Oslo Agreement had determined, whereas Barak refused to fulfill Israel's commitment to implement the third — which he postponed until the final status settlement.

Sharon's Authorized, Provocative Visit

IN AN INTERVIEW WITH JOURNALIST YOEL MARCUS which took place only a day or two before Sharon's visit, Barak disclosed his intentions: "If there is no partner [to the Palestinian agreement to relinquish sovereignty over the Al Aqsa Compound] we have at least [after Camp David] succeeded in reaching a situation where the majority of the world is with us and the people of Israel understand that we are not going to a confrontation because of Itamar B or Tapooz C [settlements which were built under the pretext of only "thickening" existing settlements], but because of our linkage with the most important things that unite us: security and the sanctuaries of Israel" (*Ha'aretz*, 9/29/00).

Since the failure of Camp David, it had been clear to both Sharon and Barak, that the despair and frustration in the Palestinian street was bound to ignite at any provocation. According to reports from the White House of Arafat's meeting with Barak at his home in Kochav Yair, three days before Sharon's visit to the compound, Arafat warned Barak that such a visit would cause a conflagration. "He begged him not to allow it." Another report states that Saeb Erikat, the head of the Palestinian negotiating team, delivered a similar warning to deputy Minister of Internal Security and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Shlomo Ben Ami (Orli Azulai, *Yediot Ahronot*, 10/13/00). However, despite all warnings, Barak authorized the visit, knowing that the flare-up that would come in its wake would present a pretext to liquidate the Oslo process, or alternatively, to open military oppression, which would dictate an agreement of surrender — the same agreement that Barak had failed to dictate at Camp David.

The Palestinians understood the political meaning of this visit, namely, to establish Israeli sovereignty over the Al Aqsa Compound, and reacted with the presence of a large group of political figures that implied Palestinian sovereignty over the compound, including Arab members of the Israeli Knesset, were there when Sharon entered the Al Aqsa Compound. But turning the issue of the Al Aqsa Compound into a conflict about who had real sovereignty over it did not allow the Israeli Police to tolerate any manifestation of popular political protest. The next day, they massacred the masses of demonstrators who came out of the Al Aqsa mosque after their prayers. As *Kol Hair* reported (10/6/00): "It was but eight minutes after stones were thrown at the Police at the gates of the compound and towards the Wailing Wall, that the order was given to the Police to break through into the mosque compound. It seems that the District Commander decided that a simple action, carried out before things got worse, such as evacuating the Wailing Wall Square, closing the gates of the compound, and waiting for things to calm down (as in the events of '94, when the claim for sovereignty was not on the agenda) would be perceived as a sign of weakness."

And indeed, the Israeli military superpower showed no weakness towards the masses of Palestinians who rallied forth into the streets on the days that followed the Al Aqsa massacre, both in the '67 Occupied Territories and in Israel. The brutal measures that the Israeli army and Police exercised on both sides of the Green Line demonstrated anew the unity of the colonialist Zionist project throughout all the areas of historical Palestine, and the institutionalization of the apartheid regime throughout.

Intensification of Racism Against '48 Palestinians Under Barak's Rule

THE DECLARATION OF WAR BY THE ISRAELI POLICE against Palestinians inside the Green Line (referred to here as "the '48 Palestinians," based on the year that Israel became a state) actually began many months before the Al Aqsa intifada. Police Commander of the Northern district Alec Ron's oppressive policy and blatant racist incitement won full backing from the "enlightened" Minister of Interior Security Shlomo Ben Ami. He perceived this as an efficient measure to restrain social agitation within the Palestinian population which was intensified as a reaction to the policies of marginalization and dispossession continued by the Labor government. These policies continued despite Barak's promises before the elections, which resulted in 95 percent of the Arabs voting for him as Prime Minister. Barak treated '48 Palestinians with arrogance: he refused to accept the Arab Members of Knesset (M.K.'s) as members of the new government and, all through the months that he was in power, not once did he respond to the many requests of the Supreme Monitoring Committee of Arabs in Israel to meet with him. The acute social-economic problems of the Palestinian Arabs were neglected, land confiscation continued, as did house demolitions, and the rate of unemployment in Arab communities dominated the top of the list.

But what most characterized Barak's period of power was the intentional systematic policy of labeling the Arab population as "a fifth column within the state of Israel." Arrests became more frequent, supposedly owing to organization of "terrorist groups" among them. The Police spokespersons leaked stories to the media of "a national Arab underground" which was alternately said to be connected with Syria, the Islamic movement and even with Ben Laden. But it is worth noting that out of one million of the Arab populace in Israel, there are only 30 in jail today charged with security offences, the majority of which are connected with events that happened in the '70s. This fact indicates that the "security" accusation was formed to cover up the attempt to oppress legitimate political trends among the Palestinian Arabs in Israel, including their demand for equal civil rights in the Jewish state.

The Arab M.K.s who participated during the previous year in the mass demonstrations against house demolition and land confiscation (at Al Ruha and Lydd among other places) were accused of incitement, and a police investigation was even opened against M.K. Muhamad Baraka (Hadash-The Front, headed by the communist party), accusing him of inciting demonstrators to attack the police. Arab M.K.'s of all factions were united in their militant reactions to the persecution policy of the police and aired statements which reflected the anger and bitterness of their constituencies. M.K. Dehamshe (the Unified Arab List) stated: "We will stand firm against the police. If a policeman comes to demolish our homes, we have the right to defend ourselves. This right permits us to break the hands and feet of that soldier or policeman. Every policeman that hurts us is a delinquent." M.K. Isam Mahul of Hadash stated, "I want to be honest with you. We have incited, we are inciting and we will incite. That is our duty towards the Arab public. The question is how can we rid ourselves of the 'Duvdevan' concept [referring to an undercover unit acting in the '67 territories] which Alek Ron brought from the occupied territories into Israel" (*Yediot Ahronot*, 9/15/00).

A Gallop poll (reported by Hemi Shalev, *Ma'ariv*, 9/29/00) revealed "monstrous phenomena, that made our hair stand on end, of deeply rooted hatred

and racism in all strata of the Jewish population.” Half of them were not willing to live in the same neighborhood with Arabs, more than half were not willing to send their children to a kindergarten where there was an Arab child, and about two-thirds of them would have wanted all Israeli Arabs to be transferred to outside the areas of the state of Israel.

The depth of the alienation and despair that the Palestinian Arabs in Israel feel is genuinely expressed in the words of the Arab journalist Said Kashua:

“This is a state that took your lands away, and somehow you managed to come to terms with that; a state that expelled your people and somehow you forgave that; a state which sets up look-outs and ‘community localities’ in the Galilee, on the land that used to belong to you — and that was also forgiven . . . The feeling of a redundant people, that are in fact a technical mistake of ‘48, a state that conveys to a million of its citizens, ‘Get out of here! . . . Enough is enough! We don’t need them anymore. We have already taken their lands, and construction workers can also be imported, so why do we have to get stuck here with so many Arabs who even dare to open their mouth and ask for rights, instead of shutting their mouth and saying thank you” (*Kol Hair*, 10/9/00).

The Ten-Day ‘48 Intifada and the Israeli Left

ALL THESE EXPLAIN THE OUTBURST OF ANGER BY THE ARABS IN ISRAEL and their identification with their massacred brethren at Al Aqsa. Tens of thousands of Palestinian citizens of Israel went out to the streets, blocking main roads in the state. As a senior police officer described it: “Since 1948 there was not a situation in which the North of Israel was disconnected. In all my life I have never seen the Haifa-Tel Aviv road blocked, and now, it has happened” (*Maariv*, 10/4/00).

The Israeli “Left” was particularly shocked by the militant demonstrations of Palestinian Arabs inside Israel — or what is referred to here as the ‘48 intifada — “by the hidden genie that came out of the bottle,” and by the alienation that they revealed towards the Zionist-Jewish state. As to the fourteen citizens whom the police assassinated, the majority of the “Left” leadership chose not to respond. Others spoke of “understanding” life-threatening situations with which the police were confronted. Well-known intellectuals revealed their orientalist, racist attitude towards Arabs and their total disregard of moral values in assessing their situation. Yermiyahu Yovel, professor of philosophy at the Hebrew University, and a supporter of Peace Now, emphasized that “It was not the distress or the social-economic deprivation that caused the outbreak of Arab citizens of Israel. Rather it was the religious impulse which drove them to rescue the Al Aqsa mosque” (*Yediot Ahronot* 10/5/00). In his opinion, the secular Arab leaders who “went crazy” inflamed this impulse and exploited it in a cynical way for their own interests. In the eyes of this “liberal” philosopher, the rights of Arab citizens in Israel are not absolute. “The stipulation for their implementation is their responsibility towards the shared state, [but] if you dissent and are subversive in a violent manner, you are forfeiting your democratic partnership and all the rights bound to it.”

The shock that the Arab uprising within the state of Israel caused among Jewish Israelis was much greater than that of the uprising of the ‘67 Occupied Territories. Now both Right and Left hastened to stress the need to find budgets for the Arab sector in Israel, hoping that these would be efficient measures to soften their political and social agitation. In the practical and symbolic sense,

the '48 uprising presents a challenge to the very nature of the Jewish state. Moreover, in the uprising of the Arabs within Israel lies the danger of the blurring of differences between the two parts of the Palestinian people. Drawing them closer together negates the objective of separating between the Palestinians on opposite sides of the Green Line.

Conclusions

REVEALING THE FALSE ASSUMPTIONS OF OSLO'S ARCHITECTS

The Al Aqsa Intifada, which brought the Oslo process officially to its end, revealed the colonialist assumptions on which it was based and the shaky arrangements that were supposed to sustain it. The two main purposes of the Oslo Agreements were to ensure the political stability of the region so that it would be open to the capitalist globalization process; and to promise the Israeli state the continuation of its control over the '67 Occupied Territories with the collaboration of the Palestinian Authority oppressing any opposition and thus satisfying the economic and security interests of Israel.

OPPOSITION GROWING

The basic assumption behind the Oslo agreement was that Arafat would be able to fulfill the task of ensuring the security of Israel, without interference from democratic legal and political institutions which would not exist in the regime he was to establish. However, the bureaucratic strata which was brought from Tunis and the corrupt economic and political system of which this strata is the main beneficiary, has caused rage and strong opposition both within the democratic elite which emerged throughout the years of the "First Intifada" and was marginalized by Arafat (see Glen Robinson, *Building a Palestinian State: The Incomplete Revolution*), and among political and military leaders who represented that elite at the time.

Moreover, such criticism prevails also within the Fatah militia that Arafat allowed to be established, the Tantheem, who more and more show a tendency towards political and operational independence from Arafat, while challenging the Oslo process, to which they themselves were partner. Indeed, as journalist Danny Rubenstein states (*Ha'aretz*, 10/18/00), Arafat does not control the uprising which broke out spontaneously and has been largely led by the Tantheem.

Basically untenable was the assumption that the strong police force, which the Oslo Agreements permitted Arafat to set up, would carry out the exclusive mission of ensuring the security of Israeli soldiers, settlers and civilians inside the Green Line. The recent Intifada made it clear that the Palestinian police, including the Preventive Security forces, perceive their duty as the protectors of their people when they are attacked by Israeli soldiers. Moreover, the assumption that it is possible to create a kind of SLA (South Lebanon Army) out of the conquered and oppressed Palestinian people has been shaken, since many Palestinian police have shown strong identification with the militant demonstrations, and even joined them in attacking soldiers and settlers.

But it became clear that Arafat could not as yet sign a settlement which included relinquishing the Right of Return and sovereignty over East Jerusalem and the Al Aqsa Compound. Although at present there is no organized democratic opposition, there still exists in a wide strata of the Palestinian people, at

home and in the Diaspora, a considerably high level of politicization and militant energies which constitute a serious threat to Arafat's leadership.

ERASURE OF THE GREEN LINE

The Israeli "Left" that initiated the Oslo process has repeatedly stressed Oslo's importance in implementing the "separation between the two people." (Let's "separate in peace," say the leaders of Peace Now.) This slogan was reiterated like a mantra, despite the fact that both Labor and Likud governments had created a reality in which the settlements were stretched to the outskirts of Palestinian towns and villages, such as Beit Jala (Gilo settlement), Beit Sahur (Har Homa and Tku'a settlement), El Bireh (Psagot settlement), Gaza (Netzarim settlement) and others. These settlements were designed precisely to prevent separation and, as such, empty the Palestinian sovereignty in their autonomous enclaves of any real meaning. The recent events have clearly shown the falsehood of the "separation" plan within the Occupied Territories. Thus, for example, the shootings from the direction of the Palestinian town Beit Jala towards the Israeli settlement of Gilo (which was built on the lands of Beit Jala and Beit Safafa), refuted the prevailing Israeli attitude towards the settlements around Jerusalem, as if they were merely innocent "neighborhoods," and that their peaceful existence was ensured just as was that of West Jerusalem, whose Arabness has long been made forgotten.

The assumption that the separation between the state of Israel and the Occupied Territories of '67 through the Green Line is possible has also been shown to be unreal. The ten days of the uprising of the Palestinian Arabs inside Israel revealed the malice and the stupidity of the slogan "Two states for two people," which had been adopted for years by the more "radical" parts of the Israeli Left. The bearers of this slogan who ignored the existence of Palestinian Arabs in Israel did not foresee the strengthening of their Palestinian national identity. And indeed as Israeli commentators on the Al Aqsa intifada determined, "the Green Line has been blurred." However, this happened not only because of the strong identification with the uprising of their people in the '67 Occupied Territories that the Palestinians in Israel have manifested in their demonstrations. The erasure of the Green Line was performed by Israel itself long before, when Israel has perceived its Arab citizens as enemies, and has used against them the same methods of oppression which it uses against its subjects in the Occupied Territories: shooting live and rubber bullets at demonstrations in protest against Israeli oppression, demolishing "illegal" houses, and confiscating lands and then building settlements which reach the outskirts of the Arab communities from whom the land was taken, thus preventing any development in them.

Here we have before us one of the inherent contradictions in the policy which the Jewish-Zionist state exercises towards its Arab citizens. On one hand, it wishes to differentiate between the two parts of the Palestinian people which were torn from each other in the '48 war, and aims at separating them from each other. On the other hand, in order to justify the existence of a Jewish state, Israel is compelled to repeat and underline the "security" reasons presumably preventing it from accepting Palestinian Arabs as equal citizens and from acknowledging them as a national minority.

STRENGTHENING OF '48 PALESTINIANS' NATIONAL IDENTITY

The Israeli "Left" has assumed that the policies to dispossess the Palestinians inside Israel, including the "Judaizing" of the Galilee and the Triangle area (Um el Fahem region), would continue uninterrupted. Ashkenazi middle-class yuppies, most of them "pursuers of peace," who were looking for a suburban "quality of life," built look-outs and "community localities" in the Galilee and the Triangle (see Oren Yiftahel, "Judaize & Divide: Shaping Space in the Israeli Ethnocracy," *News From Within*, Vol. XV, #11, Dec. 99). In their opinion, they maintained good "neighborly relationships" with their Arab neighbors — with the youngsters of whom they organized workshops for "coexistence." The rosy picture that those "progressive" settlers drew for themselves was also shattered during the recent events.

At the time of Rabin's rule, the state budgets to the Arab local authorities were increased as part of a political alliance that was established with the Arab M.K.'s, according to which they supported the government in the Knesset, although they were not part of the government ("safety net"). At that time, there prevailed in progressive academic circles in Israel the assumption that the "Israelization" process of Arabs in Israel was at its prime, at the expense of their identification with their people in the '67 Occupied Territories ("Palestinization"). Sami Samoha, professor of sociology at Haifa University, determined that it is inevitable that the Palestinians in Israel will accept the Jewish state which is passing through a deep process of democratization, "simply because they have no better alternative to their lives in Israel. The prospect of living in a Palestinian state certainly holds no charms for them. [Thus] it is clear that life in the Jewish — and democratic — state of Israel, with all its defects, is still the best deal on offer" (*News From Within*, Vol. XII, #1, Jan. 1997, quoted verbatim from a conference at Tel Aviv university, Dec. 4, 1996). The individual and collective disorganization of the national Arab minority was of no interest to the Israeli Left. As said before, the main dimension of their world view is that of the security of the state of Israel and its existence as a "Jewish" state.

But once again the massive demonstrations of Palestinian Arabs in Israel confirmed that within their society, which supposedly was destined to be fragmented and atomized, a sense of solidarity with their brothers and sisters on the other side of the Green Line has been growing as part of the strengthening of their Palestinian national identity, along with their willingness to struggle persistently for radical equal citizenship in Israel. However, they are calling not only for "equality of rights" on the individual level, but are demanding the recognition of their collective rights, such as returning the lands which have been stolen from them, granting them cultural autonomy, etc. Moreover, they are now challenging the very legal and ideological foundations of the Jewish-Zionist state in which their oppression is structurally inevitable.

OLD ZIONISM VS. NEOLIBERALISM

It seems that Israel is ready to take off the gloves now that the cracks in the colonialist structure that Zionism erected have been revealed. Confronting the genuine national desires within the Palestinian people is bringing the Labor establishment to show its real face. There are no more deceiving attempts to claim that there are substantial differences between Left and Right — attempts that have continued since the beginning of colonization in Palestine (see Zeev Sterenhell,

Nation Building or a New Society? concerning the Zionist Labor movement and the consented division of roles between them and the capitalist Right in pre-48 Palestine). The Labor Party is almost liquidated by now, as is the “political center” that Barak founded before the last elections as “One Israel.” The majority of the Labor representatives will support a united national government together with the Likud headed by Sharon, which will adopt a policy of slaughter and bloodshed to oppress the opposition in the Occupied Territories, and to force the Palestinians to accept the Israeli-American dictates. Precisely that has been, from the very beginning, the strategy of the Zionist Labor Movement: conquering the land in “peaceful” ways by adding another dunam and another goat, and simultaneously getting ready to exploit fully the military power which was developed over the years, as was the case in the ‘48 war. This is the future plan of a united government after the diplomatically enforced surrender failed.

Israeli public opinion has also been prepared as in ‘48, to accept a blatant and cruel policy of force. As revealed by the Gallop Poll which was reported above, Israeli society has become seeped in religious-nationalistic fanaticism. Not a day passes without reports of persecution of Arab citizens, beatings, arson, and attacks on property and human beings. Most of these events are not reported to the police or even to human rights organizations, mainly due to the lack of confidence in legal authorities.

In no small way the responsibility lies on the shoulders of the Zionist Left that assumed it was possible to reach the realization of the Oslo Agreements by convincing the Israeli public with instrumental arguments such as “security” and “separation,” without any change in the prevailing discourse about morally justifying Zionism and without recognizing the Palestinian Nakba (“Disaster” of ‘48) inflicted by it.

We have indeed witnessed supposedly new trends of “Post Zionism,” which presented a local version of neo-liberal and multi-culturalist ideology of the capitalist globalization era. The representatives of the new bourgeoisie which emerged with the development of the Israeli economy, and their mouthpiece Labor and Meretz parties, who initiated the Oslo Agreements, have meanwhile failed to achieve the goal of ensuring political stability and “security.” It should be noted that large parts of this new bourgeoisie (including professionals and academics, the majority of whom are Ashkenazim) are the biological and ideological offspring of the Zionist Labor movement that founded the state of Israel. There is a structured contradiction between their class interests regarding a free economy and privatization, and their Zionist commitment to the existence of a Jewish state, which rules over the entire area of historic Palestine. The latter demands the continuity of some of the ideological and socio-economic collectivist dimensions of traditional Zionism, which may be an obstacle to a wild free market, and to the ideology which legitimizes it. Within this inner contradiction in the policy and ideology of the political establishment in Israel, the classic Zionist trend of “Blood and Soil,” of conquest and direct brutal oppression, has so far won over. It indeed seems that Barak and his followers in the Labor party have decided to disconnect themselves from the unholy alliance with the Israeli big industrialists who are witnessing the destruction of their dreams of the “new Middle East.” They are now trying to protest against Barak’s attempts to unite with Sharon and are calling upon him to establish a coalition with the religious party Shas — the same Shas about which, at the time Barak’s

government was being formed, they repeatedly cried, "Anybody but Shas."

A wide consensus is now emerging around the continuation of the Zionist project in its year 2000 version, which is no less brutal than its previous versions. However, the unity between Right and "Left" will inevitably widen the cracks in the Israeli-American project. It will strengthen the opposition of the Palestinian people on both sides of the Green Line, perhaps even within Israeli society, and will hopefully create a solid core able to disconnect itself from the new nationalistic alliance. This may well ignite the fire of true solidarity with the Palestinian people among the masses in the Arab world — all of which threaten American imperialism and its Israeli clients in the region.

Postscript

IN THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER, ISRAEL INTENSIFIED THE MEANS it takes in suppressing the Intifada. Israeli troops increased their use of live ammunition, now used in more than 80 percent of the shootings. The high-velocity, 5.5 mm bullets which spread when they hit the body (like dumb-dumb bullets), have brought about the high casualty figures of more than 270 dead and 9800 wounded in two months (UNICEF report).

The siege on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip by air, land and sea, has stopped the movement of people and goods between the '67 Occupied Territories on the one hand, and Israel and the outside world (including Egypt and Jordan) on the other. The economy has reached a standstill, the losses in agriculture are enormous, and the rates of unemployment have increased to 60 percent, not including the 125,000 laborers who are prevented from reaching their workplaces inside Israel. This collective punishment of the civilian population is intended to force them to put pressure on Arafat to return to the "peace" talks and accept Barak's dictates (Amir Oren, *Ha'aretz*, 11/23/00).

Israeli-intensified oppressive policies also include permitting settlers to conduct pogroms against Palestinians, massive uprooting of vineyards and orange groves, a kind of mini-transfer in a number of Palestinian communities (now turned into ghost neighborhoods) which border on settlements, and land expropriation (accompanied with threats to confiscate more) to build by-pass roads. All this is now justified by the definition of the current situation as a "war" against "terrorism," which presumably removes any restrictions on the methods which Israel uses. That is why Israel is against stationing international observers (or even the American "study delegation") which now has become a most urgent necessity.

Each day brings new mechanisms in order to prevent the attempts of the Palestinians to focus their attacks on the main roads used by the settlers. In the Gaza Strip, Israel finalized the division between the North and the South and is contemplating the isolation of all refugee camps in the Strip from each other.

In the West Bank, Israel has now realized that the by-pass road "trick," which was meant to connect the settlements and enable the settlers to travel peacefully between them and to their places of work in Israel, has failed. Dozens of cement blocks have been scattered throughout the West Bank this month to prevent Palestinian vehicles from travelling along these indirect roads, thus jailing them in enclaves. The purpose of this step is to strengthen Israel's control over the entire geographical space between the Palestinian locations, a space

which has been loosened since the beginning of the Intifada two months ago. The loosening of the Israeli control over this space was the result of the change that took place in the patterns of the Uprising, namely, less mass involvement of citizens in demonstrations and the increase of firing at military targets, and the movement of settlers and soldiers on the roads. These actions are largely led by Fatah activists (members of the "Tantheem") who now declare that the Intifada will continue "until return of refugees to within Israeli borders and until the full national rights, including sovereignty on El Aqsa compound are fulfilled."

Until the end of November, the political and security establishment in Israel could not reach an agreement about the issue of Arafat's responsibility for the different activities of the Intifada. Barak readily adopted the position of "Aman" (General Intelligence Service), which, contrary to the "Shabak" (Secret Security Services), claimed that Arafat could easily stop the "violence" by "delegating command."

No doubt Barak's Orientalist viewpoint, which has traditionally been adopted by most leaders of Zionist colonialism, eased his acceptance of the Aman position. However, Barak also took advantage of these differences of opinion for his own needs when he was called upon to justify Israel's bombing of the institutes of the Palestinian Authority and the Preventive Security Services, and to explain to America his refusal to return to negotiations until Arafat kept the promise he had given at SharEm "to lower the level of violence." The argument that "Arafat is no longer a partner in peace" served Barak well when he tried hard to set up an Emergency Government with Likud chair Sharon to strengthen the conception that we do not have here a popular uprising against occupation, but rather bloodthirsty primitive bands that act according to orders given by a terrorist leader, without any opinion of their own. At the beginning of the month of Ramadan, on November 27, Barak "donated" symbolic gestures to ease the economic attack on the Palestinians because, "really and truly, Arafat has no control over the violence" (Akiva Ekdar, *Ha'aretz*, 11/28/00). The establishment spokespersons from among the media's senior commentators now repeat Barak's partial purification of Arafat (Zeev Shiff, *Ha'aretz*, 11/29/00), which was exactly what Barak needed when he decided to return to the alternative of negotiations, after the option of an Emergency Government with Sharon was dropped.

Barak's government has reached the stage where it commands only 30 seats in the Knesset. The wide coalition of 73 MK's, which he established on July 4, 1999, has dwindled down to 30 MK (out of 120) in only a year (24 of the "One Israel" Party and 6 of the "Center Party"). Barak was compelled to choose between two options: an Emergency Government, which could keep him alive politically for a while, or elections. Sharon was interested in joining an Emergency Government since the elections option would enable Likud rival Netanyahu to return to the political arena (which he left after his defeat in the elections one-and-a-half years previous), win the primaries as Likud representative and replace Sharon as leader of the party. Also, Barak understood that without the support of the "security net" in the Knesset which the Arab lists and Shas refused to promise him, the Emergency Government with Sharon is his last chance. He thus conducted secret talks with Sharon for the last weeks where the only argument between the two concerned the "price Barak would pay." This price has increased as the Likud succeeded in weakening Barak, both in the Knesset and within his own party. In order to recruit the support of his colleagues in the Likud to the

notion of an Emergency Government, Sharon stipulated difficult terms to join it by demanding a veto in the peace talks. In that case, an Emergency Government would have delayed the beginning of the peace talks for a number of years, and the Americans and the dove members of the Labor party were opposed to it. Barak could not accept it, and the Likud submitted the law proposal to dissolve the Knesset (first reading) and prepare for general elections. A few hours before the time scheduled for the vote (on 11/28/00), when it became clear that the proposal was about to receive a majority, Barak decided to avoid the shame and to inform the Knesset that he was supporting the election law. The proposal passed with a majority of 80 votes, including the Arab vote, which, for the first time, was unanimous against the Labor Party — a sign of things to come.

The elections, which it seems will take place in May, 2001, give Barak five months to achieve any agreement with the Palestinians, the only thing which could ensure his victory. However, since there is no essential difference between Sharon and Barak in their position regarding an agreement with the Palestinians, the main considerations in the policy that they are conducting relate to interests and calculations of power struggles. As shown above, these were the reasons for the decision taken to move for elections. Also, power considerations rather than substantive political principles made it easy for Barak to change his stubborn position as to achieving a Final Agreement with the Palestinians, and to declare his readiness to discuss an "Interim Agreement" or a "Final Agreement in stages" which would not include Jerusalem and the refugee issues, precisely Sharon's position until now. Therefore, there still exists the possibility of Barak and Sharon agreeing to establish an Emergency Government, which could prevent both of them from losing the elections, if Netanyahu runs for the leadership of the Likud.

Barak's suggestion for a new Interim Agreement, however, has nothing new in it that had not been included in past proposals. Moreover, it even cuts away much of the "generous" suggestion which had been submitted to Arafat at Camp David (Zvi Bar'el, *Ha'aretz*, 11/2/00). So it is only left for us to hope that Arafat is not tempted to view the possibilities of the Likud return to power (or the joint government with Sharon) as a great danger, and that in order to prevent that, he not hasten to achieve an agreement with Barak according to the latter's dictates.

Between the Lines

*Monthly Radical Analysis and Reporting
on the Palestinian/Arab-Israeli Conflict*

Between the Lines, a new monthly magazine produced by the two former editors of *News from Within*, categorically rejects the Oslo process and the resulting apartheid reality established in the '67 Occupied Territories and strengthened within Israel. This perspective stems from a comprehensive stance opposing the exclusive Jewish-Zionist nature of the State of Israel and the authoritarian regime which has emerged in areas under control of the Palestinian Authority.

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The Struggle for Palestine

Barry Finger

THE BREAKDOWN OF THE OSLO ACCORD, announced in dramatic and unambiguous terms, by the al-Aksa intifada in the occupied territories and by the parallel awakening of the Palestinians within Israel, marks the triumph — in the words of an *Ha'aretz* journalist — of the “direct-democracy of the street” over the “peace process.” Oslo, as many have emphasized, was a particularly unique peace process in its lopsided design. For it failed to respond to the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinians for self-determination, for security, for meaningful sovereignty in Jerusalem and for the repatriation of its refugee millions. These issues were to be placed in abeyance while a period of confidence-building measures took effect. During this interregnum, Arafat and the Palestinian Authority were to prove their worthiness as peace partners by controlling their opposition, restraining terrorists within their midst and by supplanting Israel's occupation armies with a domestic police (CIA- and Mossad-trained) of comparable efficiency in terms of Israel's security needs. Israel, for its part, was *not* required to gain the trust of the Palestinians by defining its borders, dismantling its settlements, ending the policy of house demolitions, or relinquishing its control over land, water resources, roads, electricity, commerce — or Jerusalem.

Nevertheless, for all its demonstrated advantages to Israel, Oslo was greeted with continuous suspicion and hostility by the Israeli rightwing. Their great fear remained this: by placing the resolution of all issues of major concern to the Palestinians beyond the time frame of the Accords, the Palestinians were all but invited to revisit these issues and raise new demands once the time limit on Oslo had elapsed and Israeli troops had been withdrawn. And this fear was not entirely unjustified. For by accepting a two-state solution — of which Oslo was but one, provisional and incipiently flawed formulation — the Palestinians abandoned the perspective, deeply inculcated for purposes of social cohesion and ideological regimentation on *both* sides of the national divide, that the destruction of Israel is the precondition for the satisfaction of Palestinian rights. The Palestinians had, thereby, knocked from under the Israeli establishment the central political prop supporting its proscriptive justification for every act of brutality, violation of international law, act of territorial expansion and abrogation of democratic norm by which it purportedly “secures” Israel's existence.

The Israeli Establishment, including its liberal wing — for all its professed desire for peace — also fears international reconciliation to be a potent corrosive to national unity, international Jewish solidarity and unconditional American backing. That is because the “risk” of peace opens the door to all the moral uncertainties that now cloud Israel's history, papers over inter-ethnic resentments, limits democracy and restrains class conflict — concerns which remain so successfully suppressed and postponed by the perfervid atmosphere of war and pending war. And that is why true national reconciliation is far more discomfiting to the Israeli status quo than the threat of war.

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It is also for that reason that the “democracy of the streets,” with its call for a holy war now resonating throughout the Arab world — however understandable, given the absolute frustration of the Palestinian masses with an all but sterile “peace” process — is a tragedy of immense proportion. That responsibility for this tragedy lies squarely on the shoulders of Clinton and the Barak administrations is now patently clear. Ever since July, the Palestinians have been cajoled, prodded and pressured to sign a disgraceful peace treaty which would have left the Palestinians with nothing more than a string of discreet and isolated Bantustans. It became manifestly clear that Arafat was being asked to sign on to an agreement which would change the form of occupation, not remove it. This was the bitter, but not inevitable, harvest of Oslo.

What is also clear is that the program of Islamic Jihad and of Hamas, movements relatively quiescent for several years, is now the only alternative to Arafat and the Palestinian Authority (PA) currently able to sport a mass following. And it is now Arafat who must run ahead of the mob in order to reassert his “authority.” Yet he carefully makes sure to restrain the PA with its 30,000 firearms, while the youth of the nation throw stones and are massacred in the streets. Similarly, the echo in the streets of Arab capitals expresses their defiance of regimes prepared to offer wide-ranging compromises to Israel, but which are incapable of granting the most minimal of democratic concessions to their own peoples. These regimes are no more prepared for war, however, than is Arafat, confining themselves, despite their occasional rhetorical bombast, to freezing diplomatic relations with Israel. The intifada and the call for war are therefore likely to remain largely cries of protest against a seemingly impervious reality. Which is not to deny that such calls have also inspired more malevolent forms of random terrorism against innocent Jews and Israelis, nor the remote possibility that Arab leaders may find that they, too, have to appease the seething pro-war sentiment with something a tad more deadly than diplomatic maneuvering.

This mood will, undoubtedly, be exacerbated by a new election season in Israel. No government in Israel of the past decade has lasted more than two years, and Barak’s has understandably proven to be no exception. But elections tend to bring out the sleaziest aspect of the liberal wing of the Establishment, as it invariably strives to out-do the Right in its contempt, chauvinism and bare-bones brutality toward the Palestinians and the wider Arab world. This is how Israeli liberalism reasserts its “tough” nationalist credentials, as hard-nosed equals to the Right, before offering some olive branch to the Palestinians to inch the peace process along. And, given the pogrom-like atmosphere which exists and is abetted by the government of Israel towards its own internal Arab subjects, it would be highly unlikely that the next election will find Palestinian Israelis endorsing Barak with anything like the conviction and unanimity that this community offered him in the previous election. All the more reason for the center of political gravity in Israel to shift perilously towards the right.

This has unfortunately, swayed a good deal of what remains of the sectarian Left abroad to demonstrate its solidarity with the “street” by becoming the most implacable proponents of an ultra-Arab nationalism. Exorcising the specter of Oslo, and more importantly — a two-state solution which it misguidedly identifies as inextricably linked to Oslo, signifies a creeping return, at least rhetorically and ideologically, to a policy based on a mirror image of the Israeli chauvinism: of the forceful unification of Palestine through the subjugation and imposed amal-

gamation — or dispossession — of one of its national constituents. It is just that the polarities of “good” and “bad” nation are now quite simply reversed. All the old, tired clichés of the “Arab Revolution” with which the Left deluded itself for decades have come bubbling back to the surface in the less-than-veiled hope that a nationalist war waged half-heartedly against Israel — and by extension against American imperialism, for which Israel is taken as a pure and simple proxy — could be transformed by the outraged Arab masses into a revolutionary war against both Israel *and* the corrupt and incompetent Arab regimes. That the only consistent exponents of this perspective remaining in the Arab world lie in the camp of religious fanaticism seems to make little difference to this remedial class of radical Leftism.

ANOTHER APPROACH HAS BEEN SUGGESTED BY A GROUP OF PALESTINIAN academics and public figures from the occupied territories who recently appealed directly to the Israeli public for an egalitarian and just solution to the Palestinian question. They argued, as described by Danny Rabinowitz in *Ha'aretz*, for bringing the conflict to resolution by adhering to four principles:

an Israeli withdrawal to the June 4, 1967 borders; the establishment of East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine alongside West Jerusalem as the capital of Israel; Israel's recognition of its responsibility for the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem in 1948 as a precondition for the formulation of a just solution to the plight of those refugees; and mutual recognition that each side has a connection to the holy sites under its jurisdiction.

This alternative offers a point of departure to Barak and the moderate wing of the Israeli peace movement, which vacillated in their vision of peace. With the oft-repeated slogan of “they there, and we here,” a two-state solution was being sold to the Israeli public, not as a means for national reconciliation, but simply as a pragmatic agreement based on national interests. This new crystallization of Palestinian demands has created the common ground for a joint struggle with the militant internationalist wing of the Israeli peace movement, which has remained oriented to the need for a comprehensive accommodation with these aspirations. And it refocuses emphasis where it properly belongs — not on pan-Arab solidarity with the Palestinians, a given and, in and of itself, insufficient basis for the attainment of Palestinian independence — towards the Israeli masses. It advances a programmatic basis for a joint struggle for Palestinian sovereignty and one with which the international socialist left must engage and show solidarity. For it offers both nations the prospects of a real peace that will not force the Palestinians to concede fundamental national principles.

But recognition of the need for common struggle is the preface to a program, not a socialist program itself. Any such socialist program flows from the consistent application of democratic means but does not *terminate* with an opposition to national oppression. Socialists are not nationalists, and, unlike those on the pro-Arab left (the former proponents of the “Arab Revolution”), cannot harbor illusions that a Palestinian state is a major step forward in the liberation of the Palestinian masses. Far from it.

While the Palestinians have every right to select their own leadership and to fight for their national rights under that banner, socialists must warn that the attainment of a nation-state exchanges the shackles of national oppression for those of class oppression. This is not just a socialist platitude. Arafat's organiza-

tion has its financial roots in the Palestinian bourgeoisie in the diaspora. It was these sources which sustained Fatah in its formative years and which enable Arafat to rule over a bloated Palestinian Authority staffed by appointees whose sole qualifications rest on their personal loyalties to Arafat. The PLO at one time enjoyed wide support as champion of the Palestinian struggle, but Arafat has always been careful to balance the interests of the Palestinians with that of his conservative financial base. As a practical matter, the subjugation of Palestine under a corrupt Arafat regime, not to mention a Hamas theocracy, is unlikely to surpass the pitiful democratic norms which characterize the rest of the Arab world and may — in some ways — be even less tolerant of political diversity than the occupying force it casts off. Arafat, it is worth recalling, is no civil libertarian and does not shy away from routinely imprisoning people without trial and torturing his opponents.

This sobering reality cannot make socialists neutralists towards the Palestinian national struggle, but it does distinguish us from those who believe that the solution to the national question gives rise or advances the conditions *necessary* for the class emancipation of the Palestinian workers and peasants. That is, the emerging bourgeois Palestinian state cannot be seen as the framework *within* which any historical breakthrough in class struggle will occur. On the contrary, there is every reason to anticipate that wide-scale repression will follow the consolidation of the Palestinian state and will mark a setback for Palestinian socialists struggling for both the extension of democratic rights and the improvement in the lot of the Palestinian masses.

Rather our solution must be internationalist. For there are specific and identifiable dynamics within the Israeli/Palestinian context which can be brought to bear in the struggle for Palestinian statehood and which may, under *certain* circumstances, cement a basis for international solidarity. The key to this perspective is the relaxation of national enmity as a means to Jewish-Arab working class unity. It is not the cold peace of Barak or the turn inward by the Palestinians toward the Arab world that can advance this process, but rather Palestinian independence based on open borders and the elimination of military tensions.

THE POINT IS THIS. THE POLITICAL BATTLE FOR AN INDEPENDENT Palestine must itself evolve into an implicit microcosm of international struggle whereby the elemental democratic aspirations of the Palestinian masses are buttressed on an indispensable second front by peace activist pressure within Israel. Such possibilities were first introduced into the region by the PLO's abandonment of the whole "armed struggle/Arab Revolution" claptrap in favor of a galvanizing appeal for redress of national injustice, over the heads of the Israeli ruling classes, to the hearts and minds of prospective Israeli counterparts. This bridge-building has already attained far-reaching implications, eroding and dissolving in a scant few years the entire ideological edifice of Zionist exclusivity and calling into question the fundamental inequity of the Israeli political structure composed of Jewish citizens and Arab subjects. It has, in its post-Zionist form, begun to undermine all the founding myths of Israel, foremost among which concerns the birth of the Palestinian refugee problem. Reflecting this ideological upheaval, the head of the Israeli Supreme Court has recently called for the integration of Palestinian Israelis into all strata of society, supporting affirmative action remedies to insure that the nation's resources are justly allocated to that end.

The final removal of Israeli military rule over the West Bank and Gaza with an agreement over shared sovereignty in Jerusalem and a resolution of the refugee problem would mark a stinging political rebuke for Israeli reaction, which, in conjunction with the demise of its ideological premises, would be a blow from which it could never fully recover. Bourgeois class interest would begin to displace chauvinist populism on the Israeli rightwing, and Israeli politics could then be expected to undergo a fundamental class-oriented realignment. Palestinian independence, under such circumstances, would be a victory both for the Palestinians *and* for the Israelis.

The overarching significance of an ensuing “two-state solution” is that it would prepare the framework through which the Palestinian and Israeli masses can extend and deepen their economic and social interdependence — *whose foundation was already paved in common struggle*, while retaining, for as long as they desire, their respective national autonomies. The “two-state” solution is, then, a step forward only if it is based on an increasing access of the Palestinians as a whole to the Israeli economy. For it is completely illusory to maintain the proposition of Palestinian (and Arab) nationalism that the material, cultural and social welfare of the Palestinian masses will or could be increased without the active participation of the Israeli proletariat. The Israeli GNP is twenty times that of the occupied territories. It is *only* the possibilities unlocked by an integrated economic structure that further encourage the prospect of joint Israeli-Palestinian trade union struggle, open housing and anti-discrimination struggles, etc. These and the myriad other confidence-building measures arising both from the experience of international class solidarity and the awakening of Palestinian Israelis to the prospect of an American-like civil rights struggle are precisely those that can lead the Israeli and Palestinian masses to fundamentally break their nationalist ties with their own ruling classes and to replace these with cross-border class alliances.

This perspective crucially rests on a *joint* struggle for Palestine as the first great international confidence-building measure and opening salvo of a cascading struggle to free the region of its nationalist poisons and to ultimately reorganize the social and economic basis of the Mid-East society.

And it is this perspective, I think, which separates revolutionary socialism from those on the left who so enthusiastically applaud the passing of power from Arafat to the Hamas streets and their ultra-nationalist secular supporters. The frustrations of the Palestinian masses in the face of interminable Israeli foot dragging, of the brutal provocations of an occupation army, of the collective punishments, the house demolitions, the land thefts...and the list can be extended indefinitely — are entirely understandable, as the moral collapse of the Establishment wing of the Israeli peace movement is entirely reprehensible. But those on the left who blindly applaud and cheer on the intifada or who harbor visions of a Palestinian nationalism igniting a revolutionary Mid-East conflagration are cruelly deceiving themselves and the Palestinians they claim to be in such solidarity with. Should Israel withdraw from Palestinian land because the Palestinians have created a Lebanese-type quagmire, Israel will undoubtedly respond by placing a *cordon sanitaire* around Palestine. Palestine will become a Gulf state dependency, if not also an Islamic dictatorship, and the prospects of international class struggle would be placed on indefinite hold. Israel, too, will be subject to the ideological hegemony of the most loathsome elements in its political firmament, elements which might otherwise be facing extinction.

The Silence of the Vatican And the Plight of the Jews

H. Brand

*Open your mouth, and speak up for the dumb,
Against the suit of any that oppose them; open your
Mouth and pronounce just sentence, and give
Judgment for the wretched and the poor.*

—Proverbs 31:8, 9

BEYOND QUESTION, PIUS XII FAILED TO UPHOLD this biblical injunction during the dark days of World War II, and thus also some of the ancient tradition of his Church. The failure was not his alone, but remains its outstanding symbol.

John Cornwell's *Hitler's Pope** is an intellectual, political, and also a moral biography of Eugenio Pacelli, who, elevated to the papacy in March 1939, became Pius XII. It is, however, a biography whose substance is an indictment: Pacelli is indicted for his silence about the destruction of most of European Jewry by the Nazis. His resistance to speaking out and to denouncing the atrocities committed by the Nazis are thoroughly documented. The Pope's "failure to utter a candid word about the Final Solution [then] in progress proclaimed to the world that the Vicar of Christ was not moved to pity and anger. From this point of view, he was the ideal Pope for Hitler's unspeakable plan. He was Hitler's pawn. He was Hitler's Pope." The book's title reflects no sensationalist intent by the publisher. It is its argument.

It is an argument fuelled by the author's wrath, yet at times contradicted by his political and historical insights. No Pope, Pius XII included, was ever a secular ruler's Pope. There have always been institutional and ideological boundaries whose transgression by secular authorities the Vatican resisted. The Holy See retained sufficient autonomy in choosing what it could say or would not say. All the worse its moral failure, all the more incomprehensible its silence under Pius XII.

Cornwell attempts to shed light on the reasons for this silence by citing various indications of "Pacelli's long-standing anti-Jewishness" (p295-6). But the instances he mentions do not suggest the virulence, let alone the fanaticism, that would otherwise justify the broader question he raises, "whether in some shocking way [the papacy] was hospitable to Hitler's plans as early as 1933" (294). The question is purely speculative and is not pursued. A more pertinent characterization of the Vatican's attitude is a passage from a February 1964 *Commentary* article by Guenter Lewy (author of the authoritative work

*John Cornwell, *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII*. N.Y.: Viking, 1999. 430 pp., \$29.95 cloth.

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The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany), quoted by Cornwell: “. . . [O]ne is inclined to conclude that the Pope and his advisers — influenced by the long tradition of moderate anti-Semitism so widely accepted in Vatican circles—did not view the plight of the Jews with a real sense of urgency and moral outrage . . . For this assertion no documentation is possible, but it is a conclusion difficult to avoid” (295).

Complicity & the Concordat

GIVEN ITS SUPPOSED MORAL STATURE, the Vatican's evident indifference to the fate of the European Jewry deepened the indifference of the public of Western countries during the 1930's and early 1940's. “Moderate anti-semitism” in the United States, for example, prevented the granting of asylum to any sizeable number of European Jews (immigration quotas were *reduced* after 1938), as David Wyman has amply documented.¹ Szymon Zygielbojm, the representative of the Bund on the Polish National Council in London, committed suicide in 1943 to protest the “indifference” of the “Allied States” to the Jews' fate. In one of his last letters, he wrote, “By the passive observation of the murder of defenseless millions . . . these countries [i.e., the Allied States] have become the criminals' accomplices.”² These are the words of a man of bitterness and sorrow, who knew that his people were losing a war which the Allies would ultimately win.

Cornwell sets the tone of his book by prefacing it with a quote from Thomas Merton, who wrote, “Pius XII and the Jews . . . a silence which is deeply . . . in complicity with all the forces which carry out oppression, injustice, aggression.”³ Indifference is here equated with complicity in crimes against humanity. It is a measure of morality, also used, if in a vastly different context, by Zygielbojm. I am unconcerned with the complexities this measure gives rise to. Our interest here is why high moral leadership should be attributed to Pius XII if, as Cornwell argues, this Pope did not and would not live up to the test the measure poses.

That such leadership was attributed to him, by both his followers and apologists, as well as implicitly by his critics and adversaries, cannot be doubted. Cornwell's very book attests it. Rolf Hochhuth's famous play, *The Deputy* (i.e., the Vicar of Christ), was first performed in Berlin in the early 1960's, arousing a storm of disputes for decades thereafter. The pressures exerted upon the Holy See by the representatives of the British and American governments, as well as by Jewish organizations, built upon the same assumptions. (The mission of Myron Taylor, President Roosevelt's envoy, was in part intended to mute American Catholics' opposition to American aid to the Soviet Union in its struggle against the German invaders.) It is almost universally believed that the moral power presumed to be inherent in the papacy, if used to denounce Nazi atrocities, would stir the conscience of its flock and put the Nazi criminals on guard. Let us cite an instance of how the episcopate construed this power.

After the Concordat between the Nazi regime and the Holy See had been concluded in the summer of 1933, Cardinal Faulhaber sent a handwritten note to Hitler, stating, “What the old parliaments and parties did not accomplish in 60 years, your statesmanlike foresight has achieved in six months. For Germany's prestige in East and West . . . this handshake with the papacy, the greatest moral power in the history of the world, is a feat of immeasurable blessing.”

These words were written — other German “princes of the Church” expressed themselves similarly — some time after the Nazi regime had abolished virtually all civil liberties, had dissolved all political parties other than its own, and had decreed the removal of “non-Aryans” from public service as well as from pastoral functions, all clearly steps toward the deprivation of citizenship rights of the Jews. These actions were never protested by members of the hierarchy, and expressions such as Faulhaber’s could only bolster the regime and help sustain its policies. The Concordat was the price the German episcopate paid for the surrender of whatever moral leadership it could have laid claim to.

It is probable that Hitler, who aimed at abolishing “political Catholicism” as endangering Nazi rule and ideology, agreed to the Concordat on condition that the Center Party vote for the Enabling Act, introduced in the Reichstag in March 1933. This act suspended constitutional government and legalized the dictatorship. In addition, the Center Party was to be dissolved in line with the regime’s goal of a one-party state. The dissolution of the party occurred a few weeks prior to the signing of the Concordat. The clergy was also advised to reverse its denunciations of the notions of racism. All these conditions were met.

The Center Party, founded in the mid-19th century, represented the political and educational interests mainly of lay Catholics. Intellectually and ideologically, it was widely diverse, and it invariably adhered to parliamentary standards. The demise of the party was a price which the Vatican was all the more willing to pay for the Concordat with Germany inasmuch as this would eliminate the challenges, actual or potential, from lay Catholic interests. The Vatican had nearly always resisted “political Catholicism” as practiced by Catholic parties. Pius X had been instrumental in breaking up the Italian lay movement in the early 20th century. Pius XI, under whose auspices the Concordat with Germany was to be concluded, “discouraged” the Popular Party of Italy, led in the mid-1920s by Luigi Sturzo, who strongly believed that Christian social ideals should be propagated by his party, and kept separate from the sacramental hierarchy of the Church.⁴ Pius XI, desirous of an accommodation with Mussolini that would restore the Vatican’s territorial sovereignty (granted by the Lateran treaty of 1929, and yielding an important lesson to Hitler), dissolved the Popular Party. Sturzo went into exile.

Anxiety & Appeasement

THE CONCORDAT WITH THE REICH was Pacelli’s crowning achievement as the secretary of state of Pius XI. Concordats had been concluded with Bavaria, Baden, Prussia; one with the Reich had been resisted not the least by Protestants. In this matter, Pacelli, prior to Hitler’s appointment to chancellor, had importuned Heinrich Bruening, chancellor of the Weimar republic between 1930 and 1932, and representative of the Center Party’s liberal wing. Bruening thought a concordat was of tenth-rate importance, he was struggling with the disintegrating parliamentary system of Weimar. Pacelli even thought the Center and the Nazis should form a coalition government so as to bring about the desired Concordat. Bruening later wrote that “the system of concordats led him (Pacelli) and the Vatican to despise democracy and the parliamentary system.”⁵ He had strongly urged that the Center Party oppose the Enabling Act. His life at risk, he had to flee his native country in 1934.

The Concordat with the Reich, like other such agreements, provided for certain rights of the clergy, including the appointment of bishops. The Nazi regime conditioned this right upon the acceptability of the appointee, who was also required to take an oath of loyalty to Hitler. The Catholic (parochial) educational system was to be “protected”; the rights of parents wishing to send their children to such schools was not to be interfered with. Lay disputes were to be resolved by negotiation.

The ink wasn’t dry on the concordat when the Nazi regime began to violate some of its key provision, particularly those relating to education. Eventually, the Vatican issued the famous encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* (“With Burning Anxiety”). The encyclical was signed by Pius XI, had been drafted by Cardinal Faulhaber, and was edited by Pacelli. Published in March 1937, it was printed in Germany, and distributed not through the mail but by way of the parish network. The Nazis reacted vigorously, considering the publishing and the reading of the encyclical from the pulpits a subversive act. They closed the firms that had printed it, jailed many of their personnel, and re-opened trials of religious and laypersons accused of morals and foreign—exchange offenses.

Cornwell does not much discuss the encyclical, his focus being on Pacelli’s attempt to soften its more assertive features — in other words, to appease the Nazi regime. But I do not believe there can be any question that he was in harmony with the document’s essential message of the ideological inclusiveness that the Church upheld. His own first encyclical as Pope (see below) would confirm this. Guenter Lewy devotes more space and thought to *Mit brennender Sorge*, but concludes that it does no more, no less than condemn neopaganism and the denial of religious freedom.⁶ This is not quite so. The Church did not uphold religious freedom (except its own) until Vatican II in the mid-1960s. The encyclical indeed denounced the near deification of race and nation by the Nazis. What it did uphold, and this remains central to its message, was “natural law, written by the Creator’s hand on the tablet of the heart, and which reason not blinded by sin or passion, can easily read . . . Human laws in flagrant contradiction with the natural law are vitiated with a taint which no force, no power can mend.”⁷ And the universality of natural law is inherent in God’s commandment: “As God’s sun shines on every human face, so His law knows neither privilege nor exception.”

The Pope also bitterly objected to the “systematic antagonism raised between education and religious duty,” and demanded that youth organizations (the chief means by which the Nazis indoctrinated young people with their myths of race and nation, as well as their aggressive militarism) be “purged of all manifestations hostile to the Church and Christianity.”⁸ About anti-Semitism and “manifestations hostile to” the Jews, the encyclical was silent.

The silence of the Vatican and of the German episcopate was not confined to anti-Semitism and the plight of the Jews. Neither the one nor the other protested the murder of several leading Catholic laymen and intellectuals by the Nazis in 1934 (when Hitler also had the leading ranks of his storm troopers shot); or the incarceration of hundreds of priests in concentration camps during the 1930s. During the occupation of Poland by the Germans, beginning in September 1939, representatives of the Polish episcopate vainly entreated Pius XII to raise his voice in protest against the “most horrible crimes being committed, assassinations, stealing, rapes . . . The Jews are the first victims . . . The whole

country agrees that the German regime is evil, almost diabolical, and perhaps even more so than the Bolshevik regime.”⁹ Cardinal Hlond, later the primate of Poland, reported (in 1941) that the Poles are complaining that the Pope does not protest against crimes when the Germans have three thousand Polish priests killed in concentration camps” Addressing Cardinal Maglione, then the Vatican’s secretary of state, another bishop wrote (in 1943), “I wonder just which bishops have asked the Holy Father to remain silent According to Your Eminence, they did so out of fear of aggravating the persecution. But the facts prove that with the Pope being silent, each day sees the persecution becoming more cruel [T]he inexplicable silence of the supreme head of the church becomes for those who do not know the reason a cause for spiritual downfall.”¹⁰

No public condemnation of German actions and crimes against the Church in Poland was spoken by Pius XII. If it were done, the Vatican said, “the German government would increase its persecution of Catholicism in Poland and it would use every means to hinder the Holy See from having contact with the Polish episcopacy and from performing its works of charity”¹¹ Instead of the public condemnation of the Nazi’s crimes in Poland, desired by the very bishops who had the most reason to fear the Germans’ reaction to such condemnation the Vatican sent a diplomatically worded protest to the German foreign ministry, detailing the disabilities imposed upon the Church by the Germans. The protest was rejected as being beyond the competence of the Vatican.¹²

The German episcopate’s silence concerning Nazi crimes against its own members — let alone against the Jews or political and non-Catholic religious opponents or social “undesirables” — was part of its policy of accommodation with the regime, “the most recent striking example of the Church’s inability to transcend her institutional interests and to be a guardian of human morality,” as Guenter Lewy has written.¹³ The Pope’s public silences stemmed unquestionably from a similar definition of the Church’s interest. Moreover, any breach with the Germans during the twelve-year period of the Nazi regime (which public protests would have entailed) might well have tested the attachment of the faithful to the Church — defections in Germany rose during this period — and such attachment was surely judged to be precarious. This, too, would counsel against taking the “risk of an open clash with a state trampling upon human dignity and freedom.”¹⁴

A few paragraphs preceding his accusation that Pius XII was Hitler’s Pope, Cornwell writes that, while the Pope was determined not to appeal on behalf of the Jews at the level of international politics, “[t]his did not prevent him from issuing instructions to alleviate their plight at the level of basic charity” (296). The Pope’s aid to Jews has been fairly well documented and acknowledged; it need not be detailed here.¹⁵ If, as Cornwell argues, Pacelli shared the anti-Judaism of much of the Curia; if he was guilty of “failure to utter a candid word about the Final Solution”; if, as Vicar of Christ, he was not moved “to anger and pity about the fate of the Jews”; and if he was “the ideal Pope for Hitler’s unspeakable plan”; how is all of this to be reconciled with his evident willingness to exercise “charity” toward those Jews whom it could reach? You cannot simultaneously be pitiless and charitable toward the same victims. There is a conflict here, possibly one of conscience, between the obeisance of Catholic teachings to the ideas of natural law and natural right, and the *adversus Judaeus* burden of those same teachings. Pacelli, expert in the law of the church (he had been

assigned with codifying and modernizing canon law in his younger days), likely perceived the conflict but was incapable, perhaps unwilling, to resolve it.

Such perception is surely suggested by passages in his first encyclical as pontiff (October 1939) where he bemoaned the “pernicious error, widespread today, [of] the forgetfulness of that law of human solidarity and charity which is dictated and imposed by our common origin and by the equality of rational nature in all men to whatever they belong . . .”¹⁶ And indeed, as Franz Neumann has written, “The recognition of every man as a rational creature, the recognition of the freedom of the soul and, above all, of human equality before God, were historic acts of Christendom.” Neumann then quotes the apostle Paul as the most authoritative source: “There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, circumcision or uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian. But Christ is all, in all.”¹⁷ Pacelli also quotes this passage, but he does so in the context of announcing the appointment of bishops “of widely different peoples and races.” This at a time when some six weeks earlier the Germans had invaded Poland, had incited and partaken in pogroms against Jews, and driven them from most of Western Poland. Pacelli thus evaded the true sense of Paul’s message by applying it in an innocuous context that had no relevance to the terrible fate to which Paul’s own people were being subjected. The Jews, most at risk by the “pernicious error” Pacelli attacks, remain outside his field of vision.

“The Jewish Question”

IT IS UNDENIABLE THAT THE CHURCH’S CLAIM TO UNIVERSALITY could not and cannot be sustained without the rejection of racialism and the insistence on the essential equality of humans. Though theological in origin, historical and political pressures compelled “completion” of the conditions for sustaining that claim in the secular arena. The Church’s rejection of racialism and the reiteration of its message of inclusiveness became more urgent after the Nazis’ ascent to power in Germany. A sense of urgency may not have been widely shared either by members of the Curia or of the German episcopate. It clearly did move Pius XI in 1938 to commission the draft of an encyclical dealing with those subjects. He asked the American Jesuit, John LaFarge, whose book *Interracial Justice* he had read, to produce such a draft. LaFarge did so in collaboration with two fellow Jesuits. The draft’s submission to the Pope was unduly delayed; the Pope died before he could approve it. The draft encyclical was never approved or published by the Vatican but rediscovered in its archives decades later.¹⁸ It remains of great interest inasmuch as it elaborates the Church’s positions on natural law, race, and the Jews. Much of it is not really “new,” but it articulates the thinking of Pacelli and his generation prior to the Holocaust. The draft encyclical essentially argues *The Unity of The Human Race* — its title — Staff Physician, Brightwood Community Health Center, Springfield, Massachusetts, and Researcher in Ambulatory Case Mixand offers a critique of modernity and a vision of the Church’s task which cannot be addressed here. The focus of this discussion will be more narrow.

The authors assert that “all men share a common nature,” and this foundation of humanity’s unity “can be discovered through our natural powers of understanding.” From this essential unity of humanity, the equality of men and women before the law follows, and it is of the very essence of the state to recog-

nize that all the members, without exception, have an unqualified right to equal protection of the law. The draft, in subsequent passages, leaves no doubt that this right extends to the Jews. The “present persecution of the Jews,” the “flagrant denial” of their human rights, are strongly denounced, the human consequences of these injustices are vividly portrayed.

But the eloquent defense of the elementary human and civic rights of the Jews is largely vitiated by what the document’s authors ascribe to the role of the Jews in secular life. The “Jewish Question,” the authors say, is one of religion, not race, but it is the supposed role they play in the worlds of economics and politics, not so much religion, which is emphasized. Not only did the Jews, in collusion with pagan authorities, put Jesus Christ to death; not only are they (here the authors quote St. Stephen approvingly) “stiffnecked and uncircumcized in heart and ear”; not only have they “incurred the wrath of God because they have rejected the Gospel”; they have also been “blinded by a vision of material domination and gain”; and they “ally themselves with, or actively promote revolutionary movements” inimical to the Christian religion. Hence, given the “spiritual dangers” to which contact with Jews can expose souls, “the Church must safeguard her children against spiritual contagion,” this need being “undiminished in our time.” Hence also, “overfamiliarity with the Jewish community that might lead to customs and ways of thinking contrary to the standards of Christian life” must be avoided. The separation of Jews from Christians on grounds of “spiritual contagion,” historically advocated by the Church and enforced by means of the ghetto by secular authority, is here advised, if in milder form than in earlier centuries.

The authors nonetheless condemn anti-Semitism. They do so on grounds of its “inefficacy” in preserving the faith and morals of Catholics and of society at large “against the corrupting influence of error.” Also, such persecutory methods are at variance with the Christian spirit. No answer to the question of antisemitism is offered, although a section of the document is headlined so. The Church, it says, “is in no wise concerned with the problems concerning the Jewish people that lie within . . . purely profane spheres.”

Thus, the Church washes its hands of all responsibility for abrogations of rights of the Jews which anti-Semitism spells, inasmuch as anti-Semitism, at the time the draft encyclical was composed, was intensely political, hence occurred chiefly in the “profane sphere.” Yes, the Church “insists only that no solution is the true solution if it contradicts the . . . laws of justice and charity.” The authors failed to realize that “solutions” as well as the “problems” they were to address have always been defined by the Jews’ adversaries, to whose actions justice and charity have been irrelevant.

It is just as well that this draft encyclical disappeared in the Vatican archives. It is unlikely that Pacelli would have considered to publish what amounted, in part at least, to an *adversus Judaeus* document. But there can be no question that his thinking, his mind, were shaped by the teachings of the Church, including those with the *adversus Judaeus* intent or tendency. Cornwell cites a passage in a sermon delivered by Pacelli at an International Eucharistic Congress held at Budapest in 1938, in which he said: “As opposed to the foes of Jesus who cried out to his face, Crucify him! We sing him hymns of loyalty and our love. We act in this fashion, not out of bitterness, not out of a sense of superiority, not out of arrogance toward those whose lips curse him and whose hearts

reject him even today" (185-186). His audience of thousands undoubtedly "understood" the reference, and may well have construed his remarks as a justification of the virulently anti-Semitic stance of the Hungarian government at the time. The future Pope had paraphrased a verse from the 19th chapter of the Gospel of John, who must be judged as one of the Jews' most vicious adversaries in his time.

THE ENORMITY OF THE HOLOCAUST gave rise to far-reaching reconsiderations of the Church's *adversus Judaeus* teachings. These reconsiderations go far beyond the relevant deliberations of Vatican II, but here I will sketch only the latter. The Council was summoned by Pope John XXIII (1958-63) to "update" the Church's (i.e., the hierarchy's) thought and practices concerning dogma, pastoral duties, liturgy, ecumenism, religious freedom, and attitude toward non-Christian religions. The Council stated (or restated) the inerrancy of Scripture and Gospel, but allowed for interpretations that would mitigate Gospel passages designed to dull their *adversus Judaeus* edge. Thus, the crucifixion of Jesus was no longer to be attributed to all the Jews then alive, nor to the Jews living today, but only to the Jewish authorities who supposedly pressed for it, and to those who followed their lead. Words like "deicide" and "Christkiller" were to be proscribed from the Christian vocabulary altogether. Most important, perhaps, guidelines for Catholic-Jewish relations were issued for the promotion of dialogue between representatives of the two faiths. All thought of segregating Jews lest they spread "spiritual contagion" was dismissed.²⁰

Let it be understood that the fundamental tenets of the Church and of Christianity in general remain unchanged — except insofar as historical criticism creates doubt, skepticism, questioning. The Church's teachings cannot but conflict with the teachings of the Jews even though the Jews remain the Church's "elder brother" (i.e. Esau!). The Church will continue to be the "New Israel," and Jesus to be the Christ (Messiah), both having been prophesied by the Hebrew scriptures. "The Jews should not be presented as rejected by God, or accursed," but "the Church is the new people of God."²¹

Has the *adversus Judaeus* tradition of Christian teachings — conveyed not least by the sculptures and paintings exhibited in medieval churches — lain at the root of the Shoah? Many a deeply disturbed Christian scholar has brooded over the question.²² Yet, "... Christianity never called for the extermination of the Jews. Had this been its official policy, the Jews would hardly have survived the Middle Ages," writes Ismar Schorsch, one of the great German-Jewish scholars.²³ The Vatican tends to evade the question altogether, notwithstanding the sorrow that Pope John Paul II has expressed. A key example is the Vatican document *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*, published with John Paul's endorsement in March 1998. It admits in somber tones to the guilt of Christians in standing by while the Shoah occurred, and seeks to grapple with the questions of why "the Shoah took place in Europe, that is in countries of long-standing Christian civilization"; and what the relation was "between Nazi persecution and the attitudes down the centuries of Christians toward Jews." Like variations on the same theme, the Vatican document repeats essentially the same question, e.g., what have the anti-Jewish prejudices "imbedded in some Christian minds and hearts" had to do with the Nazis' persecution of the Jews. It will not, perhaps cannot, confront the role of the Church's teachings in "embedding"

those prejudices.

Still, historically, there had also existed a “tradition of protection of Jews against drastic injury by the Pope and various ecclesiastical heads in their respective countries and by the emperors and princes,” as the Jewish historian Ben-Sasson has written.²⁴ It is a tradition that also had its roots in Christian teachings insofar as these were imbued by natural-law ideas, and by the notion of the ultimate Salvationist redemption of the Jews, indispensable witnesses to the truth of Christendom as vouchsafed by the Scriptures. Popes had spoken out in denouncing accusations of ritual murder, forced baptism, cemetery desecration, and offenses and crimes against Jews. During the 12th to 15th centuries, popes regularly issued bulls (letters) admonishing good Christians against robbing or wounding them “or chang[ing] the good customs they have thus far enjoyed in the place of their habitations.” In 1348, Pope Clement IV passionately rejected the accusation against the Jews that they had caused the plague then raging by poisoning wells, writing that “it is absolutely unthinkable that the . . . Jews have performed so terrible a deed,” and that “certain Christians have been incited by the Devil” in bringing such accusations.²⁵ “Probably the greatest protection offered by the Church was its constant reminder of human decencies and its reference to the Jewish people as an integral part of the Divine Plan,” writes Samuel Grayzel, also a Jewish historian. “Christianity’s . . . retention of its heritage from Judaism thus contributed to the survival of the Jewish people.”²⁶

We cannot deny Pacelli’s charity rendered to Jewish refugees in reach of his office. But by his silence he betrayed the papal tradition of aiding the Jews when they are exposed to “drastic injury.” “There are moments when, without any tangible utility, something has to be said for no other reason but that it is true. If is not said, the moral order of the world suffers a blow that is harder to overcome than its violation by brute force.” Written in 1935, these were the words of a troubled German Jesuit.²⁷

NOTES

1. David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945* (New York, 1984).

2. Wyman, 123

3. Guenter Lewy, *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany* (New York, 1964), p. 104.

4. Eric O. Hanson, *The Catholic Church in World Politics* (Princeton, N.J., 1987), p. 50.

5. Prefatory note in Cornwell.

6. Guenter Lewy, p. 159.

7. Anne Fremantle, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals in their Historical Setting* (New York, 1959), p. 252. In Richmond Lattimore’s translation, the passage reads as follows: “For when Gentiles who do not have the law do by nature what is in the law, they, without having the law, are their own law, and they display the work of the law engraved on their hearts, with their conscience bearing them witness . . .” *Acts and Letters of the Apostles* (New York, 1982), p. 82. The passage had the polemical intention of downgrading the written law of the Jews. Even though directed against the written law, Paul no doubt drew on the Prophet Jeremiah’s “dream,” about God making a new covenant with Israel, not written on stone, as in Exodus, but, as He says, “I will set my law within them, and write it on their hearts . . .” (Jer. 31:33)

8. *Papal Encyclicals*, p. 253.

9. Pierre Blet, S.J., *Pius XII and the Second World War, According to the Archives of*

the Vatican (New York, 1997), p. 77.

10. Blet, p. 84. Also Cornwell, pp. 232-234.

11. Blet, p. 87.

12. Blet, p. 90.

13. Lewy, p. 338.

14. *Ibid.*

15. See the essays by J.L. Lichten and R. A. Graham in *Pius XII and the Holocaust: A Reader* (A Catholic League Publication, Milwaukee, WI, 1988). However, this publication is largely an apologia for the Pope's silence during World War II.

16. *Papal Encyclicals*, p. 264

17. Franz Neumann, *The Rule of Law: Political Theory and the Legal System in Modern Society* (Dover, N.H., 1986), pp. 58-59. The passage from Paul's epistle represents a mix of translations.

18. Georges Passelecq and Bernard Suchesky, *The Hidden Encyclical of Pius XI* (New York, 1997; Paris, 1995). Direct quotations stem chiefly from pp. 246-256.

20. Arthur Gilbert, *The Vatican Council and the Jews* (New York), various Appendices.

21. Gilbert, p. 288.

22. See in particular, Rosemary Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (Minneapolis, 1974).

23. Ismar Schorsch, "German Antisemitism in the Light of Postwar Historiography," in *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* (1974), pp.257-71.

24. H.H. Ben-Sasson, *A History of the Jewish People* (Cambridge, MA, 1976; Tel Aviv, 1969), p. 647.

25. Ben-Sasson, p. 487

26. Solomon Grayzel, "The Papal Bull Sicut Judeis," in Jeremy Cohen, ed., *Essential Papers on Judaism and Christianity in Conflict* (New York, 1991), p. 250.

27. G. Lewy, p. 175.

Left Responses to Globalization

In our last issue (*New Politics* No. 29), we presented a symposium on globalization, taking up some hard questions for the left raised by the current international environment. We noted that this was “only the beginning of a critical discussion of positive alternatives to today’s *realpolitik* globalization” and that we intended to continue the discussion in future issues of *New Politics*. We hoped to pursue the subject of what the appropriate left response ought to be to globalization. What strategies and tactics should the left employ? Are calls for international labor standards a way to support the global struggle for social justice or protectionism in disguise? Does conditioning U.S. aid or trade on other countries’ human rights records further the well-being of people abroad or promote U.S. imperial domination?

We address these matters and other aspects of the left’s response to globalization in the five articles that follow. Robin Hahnel responds to a specific list of questions that we posed. Kim Moody responded to our questions with a more free-wheeling discussion. Jeremy Brecher, Tim Costello, and Brendan Smith provide answers based on a chapter from their recently published book. Norm Diamond describes the anti-globalization efforts in France. And Christine Kelly looks at the anti-sweatshop movement on U.S. campuses.

Imperialism, Human Rights and Protectionism

Robin Hahnel

IN AN ESSAY ABOUT THE COLLAPSE OF SOVIET POWER IN EASTERN EUROPE IN 1989, I wrote: “One Evil Empire Down, One to Go.” Unfortunately, the collapse of the weaker Evil Empire ten years ago was followed by increasing hegemony of the more powerful Evil Empire, to the point where U.S. global dominance is literally unprecedented in world history. What has the U.S. done in the last decade when Communism no longer stood in its way? Has the U.S. government promoted global peace? Prevented gross violations of human rights? Spurred economic development in lesser developed economies? Encouraged changes to protect the environment? Sponsored policies to reduce global inequalities? Or has the U.S. government, for the most part, done just the opposite, while seizing every opportunity to consolidate and expand U.S. military, economic, and political power? Was there any difference in deeds, rather than merely rhetoric, when Republicans and Democrats occupied the White House?

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Anyone trying to decide if she should favor U.S. economic sanctions against foreign governments that violate human or political rights, or permit child or slave labor, needs to first decide if the evidence from the past ten years suggests that the United States uses its considerable global power in a benign or malevolent way. So I start with my own answers to the above questions. In my view, there is overwhelming evidence that the U.S. has used its unprecedented global powers since the end of the Cold War to serve the interests of a minority of its own citizens to the detriment of the interests of the majority of its own citizens and a majority of people in the rest of the world. And sadly, my reading of the evidence regarding deeds, not rhetoric, is that “New Democrats” score no better than Republicans on this issue, their protestations notwithstanding. When the excuse of protecting ourselves and the rest of the world from the machinations of the Evil Soviet Empire was removed, U.S. imperial behavior only worsened, just as critics feared and warned it would. In this essay I am *not* going to review the evidence from Indonesia and East Timor, the Persian Gulf and Iraq, Yugoslavia and the Balkans, Rwanda and the Congo, and Nicaragua, Cuba and Colombia. I am not going to review what has happened to the Pentagon budget after the disappearance of the only credible military threat to the United States, nor the U.S. role as arms merchant to the world. Nor am I going to evaluate the logic of neoliberal U.S. international economic policy and its effect on foreign and U.S. constituencies. For readers who do not agree with my point of departure, I recommend reading Noam Chomsky and Michael Klare on U.S. foreign and defense policy since the Cold War, and if they wish, my own evaluation of U.S.-sponsored neoliberal globalization in *Panic Rules! Everything You Need to Know About the Global Economy*. Unless people agree on whether or not the U.S. currently behaves as a self-serving imperial power, no matter what its leaders and their supporters claim, and no matter what honest U.S. citizens would like to believe about their government, I would not expect them to agree on whether or not progressives should support U.S. economic sanctions against foreign violators of human, political, or labor rights. I start from the conviction that at present, U.S. government international policy will serve the interests of U.S. elites at the expense of foreigners and ordinary Americans if need be.

Hypocrisy and Human Rights

“Do we favor the U.S. government passing legislation that in various ways puts pressure on foreign abusers of human rights — for example, denying abusive regimes trade benefits, foreign loans, or U.S. support for international loans? Does it matter just how abusive the regime is? Does it matter which form the pressure takes?”

I think the answer is basically “no,” because it is predictable that more often than not the policy would be applied in an extremely hypocritical and counterproductive way. The pressure would be applied to governments deemed hostile to U.S. investment and to governments that stood up to U.S. bullying. The pressure would not be applied to compliant regimes, no matter how abusive. The “policy” would be used against the Castro regime in Cuba and the Qaddafi regime in Libya, not against the Suharto regime in Indonesia or the Mobutu regime in Zaire. The “policy” would be wielded to weaken Kabila in the Congo, not to prevent genocide in Rwanda. The policy would be wielded to extract greater concessions from the

Chinese leadership for U.S. companies rather than to benefit a democratic opposition committed to social and economic justice in China.

But why should U.S. progressives not support U.S. government pressure on regimes that violate human, political, or labor rights—or regimes that discriminate against racial minorities, women, and/or gays, or regimes that despoil the environment for that matter? Even if the pressure is selective, hypocritical, and self-serving, even if worse violators are not only tolerated but aided and abetted, why refuse to support the U.S. government if it stops a “crime against humanity” anywhere?

I am not recommending defending any policies that subvert democracy or justice anywhere, at any time, no matter how staunch an opponent of U.S. imperialism, or how “progressive” the government that carries them out. U.S. progressives have made that mistake all too often to our own detriment and to the benefit of no one. It is not the case that all policies of governments who oppose U.S. imperialism are good policies, nor the case that all policies of generally good governments are good policies. Whether it be the Soviet Union, China, Vietnam, Cuba, Nicaragua, or Iraq, undeserved apologetics is wrong and counterproductive as well. For example, I can praise Cuban educational and health policies, I can admire the Cuba government commitment to economic equality and solidarity with other Third World movements for national liberation, and I can acknowledge that Cuba has been an undeserving victim of punitive U.S. imperial measures on innumerable occasions, and I can still criticize restrictions on political freedoms in Cuba, and Cuban failures to promote economic democracy. As long as I remember that I am not a Cuban, and therefore I have no “say” regarding Cuban policy, as long as I recognize that my criticism is simply my sincere opinion, I do the Cuban revolution no harm by stating my views.

But there is a difference between progressives voicing honest disagreements with what we find to be Cuban government violations of political rights, and progressives supporting U.S. government sanctions against Cuba because of those alleged violations of political rights. The second is support for unwarranted interference in the internal affairs of another country, at minimum, and support for calculated imperial aggression, at maximum. Moreover, blinding ourselves to the fact that U.S. government support for human and political rights is hypocritical, and that U.S. “humanitarian intervention” is humanitarian in name only, is destructive of the cause of global human and political rights precisely because the U.S. is not a benign superpower. Instead, the U.S. government is the major obstacle to eliminating “crimes against humanity” because we routinely protect violators in exchange for their fealty, and systematically obstruct efforts to create an unbiased, democratic international body with effective means for intervention wherever necessary. Only when intervention against a regime enhances U.S. imperial power is it pursued. Which is to say, only when intervention strengthens the structure of global oppression is it undertaken. Those who would support the international defense of human and political rights have one major task: replace the U.S. government as sole international judge, jury, and executioner with an empowered democratic United Nations. Supporting self-serving, hypocritical interventions by the U.S. government is contrary to the major task at hand. Ultimately the liberals among us who support current U.S. foreign policy because it flies under the convenient flag of “humanitarian intervention” simply buy the propaganda line of the greatest malevolent imperial power in the world today.

"WHAT IF THE LEGISLATION WERE OF THE FORM 'U.S. loans will not go to any countries that engage in systematic human rights violations?'" It wouldn't make much difference. Look what happens now when a Democratic administration must certify that the record of the Colombian government is improving, before U.S. military aid can be sent under the ruse of combating drug-trafficking. The administration lies, certifies, and Congress plays dumb. And how long will it be before the Chavez government is declared a violator of human and political rights, not to speak of economic freedoms, if Venezuela persists in its intent to sell oil to Cuba on generous terms? Did people not read in their *New York Times* — not *Z Magazine* — what the U.S. government did earlier this year in Ecuador? When the Ecuadorian economy became a victim of contagion in international financial markets, when economic conditions deteriorated to the point of desperation, when the U.S.-educated and -supported President responded by announcing he was going to proceed with dollarization, leaving pensioners penniless, when a popular uprising led by indigenous peasant organizations, labor unions, and popular junior officers in the Ecuadorian military deposed the President and seized the legislature in a bloodless uprising, and when senior military officers poised on the brink of declaring loyalty to the new government, President Clinton's National Security Advisor phoned the Ecuadorian chief of staff to tell him the U.S. would never recognize the new government, and there would be no peace in Ecuador unless the military backed the Vice President, who must continue to pursue neoliberal "reforms." Within hours, the heads of the Ecuadorian Army, Navy and Air Force declared their support for the Vice President who promised to pursue dollarization, and the leaders of the uprising fled underground. Unfortunately, in the hands of such a U.S. government, sanctions become another tool for imperial oppression rather than an inducement for foreign regimes to respect their citizens' human, political, and economic rights.

"WHAT ABOUT LABOR RIGHTS? Do we support U.S. government laws banning imports of goods made by child labor or slave labor? Are such laws really protectionism in disguise?" Such laws, as well as provisions about labor and environmental standards in WTO treaties, given how the WTO operates, are dangerous because they can become a new vehicle for protectionism and imperial manipulation. Suppose only violations of labor or environmental standards are recognized grounds for trade sanctions under new WTO rules. Effectively, only Third World countries would be subject to complaints. Worse still, Third World countries would have waived their rights to retaliation when subjected to protectionist measures disguised as protections of labor or environmental standards. It is important that first-world labor unions and environmental organizations recognize that our Third World counterparts have good reason to worry that such provisions can easily become the new rationale for protectionism at their expense and for punishing regimes resistant to U.S. imperial policies. The AFL-CIO was oblivious to this legitimate concern going into Seattle and angered Third World allies in the anti-globalization coalition as a result. While they did not abandon their call for labor standards in trade treaties, fortunately the AFL-CIO re-thought the issue in the aftermath of Seattle, and passed some important resolutions reaching out to Third World workers at its Executive Council Meeting on February 16-17, 2000, in New Orleans. (See "Campaign for Global Fairness" and "Equitable, Democratic, Sustainable Development," available on line at <http://www.aflcio.org/publ/estatemnts/>

feb2000/edsd.htm.) Of course, it would be a good thing if labor rights were made more secure and labor standards were improved anywhere in the world. The issue, however, is whether progressives in the U.S. should try to contribute toward this end by pressuring the U.S. government to pass and enforce laws against imports from offending countries, or to insist on such provisions in WTO treaties. I believe there are more effective and less dangerous ways to achieve this goal, and to protect American workers from competition with Third World workers who are even more exploited than they are.

International Solidarity

MANY THIRD WORLD UNIONS AND GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS APPRECIATE HELP from first-world progressives in their campaigns for labor rights and standards. They would like us to help publicize abuses — particularly when our multinational corporations are the perpetrators. They like any financial or organizational aid we can provide — with no strings attached. Sometimes they like us to organize consumer boycotts — when they ask for them. And occasionally, when their struggle is at a crucial stage, Third World movements for human, political and labor rights ask us to pressure our governments and/or international organizations to take up economic sanctions, as was the case in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, and is now the case in the struggle for democracy in Burma. But there is a difference between responding to requests for international solidarity and promoting measures many of our third-world allies oppose. In this area, it is far better to respond than initiate.

Moreover, precisely because Third World workers are terribly exploited, employers there will pass on much of the cost of improvements in labor standards achieved through international trade treaties to their employees in the form of lower wages. Since the primary concern of the AFL-CIO is to arrest the “race to the bottom” effect of trade liberalization, they can more effectively protect their interests by supporting programs that improve the bargaining power of Third World workers more than international labor standards do. For example, campaigns supporting land reform and cessation of U.S. military aid to totalitarian regimes that reign terror on union activists are far more likely to reduce the “race to the bottom” effect of international trade — without the danger of being turned against our Third World brothers and sisters. In my view, the crucial question is not whether the initiative for standards or sanctions comes from capitalist politicians or from the U.S. human rights/labor/left communities. The crucial question is if the initiative comes in the form of a request from those we purport to want to help in third-world countries. If so, we should be as responsive as possible. Otherwise, U.S. human rights/labor/left communities should refrain from initiating unwanted campaigns that are less effective ways to protect our wages and working conditions than a number of other alternatives we could, and should pursue instead.

“DO WE SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS BANNING CHILD LABOR OR TORTURE?”

I would ask if we should support international agreements banning any violation of human, political, or economic rights for that matter, including the right to equitable compensation for self-managed labor. And my answer would be “yes,” as long as there is good reason to believe the agreement would be fairly admin-

istered. But I believe the “fair administration caveat” rules out any international agreement policed by the WTO, the World Bank, or the IMF at this time. These international institutions, like the U.S. government, cannot at present be trusted to administer treaties without severe bias. Rather than place the power to administer any new treaties or policies in the hands of the U.S. government, the IMF, WB, or WTO we should instead be trying to democratize and empower the United Nations, UNCTAD, the ILO, and the implementing bodies of multi-lateral environmental agreements which are far better candidates to negotiate and fairly administer agreements of this kind. (See Walden Bello, “UNCTAD: Time to Lead, Time to Challenge the WTO,” available on line at <http://www.zmag.org/CrisesCurEvts/Globalism/unctadbello.htm>.)

Nothing I have said implies that U.S. workers do not have a right to protect their hard-won gains in labor and living standards, or that environmentalists in the U.S. do not have a right to protect the improvements in environmental quality won in the U.S. over the past thirty years. Quite the contrary, I agree with those such as Jeremy Brecher, Tim Costello, and Brendan Smith who call for “raising labor, environmental, social, and human rights conditions for those at the bottom,” as the first of seven planks in their draft program for globalization from below, and who argue that “ultimately, minimum environmental, labor, social, and human rights standards must be incorporated in national and international law.” And I believe that trade liberalization as well as capital liberalization does threaten first world environmental and living standards by generating a “race to the bottom” effect as employers force employees and governments to either grant them concessions or risk loss of jobs and tax revenues. Which is why I think workers and environmentalists have chosen wisely to oppose trade and capital liberalization — a globalization from above that empowers corporations and the rich at the expense of workers, the poor, and the environment. But it is precisely because I believe trade liberalization will aggravate the race to the bottom effect that I think it unwise for first world workers and environmentalists to give our consent to further liberalization in exchange for commitments regarding labor and environmental standards that would not prevent the “race to the bottom” even if enforced, and would inevitably go unenforced except when it served U.S. imperial interests. Quite simply, that would be a “bad trade” on our part, and one that sells our Third World partners down the river and divides the coalition against globalization from above as well. Instead, our stand should be: “No further globalization until it is done democratically, until it actually enhances environmental preservation, until it actually distributes efficiency gains between nations so as to reduce global inequality, and until it actually distributes efficiency gains within nations to reduce internal inequality as well.” Nothing the U.S. government, the IMF, the World Bank, or the WTO is currently doing comes close to meeting those requirements. Nor would appending labor and environmental standards to some treaties these institutions negotiate and administer achieve those goals. Until globalization is organized to meet those requirements, that is, until there is an equitable, democratic process capable of discovering where there are efficiency gains from a greater international division of labor and where there are not, and capable of putting those gains to good rather than bad use, the planet and a majority of its inhabitants are better off with less rather than more globalization. “No more globalization as long as it is globalization from above rather than from below.”

Closing the Door on U.S. Imperialism & Capitalist Globalization

Kim Moody

IN THE LAST DECADE WE HAVE WITNESSED THE TRIUMPH of American “Open Door” imperialism. The idea of the “open door” as the centerpiece of U.S. economic policy in the world goes back over 100 years to the classic age of imperialism. While the European powers were conducting the “race for Africa,” jockeying for territory and “concessions” in Asia, and contesting areas in Europe itself, the political elite in the U.S. sought a different means to export capital, commodities, and manufactured goods. As latecomers in the rush for colonies, U.S. imperial theorists devised a cost-effective alternative. They reasoned that American industry could find all the markets and outlets for investment it needed without administering colonies the world over like Britain. The U.S. government was, of course, not adverse to grabbing a few off-shore colonies for its business sponsors once the continent had been subdued. First, there were the “guano island” colonies of the 1850s, seized to overcome a soil fertility crisis at home. Then, when Spain’s aging empire collapsed in the face of internal revolt and the brief war provoked by the U.S., Puerto Rico and the Philippines became colonies, while Cuba served as a semi-colonial outpost for decades. In general, however, as a latecomer, the U.S. avoided the rush for colonies of that epoch.

First applied in China in 1899, the “open door” notes were addressed to the other major powers with interests in that country. They demanded that U.S. business interests have access to all of China regardless of previous territorial claims or business concessions obtained from China. The “open door” soon became a global policy for breaking into the markets of developing or colonial nations. It was, where necessary, imposed and/or backed up by a Navy (accompanied by Marines, of course) that, like Britain’s before it, claimed the seven seas as its own. It had at its core a seemingly simple exchange. Developing nations that agreed to let in U.S. goods and capital were granted “most favored nation” status, what is now called “Normal Trade Relations,” and could sell their goods (usually raw materials) in the U.S. on the best terms offered to any other nation. “Open door” imperialism was pursued in the name of free trade, freedom of the high seas, equality of exchange, and anti-colonialism and democracy.

In reality, this policy was conducted with the utmost thuggery and there was little freedom or equality about it. Until the end of World War II, it was not all that successful as a strategy for world economic “primacy,” to use the current polite term. The old European colonial empires remained a barrier, as did upstart imperial powers like Japan and Germany, not to mention the new Soviet Union. Even after the Second World War, when U.S. ideas of free trade dominated Western thinking, the expanded Communist bloc(s) took a third of the world out of play. Then, too, various national liberation and anti-colonial movements posed at least temporary stumbling blocs in many cases. Import Substi-

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tution Industrialization (ISI) strategies of development, with their dense networks of regulations, elements of planning, and extensive use of public enterprises, also put limits on U.S. and other foreign capital in many Third World nations. The Alliance for Progress of the 1960s that tried to break down some of these barriers in exchange for aid, for example, was pretty much a flop. At the same time, the Cold War polarization of the world provided the excuse for proliferating military bases, serving Washington's Air Force as well as its Navy. By virtue of the sheer size of its economy, much expanded military, and the single-minded determination of its business and bi-partisan political leadership, the U.S. became the dominant power in the "West."

Triumph of the Ruling Class

IN THE LAST DECADE, A VIRTUAL WHIRLWIND OF CHANGE has opened the door to U.S. economic aspirations to a degree all the gun boats, Marines, low- and high-intensity wars, and massive bombings had not. In more or less order of importance, the major changes were: the collapse of the centrally planned economies, the elimination of the other "superpower," the institutionalization of the debt crisis as a permanent feature of uneven development, the fading or imploding of the last ISI-style economies, the crisis of the Japanese economy, and the urbanization of Latin America and much of the Third World.

Of course, globalization is a long-term trend and all of these trends or events were underway before the 1990s. But it is in this last decade that they came together to create a sort of vacuum into which America's highly activist ruling class and political elite could rush. And so they did with predator corporations on a global mission to improve profit rates, a revamped IMF/World Bank, NAFTA, the Uruguay Round of GATT, and then the WTO. These instruments of contemporary "open door" imperialism were negotiated with the other major powers and imposed on the rest of the world. This time the lever was the institutionalization of Third World debt and the export regime imposed by the IMF et al. that made access to the U.S. (and/or European) market a necessity for most developing nations. Foreign policy shifted from military geo-politics to the militant pursuit of global commerce, taking on its most aggressive form under Clinton. Once again, this is all backed up by world-wide military might deployed these days in "humanitarian" interventions, bloody clean-up missions, and the victimization of defenseless populations.

Collectively and justifiably known since the early 1990s as the "Washington Consensus," these policy initiatives have two goals. The first, of course, is to implement the "open door" through economic agreements that eliminate barriers to trade and investment. This includes barriers that the original theorists of "most favored nation" status never dreamed of — not just tariffs and quotas, but health care systems, traditional seeds and life forms, labor standards, state-owned enterprises, etc. In other words, the concept of trade or investment barriers was extended to include domestic policies. Looked at from a different angle, as Daniel Singer pointed out in *The Nation* (November 6, 2000), the U.S. thrust toward globalization amounts to the "spread of the U.S. model."

The second goal is less well recognized and seldom made explicit, but is at the heart of the contemporary structure of capitalist globalization and is, in fact, the other side of the "open door" coin. This is to *preclude* the rise of a new,

rival, independent economic power or bloc based on domestically-owned production (non-OECD multinational-owned) and autonomous internal development. That is, these agreements and institutions are designed to head off the development of a new Japan or Korea. The prime candidate for the next Asian economic “miracle” and potential threat to U.S. economic expansion was China. Along with the rules of the WTO, to which China will soon sign on, the agreement between the U.S. and China reached last November guarantees that this will never happen. While China will become an export dynamo, it will be foreign firms, above all U.S. and Japanese, doing the bulk of the exporting, exploiting, and profiting as well as setting the priorities for China’s entire economy.

In fact, almost all of the “trade” agreements signed in the 1990s, including the Uruguay Round that begat the WTO, were crafted to this end and represent a departure from earlier efforts to promote free trade which focused primarily on tariffs and quotas on goods. The agreements of the 1990s included elements that require equivalent treatment of foreign and domestic firms, that terminate national preference in government procurement, that bend domestic policies to the needs of global capital, and that grant multinational corporations a monopoly on technology in overseas markets through the protection of “intellectual property rights.” Financial and other services have also come under these expanding “rules” for the first time.

These features alone would give capital-rich multinational corporations a vast advantage over domestic, private and public enterprises in any developing country, even large ones like Brazil or China. The free market requirements of the 1990s agreements also render any sort of planning ineffective. Even the development of autonomous national capital is severely limited in favor of U.S. or other imperial capital and/or various kinds of joint ventures under the dominance of foreign capital. Domestic firms that provide anything more than basic consumer items for the domestic market, probably in a losing battle with U.S. retailers, will populate the bottom end of contracted production chains and will remain small by global standards. The transformation of the IMF into the enforcer and institutional guardian of Third World debt gave it the power to undo other elements of national development, in particular public ownership and social programs. Under these conditions, there will be no new Korean-style upstart exporters of advanced industrial products in the early 21st century — not, at least, without drastically breaking the rules of the global trading system and facing banishment from normal trade channels or access to capital. Aside from Europe, itself thoroughly penetrated by U.S. capital, there will be no major contestant for world economic “primacy” under the current regime of global, above all U.S., capital.

A New International Solidarity

THERE IS ANOTHER SIDE TO THIS AS WELL. The nationalist backlash of today seldom takes the form of a liberation struggle for separation from a major imperial power. Most nations seeking independence today fight to separate from other subordinate countries — East Timor from Indonesia, Kosovo from Yugoslavia, the Tamils in Sri Lanka, Chechnya from post-superpower Russia, etc. Many of them look to the U.S. or Europe for help. The fragmentation and weak states that result from such separations and break-ups accord well with “open door” imperialism and its market imperatives. Their cause may be just and it may be

our duty to support their aspirations and struggles, but this is certainly a different dynamic than that of the era of revolutionary national liberation and anti-colonial struggles that characterized much of the past century.

Eric Hobsbawm, in his book *The Age of Extremes*, makes the point that for the first time in human history the majority of the world's population will no longer live and work on the land. He might have added that many of those left in the countryside are no longer tied to the land by ownership or obligation. The urbanization of most Third World countries has created a new kind of poverty for hundreds of millions in which agricultural self-sufficiency is no longer an option for survival for a growing number of people. In addition, more of the remaining rural population finds itself landless as farm productivity has soared and export-oriented agri-business has taken over, limiting self-sufficiency in the countryside as well. Together with the massive dislocation in many former Communist countries, the result has been the equivalent of a vast, global enclosure creating an inexhaustible supply of low-wage labor to feed the world's new sweated industries. Whether this new proletarian world majority finds gainful employment, seeks survival in the underground economy, remains in the countryside as a landless working class, or joins the trail of the largest human migration in history, it provides an unprecedented source of exploitable labor within capital's unprecedented global reach.

At the same time, urbanization has altered the class character of resistance and affected how contemporary movements opposed to neoliberalism and its effects in those countries are shaped. Rural-based guerilla movements have faded. Those that still exist, as in Colombia, or that have arisen in response to neoliberalism, such as the Zapatistas, are no longer directed at taking power directly so much as negotiating some form of political opening. Other rural-based movements have more the character of working class mass movements such as the Landless Movement (MST) in Brazil. The site of most movements in the Third World, however, has moved to the cities and towns, whether it is the uprising of Palestinian and Israeli Arabs, or general strikes against the IMF or other aspects of globalization from India to Argentina. This, along with the fading of the Stalinism that infected so many of the old guerrilla movements, lays the basis for a broader, more participatory mass base than was generally true of the guerilla organizations. The fact that unions are often at the center of these movements also makes more attractive and dependable the overseas allies we must seek as we attempt to move U.S. labor toward a more consistent internationalist outlook and practice.

This is the background against which socialists approach questions of trade, protectionism, and nationalism. In this world we must be internationalists, reaching out to these real and potential allies to resist the tyranny of the market, the rapacious non-stop drive of the corporations, and the "primacy" of U.S. business and government. But what does this new situation mean for action around global justice issues at home?

The Dilemma of Activism at Home

GIVEN THE "PRIMACY" OF THE U.S. in the hierarchy of world imperialism and the globalization process, the first general principle is that we should neither expect nor advocate that the U.S. play world-wide guardian for human or labor rights or of the environment despite the occasional promise from Washington to

do so. While we demand that U.S. corporations adhere to any international standards that do exist or are negotiated, we also understand that these multinational corporations and the government that opens doors for them abroad bear disproportionate responsibility for the increase in social inequality, economic injustice, and environmental ruin around the world. Although, for reasons of their own, many nations have long practiced home-grown forms of repression, exploitation, and environmental rot, it is the investments, unequal trade, IMF and World Bank policies, and WTO “rules” that push all nations in the direction of greater inequality, increased poverty, and the political and labor repression needed to enforce them. Even where the wave of democratization of the last decade or so has taken hold and unions emerged to improve living standards, as in South Korea, Taiwan, or South Africa, the push to limit trade union rights through legislation has accelerated as these nations are simultaneously drawn deeper into the global neoliberal order.

To put this another way, it is U.S. corporations and successive governments along with the trade agreements and multilateral institutions they command or influence that have led the push for neoliberalism (the U.S. model) world-wide. This, in turn, has encouraged more anti-union laws, repression of union and other grassroots activists, the return of child labor, global pressure for lower labor costs, etc. This is the framework in which the present and likely future of the bad human- and labor-rights records of other nations, as well as that of the U.S., recently documented by Human Rights Watch, should be viewed.

This doesn’t, of course, mean that socialists should let the governments and ruling elites of nations with poor human and labor rights records, from China to Indonesia to the U.S., off the hook. We should protest these practices and offer every form of help and solidarity possible to movements of resistance and liberation everywhere. It does mean, however, that we should not call for “humanitarian” intervention by U.S. armed forces, economic sanctions except where labor or social movements call for them as they did in Apartheid South Africa, or other U.S. government-based “solutions” to problems abroad.

WE ARE CAUGHT IN A DILEMMA. On the one hand, socialists naturally support labor and human rights everywhere. On the other, we know that today’s trade agreements, multilateral institutions, and neoliberal policies necessarily push in the opposite direction. As a result, I think the labor rights approach to trade and investment agreements is problematic because it implies support for the agreements if they include such language. Aside even from enforcement problems, there is the fact that these agreements go far beyond anything that mere labor or human or environmental rights provisions could protect in what they destroy by introducing globally-driven market relations and creating “rules” that affect domestic policies. All manner of social legislation, welfare provisions, income subsidies, health and safety protections, and traditional forms of survival are at stake in this neoliberal global regime.

In fact, in the face of the growing world-wide opposition to the “Washington Consensus,” some in the world trade elite are joining the chorus for labor standards as a way to save the market-driven souls of these agreements. The World Bank and WTO have announced to the world that the reduction of Third World poverty is what it’s all about. WTO chief Mike Moore even dusted off his old New Zealand Labor Party credentials and opened his lecture on the benefits of

world trade last July with, "We on the Left have a lot to be proud of." At the same time, a growing number of corporations are brandishing their own voluntary labor rights standards in hopes of heading off deeper opposition to the neoliberal regime itself. It is not unlikely that in the next few years some form of labor rights provisions will be common to trade agreements and even tolerated by the multilateral institutions as a means of saving the neoliberal regime. By now they have discovered that paper rights can easily be undermined by stern economic and political realities. While we would gladly seize any opening such provisions might grant the workers in countries where even paper rights are denied, we should not give support to the type of trade agreements and multilateral "rules" that wipe away precisely the sort of economic and social safety nets that give labor rights some measure of reality.

The second major question in dealing with protectionism, trade, and overseas investment policies is: does it increase or limit corporate power or capital mobility? Clearly, these agreements, "rules," and institutions are designed to increase corporate power and have been very successful. An economic measure of this is that the sales of corporate overseas affiliates in national markets abroad have grown at twice the rate of world exports; annual affiliate sales are now \$13.5 trillion compared to \$7 trillion for exports. In other words, multinational corporations have a large and growing direct presence and, hence, power, in "host" markets abroad in excess of traditional trade. On this basis we should oppose agreements and policies like Fast Track, NAFTA, GATT/WTO, and the November 1999 U.S.-China Agreement because they increase corporate power and deepen the very processes that reinforce uneven development, poverty, and human and labor rights violations as well as environmental destruction and the dangerous narrowing of the genetic basis of agriculture. Similarly, we should be for the abolition, not the reform, of the IMF, World Bank, and WTO. We certainly should not fall for the recent attempts of the IMF and World Bank to spruce up their images either by promising poverty relief or showing their concern for labor rights by meeting with Bill Jordan of the ICFTU. None of these institutions are needed to conduct normal trade among nations. All of them increase the power of capital over labor globally and push the majority of people and nations in the world into deeper dependence on an unsustainable trade regime.

New Allies, New Approaches

THE SHIFT TOWARD INCREASED CORPORATE POWER, as these agreements and multilateral institutions and the often bitter fights around them reveal, is a matter of politics more than of market forces. In fact, it has generally been the policy changes of the last half century that have allowed for the freer flow of trade and investment and the increased impact of market forces. The 2000 *Economic Report of the President (ERP)*, for example, states the importance of both international and domestic policy in opening the door to market forces. After granting technological innovation an important role in globalization, it says:

Policy has also played an active role in reducing barriers to trade and investment. For example, over the past 50 years, policy measures have sought to reduce tariff and nontariff trade barriers. More recently, and especially since the 1970s, many countries have decided to remove restrictions on capital flows. Coupled with other domestic policies designed to promote competition among firms, these kinds of mar-

ket liberalization in trade and investment have helped reduce costs to consumers and promote technological innovation (pp. 208-209).

As a consequence, the concepts of nontariff barriers and protectionism have been transformed by the theorists and administrators of the global capitalist regime. As used by the supporters of neoliberalism today, nontariff barrier refers to any measure that stands in the way of the profits to be made from the unfettered movement of capital or the free flow of goods and services from the imperial nations. As the *ERP* cautiously hints, this includes all manner of domestic policies and institutions. Socialists have no reason to accept this definition. We are not anti-trade, but we are not for trade becoming the excuse to dismantle what few and meager policies still offer economic and social support for working-class people. What we have always opposed in protectionism by imperial powers was the nationalism on which it rested and the contradiction this implied with working class internationalism.

An example of resistance to the expanded definition of nontariff barriers and, hence, protectionism that some on the left find controversial is the Teamster opposition to Mexican trucks operating in the U.S. Some see this as protectionist and anti-Mexican. The actual issue here is not trade at all, even though NAFTA redefines it as such. It is about U.S. domestic road safety standards. Socialists can hardly favor undermining safety standards. All that the union is actually demanding is that Mexican trucks be up to standard and drivers be licensed the same as U.S. truckers. This in itself is not chauvinist any more than requiring that all workplaces in the U.S. meet OSHA standards regardless of the nationality of the owners or the workers. The road, after all, is the truckers' workplace. This, it seems to me, overrides the fact that this ban has a "protectionist" outcome for the time being or that the employers and NAFTA boosters see it as protectionist.

At the same time, it matters a lot how the union approaches such a question. Current Teamster President James Hoffa gives it a nationalist and racist flavor by his attacks on Mexican truckers as drug smugglers. Under Carey, the union shunned such rhetoric, emphasized safety, and attempted to work with Mexican unions on this issue. There are usually choices. For example, the AFL-CIO chose to handle the China trade agreement as an anti-China campaign instead of a fight to limit the power of U.S. corporations. So, the issue of Mexican trucking firms operating in the U.S. can be handled in a way consistent with internationalism. We cannot possibly favor the lowering of the higher world labor standards if our goal is to raise lesser standards in other countries to that level. We should, however, whenever possible, be doing this in concert with workers and unions from the affected countries.

It is self-defeating to address the problem of super-exploited labor abroad by calling on the U.S. government or the multilateral institutions it dominates to protect global labor as the AFL-CIO does. Whether it is through trade sanctions, side-bars tacked on to trade agreements, or even through trade agreements that include labor rights in the text, as does the new agreement with Jordan, this is a matter of the fox guarding the hen house. In any case, while we support labor and human rights everywhere, opposition to the kinds of trade agreements that characterize contemporary "open door" imperialism should hardly be abandoned for the promise of paper rights by powers who show no respect for them at home or abroad. Regardless of intentions, such an approach

also underwrites the U.S. role as final arbiter in world affairs, i.e., as chief justice of the imperial court.

While we would support broad multilateral agreements banning sweatshop practices, child labor, etc., unconnected to trade or investment, as the ILO conventions already do, we should also realize that such agreements and codes generally lack enforcement and that proposing enforcement by the world's greatest violators (certainly in other people's countries) is shaky ground for improvement. As one U.S. worker told Human Rights Watch about U.S. labor law, "I know the law gives us rights on paper, but where's the reality?" Enforcement of agreements that include labor rights clauses, like the enforcement of many domestic laws, ultimately comes down to the actions of the workers and their organizations and allies. Therefore, we should be emphasizing direct solidarity with social and labor movements abroad whenever possible. There are plenty of examples that show it can make a difference.

Although it is too soon to see if it can really develop teeth, the Workers Rights Consortium anti-sweatshop enforcement mechanism negotiated by the United Students Against Sweatshops represents an interesting non-governmental grassroots approach, using the power of the students and allied organizations, including some unions, to pressure, presumably through direct action if necessary, universities whose contractors are found in violation of WRC codes. Here, the action is not a sanction against an entire people, as is the case in enforcement through trade agreements, but against the university and the employers. This points more generally to a direct form of solidarity in which U.S. unions can aid workers abroad by pressuring or hurting the U.S. companies that own or contract with overseas violators.

In addition to advocating the dismantling of the multilateral institutions of imperialism mentioned above, we should fight for the canceling of Third World debt. Canceling this debt would bring potential relief to billions of human beings — 1.3 billion of whom live on \$1 or less a day. To be sure, they would have to fight to get their share of this debt "dividend," but unions and social movement organizations around the world could support their struggles. In any case, debt cancellation would do a lot more than another round of "development" loans of the World Bank or "structural adjustment" loans of the IMF to rebalance trade and potentially free many nations to pursue sustainable forms of economic development. Naturally, we don't expect most current Third World governments to do this. The freeing of billions of dollars, however, would give opposition movements a stronger argument for radical programs and, perhaps, more support as people saw the current government squander the money. With their debts canceled, opposition movements that come to power would have some of the wherewithal to address the conditions of the majority. In any case, the debt is the major lever used to open doors in the Third World and force them into export-oriented monoculture and sweated production. Its cancellation removes this important weapon of domination.

Naturally, given all the contradictions in today's global economy there will be many cases where the "correct" internationalist position is not so obvious. What seems most important, however, is building a political movement capable of winning any of the goals mentioned above or even of defeating U.S. capital's on-going political offensive for still more "free trade" and neoliberal deals: for example, the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas and the African Growth and Opportunities

Agreement. Seattle and the subsequent mobilizations were an inspiring start on which we must build. They have undoubtedly put the administrators of globalization on the defensive for a while. Unfortunately, the “blue (collar)-green” alliance suggested by these inspiring events lost much of its momentum as official labor backed away in favor of campaigning (and covering) for Al “Fast Track” Gore. It is also doubtful if simply going from one mobilization to the next amounts to a strategy — even though these mobilizations are important and it is wonderful to see the world elite’s representatives running for cover.

The Nader campaign provided an additional political experience for many young people and even for some trade unionists tired of the lies and betrayals that are the basis of labor’s Democratic dependency. Can it become, as Nader urges, a step toward a permanent opposition in U.S. politics despite a somewhat disappointing electoral outcome? Looking beyond our own borders, we can take inspiration from the many mass strike movements against the neoliberal regime in the last few years and even from the insurrectionary mass movements that so recently tumbled tyrants in Serbia and the Ivory Coast. Perhaps out of these experiences, plus the simultaneous return of labor and student activism, other efforts like the Labor Party, and the new dynamism of the Latino working class, a diverse and class-based movement will rise to the occasion in the U.S. That, in any case, must be the focus of our activity as well as our hope and goal. It is time to close the door on global capital and U.S. “primacy.”

A Draft Program for Globalization from Below

Jeremy Brecher, Tim Costello, and Brendan Smith

PARTICIPANTS IN THE MOVEMENT FOR GLOBALIZATION FROM BELOW have varied goals, but the movement’s unifying goal is to bring about sufficient democratic control over states, markets, and corporations to permit people and the planet to survive and begin to shape a viable future. But what does this mean concretely? Is it possible to construct a non-utopian program that addresses the needs, concerns, and interests of diverse constituencies — workers in the North, environmentalists, the people of the South — in ways that are complementary, not contradictory?¹ We offer the following draft program as a work in progress, based on elements that have been percolating through the globalization-from-below movement.

While this program ultimately envisions new rules and institutions for the global economy, many of its objectives can be implemented piecemeal through pressure on particular corporations, governments, and institutions. Our sketch of a program for globalization from below is organized around seven basic principles:

1. Level labor, environmental, social, and human rights conditions upward.
2. Democratize institutions at every level from local to global.

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3. Make decisions as close as possible to those they affect.
4. Equalize global wealth and power.
5. Convert the global economy to environmental sustainability.
6. Create prosperity by meeting human and environmental needs.
7. Protect against global boom and bust.

1. Level Labor, Environmental, Social, And Human Rights Conditions Upward

GLOBALIZATION FROM ABOVE IS CREATING A RACE TO THE BOTTOM, an economic war of all against all in which each workforce, community, and country is forced to compete by offering lower labor, social, environmental, and human rights conditions. Halting the race to the bottom requires raising conditions for those worst off. Such upward leveling can start with specific struggles to raise conditions for those who are being driven downward. Ultimately, minimum environmental, labor, social, and human rights standards must be incorporated in national and international law. Such standards protect communities and countries from the pressure to compete by sacrificing their rights and environment. Rising conditions for those at the bottom can also expand employment and markets and generate a virtuous circle of economic growth.

- Raise labor, environmental, social, and human rights conditions locally: The fight to reverse the race to the bottom can begin at home. Organizing unions, ensuring the right to organize, fighting for environmental justice, establishing rights for workers in contingent jobs, living wage campaigns, and creating an adequate social safety net all establish rights and raise standards for those threatened by the downward pressures of the global economy.
- Force standards on corporations: Workers and other citizens, acting in civil society, should pressure global corporations to negotiate minimum global standards for labor and environment. National governments should be pressured to incorporate such standards in national trade laws and international financial and trade organizations.
- Incorporate global standards in national law: Internationally recognized labor rights are regularly violated not only in the Third World but also in the U.S. Every country's law should enforce those rights at home and require their corporations to meet international labor standards throughout the world.
- Put floors, not ceilings, in international trade agreements: NAFTA, the WTO, and other trade agreements often forbid labor, environmental, health, and other regulations that exceed the agreement's own standards. Such ceilings should be eliminated to allow communities and countries to set their own higher standards.
- Negotiate agreements to protect minimum standards for labor, environment, and human rights: Such agreements can be implemented by established institutions such as international trade organizations or the UN, or by new ones established for the purpose.²

2. Democratize Institutions at Every Level from Local To Global

GLOBALIZATION FROM ABOVE HAS RESTRICTED THE POWER OF SELF-GOVERNMENT for people all over the world. At the heart of globalization from below lies democratization — making institutions accountable to those they affect.

- Open the dialogue on the future of the global economy to all: The movement has already initiated a participatory global dialogue on democratizing the global economy. That dialogue should be expanded in every local community, in every country, and worldwide.
- Establish a Global Economy Truth Commission: Globalization has been conducted behind the back of the world's people. A truth commission can provide citizens of the world with the information they need to monitor the results, impacts, and failures of economic institutions and policy at every level.
- Democratize international trade and financial institutions: It is unacceptable that a few rich countries monopolize decision making regarding the global economy's future through their control of the IMF, World Bank, and WTO and through the control of major policy decisions by the G-7. Voting in international financial and trade institutions must move toward the standard of equal representation for the world's people.³
- Let those affected by international economic policies participate in making them: Instead of closed negotiations with top government and corporate officials, decisions about international economic agreements and loans should require participation by labor unions, environmental groups, women's organizations, development organizations, and other major sectors of civil society in each country.
- Establish an enforceable code of conduct for global corporations: Corporations that operate in more than one country should be subject to a global code of conduct with minimum requirements for disclosure of activities and compliance with labor and environmental standards. The UN Center on Transnational Corporations was in the process of developing such a code, but it was stopped by U.S. opposition.
- Make corporations legally accountable: Corporations should be held legally liable for harms caused abroad and be subject to actions for relief in home-country courts. They should be required to disclose their use, emission, and accidental discharge of toxic substances and the names and addresses of their fully or partially owned facilities, contractors, and subcontractors.
- End the domination of politics by big money: Ending "crony capitalism" means reducing the domination of political systems and media by economic oligarchs and increasing the capacity of people to organize themselves at the grassroots. This is as necessary in the United States as in Indonesia, Mexico, or Russia.

3. Make Decisions as Close as Possible To Those They Affect

THE MOVEMENT FOR GLOBALIZATION FROM BELOW SHOULD AIM to construct a multi-level global economy. Power and initiative should be concentrated at as low a level as possible, with higher-level regulation established where and only where necessary. This approach envisions relatively self-reliant, self-governing communities, states, provinces, countries, and regions, with global regulation only sufficient to protect the environment, redistribute resources, block the race to the bottom, and perform other essential functions.

- Build a community-controlled economic sector: A key strategy for protecting local communities from the vagaries of the global economy is to create an economic sector that is partially insulated from global markets. This sector needs to be rooted in and controlled by local people and based on meeting local needs.
- Make corporations locally accountable: Local labor unions, community groups,

and governments should pressure corporations to negotiate with them regarding acceptable norms of behavior.

- Establish local control of local environments: Any activity with potential impact on the local environment should require the informed consent of the people in that community.
- Protect local and national economic development capacity: Current trade agreements often interfere with the right of countries and communities to pursue local economic development objectives, such as job creation and targeting development for needy groups. International agreements should instead protect that right.
- Establish regional “no raiding” pacts: States and provinces should agree not to compete to provide subsidies to lure companies to relocate. No-raiding rules exist in the EU, and unions in the northeastern U.S. have proposed a multi-state agreement that would block the regional race to the bottom by punishing companies that relocate to areas with lower standards.

4. Equalize Global Wealth and Power

THE CURRENT GAP BETWEEN THE GLOBAL RICH AND POOR IS UNACCEPTABLE; it is unconscionable to act as if it can be a permanent feature of the global economy. It is equally unacceptable to assume that the world’s rich countries can call all the shots regarding the global economy’s future. Policy at every level should prioritize economic advancement of the most oppressed and exploited people, including women, immigrants, racial and ethnic minorities, and indigenous peoples. It should increase power, capability, resources, and income for those at the bottom.

- Shop and invest ethically: Individual consumers, institutions, and governments should use their buying power to purchase goods, services, and investments that support acceptable labor, environmental, and social conditions. Consumer power is already being used in such areas as the boycott of companies that invest in Burma and of World Bank bonds.
- Revive the North-South Dialogue: In the 1970s, the rich and poor countries of the world initiated a dialogue designed to establish a New International Economic Order that would support Third World development. This dialogue, terminated by Ronald Reagan, should be restarted.
- End global debt slavery: Today poor countries are forced to run their economies to pay debts promoted by foreign investors and taken on by corrupt governments that did not represent their people. The wealthy countries and the international financial institutions should immediately cancel the debts of the poorest countries. Repayment requirements should be limited for all underdeveloped countries. No poor country should be required to use more than a small proportion of its income for debt repayment.
- Make global markets work for developing economies: Rather than promoting indiscriminate free trade, trade policy should provide poor countries with preferential access to first world markets on a more substantial scale than is now done with the Generalized System of Preferences. To reverse the fall in commodity prices that has devastated Third World producers and to prevent a global race to the bottom in commodities, agreements to promote stability in price and production levels should be encouraged.
- Provide developing countries access to technical knowledge: International trade agreements have enormously expanded the so-called intellectual property rights

of corporations. Often this causes terrible hardship, such as the murderous drug company policy of using their “intellectual property rights” to price lifesaving drugs out of reach of the world’s ordinary citizens. Global policy should encourage rapid and inexpensive access to all forms of technical knowledge to aid sustainable development.

- Invest in sustainable development: Global investment should be redirected from private financial speculation to one or more public international investment funds. The primary purpose of these funds should be to meet human and environmental needs by channeling money into locally controlled, environmentally sustainable, long-term investment. Sources for funding could include a Tobin Tax (a global tax on short-term international currency transactions); a global tax on carbon use designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; reductions in military spending; and public and private investment.

5. Convert the Global Economy To Environmental Sustainability

THE WORLD IS IN THE MIDST OF A GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CATASTROPHE. Ill-conceived economic activity is disrupting the basic balances of climate and ecology on which human life depends. Globalization is rapidly accelerating that ongoing catastrophe. The sources of environmental destruction lie primarily in the North and in the activities of global corporations in the South. The only way to reverse this catastrophe is to halt the present dynamic of globalization and meet human needs by technologies and social practices that progressively reduce the negative impact of the economy on the environment.

- Transform the production and consumption patterns of wrongly developed countries: The so-called developed or industrialized countries of the North produce the lion’s share of the world’s pollution and climate-changing carbon emissions. The technological and social means to change their destructive patterns exist but are not being utilized. Public policy, including taxation, regulation, planning, and investment, must be directed to completely rebuilding these wrongly developed economies on an environmentally sustainable basis.

- Make international environmental agreements enforceable: International agreements to combat global warming, protect endangered species, and restrict foreign dumping of toxic waste have little provision for enforcement. Such agreements should be made enforceable by incorporating sanctions like those for protection of international property rights in the WTO.

- Incorporate environmental protections in trade agreements: The WTO, NAFTA, and other trade agreements should discourage environmentally destructive practices. Countries should be free to ban import of goods produced under conditions that violate environmental principles.

- End the despoiling of natural resources for export: Countries should not be required by the IMF, World Bank, or global investors to chop down their forests, overfarm their lands, and overfish their waters to service their debts or increase investor profit.

- Encourage sustainable development: Establish sustainable development plans at local and national levels. Pursue “conservation-based development” that combines good jobs and income with environmental enhancement. Focus international aid on helping to implement sustainable development plans.

6. Create Prosperity by Meeting Human and Environmental Needs

TODAY, AN ESTIMATED ONE BILLION PEOPLE ARE UNEMPLOYED. Millions are forced to leave rural areas and migrate to cities or around the world seeking work. Meanwhile, the world's vast need for goods and services to alleviate poverty and to reconstruct society on an environmentally sustainable basis goes unmet. A goal of economic policy at every level must be to create a new kind of full employment based on meeting those needs.

- Encourage development, not austerity: Neoliberalism, the IMF, and the World Bank have imposed austerity policies on much of the world, leading to massive unemployment and the destruction of small businesses and farms. Instead, local, national, and global policies should aim to ensure livable wages. They should make credit available for small and medium-sized locally owned businesses and farms. They should pursue a progressive tax policy that reduces the burden on the poor. This will help reverse the destructive competition that is promoted by globalization from above.
- Promote local food production for local needs: Today's global economy subsidizes corporate food exports while forcing countries to open up to foreign food imports, thereby driving millions of small-scale farmers off the land. Instead, global policy should promote small-scale, environmentally sound farming for local markets. It should end agricultural export dumping. It should encourage countries to provide basic food security for their people.
- Utilize development planning techniques: Governments should revive the development planning techniques that have been forbidden by neoliberalism and its institutions. Such tools include reserving some economic sectors for public, state, or national ownership. They also include performance requirements designed to achieve local, regional, or national economic objectives, such as requirements for local inputs and local hiring preferences.
- Promote long-term investment: Short-term foreign investment that just skims off speculative profits does little or nothing for economic development. Only long-term investment that builds economic capacity and protects the environment is likely to benefit poorer countries.
- Reestablish national full employment policies: Neoliberal economic policies have used mass unemployment to keep wages low, allegedly to fight inflation. National governments should instead use tax, budget, and monetary policies to ensure full employment.

7. Protect Against Global Boom and Bust

THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION HAS BEEN AN ERA OF VOLATILITY. Its repeated crises have destroyed local and national economies overnight and driven hundreds of millions of people into poverty. An unregulated global economy has led to huge flows of speculative funds that can swamp national economies. No one country can control these forces on its own. Yet neoliberal economics and the major economic powers have resisted any changes that might restrict the freedom of capital. Economic security for ordinary people requires just such restrictions.

- Utilize capital controls: Under the articles of the IMF, countries have the power to impose controls on the movement of capital across their borders. This power, which was used regularly by most countries for many decades, helps protect against

wild rushes of money into and out of a country. But current policies of the IMF and other institutions and pressures of globalization have largely undermined the capacity of individual countries to use such controls effectively. Countries and international institutions should cooperate to restore their effectiveness.

- Establish global financial regulation through such measures as: instituting a “hot money” tax (the Tobin Tax can reduce global speculation, as well as provide resources for world development and environmental protection); coordinating demand in the major economies; assuring global liquidity by making provision in advance to reduce the effects of liquidity crises, especially on poorer countries; stabilizing exchange rates; making speculators pay for their losses so that assistance provided to economies in trouble goes to benefit the people, not to line the pockets of international investors; establishing a permanent insolvency mechanism for indebted countries; and developing international institutions to assist with monetary regulation and the control of non-bank financial services companies.

THE MOVEMENT FOR GLOBALIZATION FROM BELOW IS INDEED developing an alternative vision for the global economy. It is not just a nostalgic desire to return to the past, nor a fearful rejection of a wider world, nor a laundry list of wishes and hopes. It is a program for the transformation of the global economy. Its elements are concrete enough to implement. They fit together well enough to be synergistic. They address the needs of the overwhelming majority of the world's people.

People can begin to implement these elements wherever and whenever they have the power to do so. As some elements are implemented, that can help strengthen the capacity to implement others. This program is certainly neither adequate nor final. But it demonstrates that the proposals of different parts of the movement for globalization from below can indeed be put together into a common whole.

Notes

1. It is often assumed that these interests are inherently contradictory: for example, that rising living standards in the South necessitate lowered living standards in the North or that environmental protection implies worse living standards for some or all of the world's people. While neither poverty nor environmental destruction can be reversed without major change worldwide, such change does not require the impoverishment of ordinary citizens of the North. Ending wasteful and destructive use of the world's resources and putting its unused and poorly used resources, particularly its one billion unemployed, to work could largely eliminate poverty and environmental degradation without reducing the real quality of life in the North. Change in consumption patterns will be necessary — for example, reduced dependence on fossil fuels — and the lifestyles of the rich will no doubt need to take a hit, but this does not imply a reduction in overall quality of life for the majority in the North.

2. There has been considerable debate regarding the appropriate venues for such standards (for example, the WTO versus the ILO). In fact, this question is currently moot, since the opposition to incorporating such standards in *any* international agreement is overwhelming. For the time being, labor rights will have to be imposed on corporations primarily by direct pressure in civil society. As other means for imposing them, such as national policy or international agreement open up, those opportunities should be seized without regard to preconceptions about appropriate venues.

3. Proposals include restoring the original Bretton Woods conception that the UN Economic and Social Council oversee and coordinate the work of international trade and finan-

cial institutions; changing the weighted voting in international financial institutions to correspond to population rather than just investment; adding additional countries to international institution governing boards; establishing elected regional boards of directors; and creating a directly elected Global People's Assembly within the UN system.

“Seattle on the Tarn” **French Solidarity Against Capitalist Globalization**

Norm Diamond

IT IS EARLY AFTERNOON, JUNE 30, 2000. WE ARE PART OF A VAST CHAIN of people, hiking down from the plateau of Larzac to the town of Millau. We walk mostly single file, along what our guides tell us is normally an obscure path for sheep. Much of the time we have fabulous vistas: over the river Tarn and its narrow valley, over the tiled roofs of the ancient town, across to the other plateaus that squeeze Millau. When we are able to look up from the steep path, we see others like ourselves, hundreds, perhaps thousands of us, snaking down the cliff face. We are the impatient ones, the ones who wouldn't wait for organized transport. Eventually we reach a road and have to cross between the steady flow of shuttle buses bringing thousands more. On foot and by bus, we are a guerrilla army, taking over the town.

We are in southern France, a couple of hours north of the Mediterranean, here for the trial of ten sheep farmers accused of dismantling a McDonald's and using their tractors to haul away the debris. One of the farmers is José Bové who had also been one of the media stars in the anti-WTO protests in Seattle, distributing smuggled Roquefort cheese and speaking effectively about the horrors of corporate agriculture. We are in his home territory, and his popularity is immense. National polls show him winning the presidency of France, should he choose to run. Unions, peasant organizations and left groups have chartered trains and buses from all across France to show their solidarity.

Along the road we pass the refurbished McDonald's. It has been open for business, but today it is shuttered. Riot police with three-quarter body-length shields surround it, barricaded behind buses and armored cars. Given our numbers, they hardly appear menacing. Indeed, they are nearly the only police we shall see this day. Even the courthouse relies on marshalls from the demonstrators to keep order in the street.

“Seattle on the Tarn,” is what organizers name the day, and French media are quick to use the catchy appellation in their headlines. J30 is what we call it for short, identifying it with a continuing list of date-named protests against capitalist globalization worldwide: N30 (Seattle), J15 (Quito), A16 (Washington, DC), M7 (Thailand), M11 (South Africa), M31 (Buenos Aires), J4 and J15 (Windsor and Calgary), J21 (Okinawa), A3 (Colombia), S11 (Melbourne), S26

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(Prague), O20 (Seoul).

So far, each of these protests has gained inspiration, legitimacy and momentum from the ones that precede it. There is more going on, however, than just an “eros effect.”¹ Each one of these events came out of concrete local conditions, out of the specifically local ways people have been affected by the generalized spread and penetration of the capitalist market. That J30 happened here and now is the product of a particular history and organizing effort. Understanding and building on these events requires recognizing the importance of place.

Culture of Solidarity

I BEGIN WITH TWO VIGNETTES: In the first, we are driving along the top of Larzac some days after the demonstration. We are on a modern highway which obliterates the Roman road I knew from past visits. My teenage son is hungry, too much so to wait till we reach the old walled city I want to show him. We pull into a roadside restaurant and are already seated before we notice that the walls are covered with blown-up photos from the Seattle protest. My son walks the perimeter, identifying each place where he faced off with WTO delegates or city police.

When I express my surprise to the waitress, she says we're in luck. By coincidence, the photographer is eating with his young son a few tables away. He tells us they are celebrating his return from Colombia, where he had traveled with Bové to talk strategy with organizations of small farmers like themselves. When the waitress brings us a bottle of the house wine, the label is the same symbol we've seen already on hillside banners, t-shirts, flyers and postcards: a globe with two sites indicated, Seattle and Millau. Half the globe consists of a voracious sesame-seed burger bun. Rising from inside one hemisphere are two hands, handcuffed but raised in triumph, effectively holding off the attacking corporate breadstuff. The day before, when we remarked on one of the postcards in our hole-in-the-wall North African restaurant down in Millau, the counter man told us, “Those guys up on Larzac, they're magnificent. They're all anarchists, you know.”

In the second vignette, I have found an injured sheep while wandering outside a small hamlet, also on Larzac, where I spent time in the 1970s. Now my son and I are waiting for two of the farmers to bring her back, to make sure they could follow my directions. In the hamlet, prominent on the rutted trail that winds through it, serving as its main street, we come across a wooden plaque. It is a sort of public penance, a communal expression of regret and atonement.

Here is the story it tells: In the early 1960s, France was engaged in a bitter war to retain Algeria as a colony. Algerian prisoners, small farmers turned independence fighters among them, were brought back to the military camp on Larzac. Though fairly remote, this camp became the target of antiwar and anticolonial protesters, who tried to block its gates and scale its fences. The protesters, nearly all from outside the region, attempted to enlist the small farmers of Larzac. But the latter were “apathetic” (their self-description on the plaque). They saw nothing in common with the prisoners. Instead, they served in the army when they couldn't get out of the obligation and ignored the protesters.

Now they feel ashamed that they let nationality divide them from small farmers like themselves who happened to be from a different country. The plaque is their declaration that they should have joined the protesters forty years ago against the government. It also says they have done more than offer a remote,

carefully carved apology. They have established a program that brings the children of Algerian farmers to live and study on Larzac.

The public nature of the plaque is as remarkable as the vision and practice of class solidarity it expresses. It is as if our city billboards replaced their advertisements with municipal resolutions (and real programs) of support for the struggles of Mexican or Puerto Rican workers. What could account for this extraordinary transformation from the sixties till now? The key is a series of events in the 1970s that rocked Larzac and, then as now, mobilized France and beyond. J30 shows the continuing significance of this remote plateau to solidarity all across France. It is also an indication of the way that an earlier solidarity has evolved to become anti-capitalist.

Larzac & the Culture of Resistance

IN FRENCH, LARZAC IS CALLED A "CAUSSE," the word deriving from the same root as the English word "calcium." Perhaps thirty miles at its widest, it is a limestone plateau, pockmarked with caves, thrust out of a long ago inland sea. Its porous soil doesn't hold water at the surface and sustains only sparse vegetation. Antedating the Roman remnants, there are vestiges of prehistoric worship and burial sites. At times during the medieval era, it was on important trade routes. The crusading Knights Templar took much of it for their regional headquarters. Wandering its roads and paths, there is abundant evidence of past agricultural failures.

The scarcity of trees has been a puzzle until recently, given the more extensive greenery on similar causses nearby. Excavations on the outskirts of what is now Millau have uncovered what appears to be the major pottery production site for the Roman Empire. Thousands of its signature bowls and water containers have been found over an area extending from Britain into Asia. As the cleverly engineered kilns have been reconstructed, it has become clear that this was an extensive factory. The belief now is that Larzac once sustained a forest, but that the trees were cut to provide fuel for the pottery kilns. They were cut to such an extent that their ability to reproduce was compromised.

This human-caused ecological disaster, in combination with the underlying geology, shaped the centuries-old integrated economy of the region. On top of the plateau, sheep graze and drink out of artificial ponds which have been lined to hold water. Lamb is part of the region's cuisine, but the sheep are raised primarily for their milk. In caves partway down the western slopes, the milk is converted to Roquefort cheese. This is the one place in the world "the king of cheese" is produced, the only place its unique blue mold occurs. At the base of Larzac, using the river and the surplus male sheep, Millau developed an extensive industry specializing in tanning animal hides and producing sheepskin gloves.

This, at least, was the economy in the early 1970s. At that point the French government decided to convert this sparsely settled plateau into a facility for West European militaries to practice tank maneuvers. France would both take a small step toward independence from NATO and further French-German rapprochement. All this would happen by means of heavy tank treads on a fragile landscape. An advance guard of German tanks rolled in by invitation, less than thirty years after German occupiers were driven out. Speculators began buying properties for resale to the military. The Ministry of Defense issued an edict forbidding any new farm building on the entire expanse of Larzac.

To understand the response on the plateau, it is important to know something about the militant political history of this area. Larzac is within the boundaries of a much bigger region that has a long history of resistance to central authority. Almost eight hundred years ago, the Papacy and King of France, whose kingdom then consisted of little more than the vicinity of Paris, combined in a crusade to subjugate and loot this region. Their pretext was the “Albigensian heresy.” (Albi is a short bus ride to the west of Larzac.) Underpinning the “heresy” and its unacceptable freedoms—women could own property here, and Jews had citizenship rights—was a commercial civilization more advanced than any other part of what later became France. The territory was subjugated and patriarchy and Church dominance reimposed. But the tradition of resistance has smoldered, defining part of regional identity and coming to life with regularity.²

When organized Protestantism came to France, not surprisingly it found greater receptivity here than most places. Persecuted Protestants from elsewhere in France sought shelter in this region, which then became a battleground. There are vestiges of towers where they were imprisoned and local battle sites and churches that changed hands multiple times. People treasure old family Bibles that had their frontispiece torn out centuries ago to hinder their identification as Protestant. Houses still have hiding places in their thick walls where incriminating Bibles could be thrust.

More recently, under Nazi occupation, this was again an area of active resistance. The French term for a Resistance fighter, *maquisard*, derives from the prickly brush characteristic of this region. That the training would include German tanks, only added nationalist sentiment to an environmentalist sense of stewardship for this unique and vulnerable landscape. Peasant attachment to their own land became a drive for local autonomy which quickly bloomed into antimilitarism and found resonance worldwide.

The Struggle for Larzac

THE STRUGGLE OVER LARZAC MERGED INITIALLY WITH STUDENT AND OTHER OPPOSITION to the U.S. continuation of the Vietnam War. It drew also on the established national network of small farmers. As various left groups joined in, the organizers on Larzac made it a priority to reach out to industrial workers. They began to send meat and cheese to workers on strike, and visited rallies at Renault and Peugeot and elsewhere. They developed especially strong ties with workers at the Lip factory, engaged in an extended sit-in occupation of their own. Joint posters identifying the two struggles appeared all over France.

Parallel to their own ritual of public oath-taking not to give up their land, the farmers of Larzac organized young men across France to send back their military registration, the equivalent of burning their draft cards. With supporters, they launched a 425 mile march to Paris. Two years later, they camped for a week under the Eiffel Tower. When protesters were arrested at the military camp, they organized demonstrations outside the same tribunal in Millau where we waited for José Bové and friends.

Up on the plateau, in a brilliant organizing move and to defy the Ministry's edict, they began to build an “illegal” sheep barn. The structure is typical for this region, shaped like a miniature vaulted airplane hangar, large enough for hundreds of sheep and made of limestone rocks. The building process and ornamentation, however, were anything but typical. Under its eaves, along both

lengths, there are foot-high anti-militarist quotes, on one side from Einstein, on the other from DeGaulle. Each quote is reproduced numerous times, in languages that pair peoples in conflict. Thus the same quote appears in Russian and English, Hebrew and Arabic, Vietnamese and Cambodian, etc. People came from all over France and all over the world to help with the construction, carving the name of their organization or struggle or place of origin into the stones. Especially prominent were young German antiwar and new left activists.

The struggle lasted the entire decade before backing the government down. Its persistence and militancy probably contributed to the Socialist Party electoral victory in 1981. Newly elected President Mitterand then conceded the victory the people of Larzac had already won. Within France, the struggle both reinforced organizational ties among small farmers and provoked splits in pre-existing organizations over tactics. It strengthened mutual support between peasants and industrial workers, and brought an awareness of struggles elsewhere in the world and other ways of thinking about struggle.

One of its biggest consequences was to bring newcomers to Larzac. Nearly every one of the J30 defendants came to the plateau and settled there in the seventies. The culture on Larzac was transformed. People who had lived traditional lives with very traditional gender roles, for instance, now mounted large communal plaques with quotations from Mao and Marcuse and traded insights with visiting American Indian Movement militants. They launched a newspaper and newsletters and a satiric journal that continue to this day. They have endeavored to maintain the network that supported them, and draw on it to send resources and delegations to other countries where the struggles of small farmers remind them of their own.³

Why McDonald's?

TO THE RETURN VISITOR, RURAL LARZAC LOOKS MUCH THE SAME. The barn stands, as it probably will for centuries, though its soft stones are now weathered, their carved symbols mostly illegible. Roquefort cheese has become more of an international commodity, but it still requires land, sheep and the distinctive mold found nowhere else. There are now some machines for milking the sheep, but the task is still mainly done by hand — by two fingers, to be exact. One of the pleasures of returning was to see the extraordinary “illegal” barn in normal, sheep-filled, daily use.

The towns, however, have changed drastically with the new economy. The walled city I wanted to show my son had lain in ruins for centuries. It has been transformed now into a thriving artists' colony catering to tourists. Alongside its studios and galleries it hosts half a dozen restaurants and two ice cream shops. Not a person I asked in any of its stores could tell me where to find its old lined sheep pond, which I finally located, crumbling and overgrown, less than a hundred yards from its walls.

Millau still has about the same number of inhabitants, about 23,000. But twenty years ago, seven thousand people worked in its factories, right in the heart of town, processing animal hides. Now those factories are mostly vacant. They are in transition, shuttered but not yet converted to housing or boutiques. There are still six hundred workers, but they live off Millau's reputation, making fancy, one-of-a-kind pairs of gloves on special order. Mass production has

gone elsewhere, to cheaper labor in East Europe or the Third World. Instead, Millau has become the hang-gliding capital of Europe, with the northern lip of Larzac being, literally, the jumping off point, and tourism the main industry. This is the economic underpinning of the refurbished and new hotels and fancy shops. It is also the explanation for the not one but two new McDonald's.

At every level, international, national and local, McDonald's in Millau is a focal point for the strains and pressures brought by capitalist globalization. As such, it was an evocative and well-chosen target. French cuisine is an integral part of French culture and national identity. This tourguide truism understates the assaults people have felt in the last few years from mad cow disease (a recurrent alarm, as I write), genetically modified organisms, dioxin contaminants, septic residues, listeria, and heavy metals. Each of these has been a significant scare to French consumers. All have been byproducts of the new industrial agriculture, with its massive operations integrating fertilizers, feed, pesticides, herbicides, and seeds. "Better living through chemistry" does not translate well into French experience.

It is that background that stiffened European resolve around bovine growth hormone, even in the face of a ruling by the court of the World Trade Organization. This court held that Europe could not refuse hormonally-enhanced beef from the United States because such refusal would represent an unfair commercial advantage to its own farmers. (United States, chemicals and beef: sounds like McDonald's already.) Most European farmers don't use the hormone because they would be obligated to label it as such, thus deterring consumers. As a sanction, the U.S. government was granted the right to impose tariffs on selected European products and chose, among others, Roquefort cheese! Add only that McDonald's did not use local labor in its construction. Neither do they sell Roquefort in their cheeseburgers, not even in Millau.

On August 12, 1999, the McDonald's we hiked by nearly a year later was still under construction. The first reports from the scene were that it had been "sacked" by rioters. Within a day, damages were reported to be in the millions of francs and the perpetrators in hiding. Overseas accounts emphasized that this was an anti-American action. The impression, hearing about it from abroad, was that it had been some sort of stealthy vanguardist undertaking. Debray's old theories of guerrilla warfare came to mind in trying to make sense of press reports: perhaps the perpetrators thought they were demystifying authority and encouraging the cowed citizens eventually to act on their own. In nearly every respect, the press reports and official accounts were misleading.

What actually happened represents the kind of political organizing developed over the years of the struggle on Larzac. Exactly one week before, on August 5th, a delegation representing both the farmers producing sheep's milk and the industrial makers of the cheese met with the Minister of Agriculture, in Paris, to see what could be done to protect the thousands of people hurt by the punitive tariff on Roquefort. The Minister told them there was no way to challenge the WTO court ruling. At best, he could offer modest funds for a stepped-up Roquefort advertising campaign. Emerging from his office, the delegation held a press conference on the steps of the Ministry, linking McDonald's to the attempted importation of the rBGH beef and identifying it as a symbol and purveyor of the worst of industrial agriculture.

In the days preceding August 12, organizers met with the Millau police,

agreeing on a time when the construction site would be cleared of all workers and negotiating over the parts of the building that could be dismantled as a symbolic statement. The police offered light switch boxes, the organizers countered with doorframes, and bargaining went from there. The rally was publicized, the event billed as a family affair. About three hundred people showed up, half from Larzac, half from Millau. Kids frolicked. People pitched in to load the (more or less) agreed-to pieces of the building onto carts. Tractors hauled the carts into town and deposited their contents at the police station. There were speeches, then everyone went home. The damage to the construction was not great. The organizers apparently did not even expect to be arrested.

The unanticipated arrests played into the hands of the experienced organizers, who used the prospect of a trial to hammer at the issues. José Bové focused attention by refusing bail and staying in jail a few extra days. He was already well-known as a spokesperson for international and worker-farmer solidarity and an advocate for small-scale, environmentally sustainable farming. At the time of the McDonald's action, he was on parole for an earlier use of his tractor that destroyed a field of genetically-modified corn. The French press treated him as a media star on his N30 trip to Seattle, and he milked the coverage effectively. Before giving one of the keynote speeches at the anti-WTO protests, he traveled across the U.S. for more than a week, meeting with groups of small farmers and assuring everyone that his target was not the American people but corporate agriculture. Along the way he distributed samples of smuggled Roquefort.

J30

THERE MAY HAVE BEEN AS MANY AS 100,000 PEOPLE IN MILLAU for the trial and follow-up festivities. Long after midnight, the highways were still backed up for miles with arriving vehicles. The town undoubtedly was overwhelmed, but everything stayed peaceful. The atmosphere was that of a carnival and concert. The defendants turned the trial into a denunciation of corporate globalization, with witnesses from around the world. The judge tolerated the testimony, but acted uninterested. The real teach-in happened outside the trial, however, with forums and street theatre in the town and the witnesses repeating their testimony to the crowd on the concert grounds. Speeches and music lasted most of the night and resumed the next day.

We left not knowing the verdicts. In mid-September, the judge ruled that only José Bové would go to prison, for a term of three months. This is actually a harsher sentence than the prosecutor asked for.

Bové himself walks a fine line. He has become an international star in a movement, both local and global, that thrives on collectivity and professes egalitarianism. "We are all leaders!" has become an international motto. On our last day in Millau, my son and I came across an encouraging sign. There is an age-old working class slogan that radically rejects hierarchy: "Neither God Nor Master." As we wandered one last time in Millau's medieval passageways, we found freshly painted graffiti. Along with support for the defendants, it said: "Ni Dieu, Ni Maître, Ni José Bové."

NOTES

1. George Katsiaficas used the concept of "eros effect" to account for how events build

on each other, as part of his explanation for the profusion of uprisings in 1968 (*The Imagination of the New Left, A Global Analysis of 1968*. Boston: South End Press, 1987).

2. At the time of the crusade, people here spoke the most advanced of the Romance languages. Even now the region is known as Languedoc, or “language of Oc.” Oc was the language used for the songs and poetry of the troubadors when French, Italian and Spanish were little differentiated and very limited in their expressiveness. The local language lived on, albeit crudely and without literary expression, as a sign of regional identity and defiance. In the 1970s, as part of a more generalized resistance to economic and political centralization, there were moves to establish academic departments and otherwise resurrect Oc as a viable language through much of southern France.

3. Farmers in Japan, Zimbabwe, Nicaragua, Palestine, New Caledonia, Tahiti, and Colombia have been recipients of their support.

No Sweat: Students, Labor & Global Economy

Christine Kelly

A VIGOROUS AND PROMISING WAVE OF STUDENT ACTIVISM has been steadily growing on U.S. college campuses since 1997. While the concerns of college-based youth activists today cover a broad range of issues,¹ the most widespread, coordinated, and effective efforts have focused on the super-exploitative labor conditions fostered by the apparel industry in foreign and U.S.-based factories commonly known as “sweatshops.” That poor, largely female, mostly Asian and Latin American workers have found committed allies on U.S. college campuses is a significant development that has had surprisingly successful results. It is an alliance that reflects a growing awareness in the United States that while “globalization” may be bringing the world closer together, it is simultaneously lowering the boom on wages, workers’ rights, women’s rights, and political accountability at home and abroad.

The student anti-sweatshop movement, however, goes well beyond raising awareness; it is a sophisticated organizing effort which combines a radical economic analysis with a campus-ready strategy. This is a powerful combination that has put students at the forefront of campaigns, together with labor and the human rights community, to expose and regulate the scandalous practices of the apparel industry. It has also, in an unprecedented manner, turned students into major players in the federal agency/industry policy game. That the student movement has held out against the disingenuous lure of White House integration is only one of its many contributions to a practical and radical politics for our era. In particular, students were key in discrediting the White House-backed monitoring arm for the apparel industry (the Fair Labor Association) and pivotal in establishing a legitimate, independent monitoring arm for the manufacture of college apparel (the Workers Rights Consortium). This has been perhaps

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their greatest contribution. While the ultimate success of the campus-based campaigns depends on the continued growth and political diversification of the broader anti-globalization movement, students remain a leading and defining force in the most significant social justice movement of our era.

The Campus-Sweatshop Connection

TODAY, THE MAJOR ORGANIZATIONAL VEHICLE for the support of anti-sweatshop activism on college campuses is United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS). On an extremely small budget (\$175,000 for 1999-2000) and with two full-time national organizers and one half-time staff member in Guatemala, the organization serves the needs of its 200 campus affiliates in the United States. As an organization it is only two and a half years old, but the movement can be traced to the coordinated efforts of labor-trained² student activists at Duke, Georgetown, Notre Dame, University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Michigan, several University of California schools and others in 1997.

With assistance from the United Needle and Industrial Textile Employees (UNITE) trade union, the 1997-1998 school year witnessed the coordination of the first Sweat-Free Campus campaign. During a July 1998 conference sponsored by UNITE, students formed USAS and honed the three major organizing demands (now known as the Campus Codes of Conduct) aimed at the apparel industry:

- (1) public disclosure of factory sites;
- (2) independent monitoring of factory conditions;
- (3) a guaranteed living wage for workers.

In an effort to raise the issues with administrators and the student body, in 1997 and 1998, students engaged in a variety of tactics which included building takeovers, mock fashion shows, a "knit-in," educational "coloring books," and, in the case of the University of Wisconsin at Madison, the infiltration of the homecoming parade, where activists dressed as Indonesian sweatshop workers and carried a giant Reebok shoe. In most cases, direct action protest led to the partial endorsement of the Codes of Conduct by universities and colleges. While these results showed the universities' vulnerability on the issue, university endorsement was largely conciliatory and symbolic.

Since a second wave of protests in 1999, using the campus-based strategy described below, USAS has been successful in reaching full agreements with fifty-seven universities and colleges that have now adopted the Codes of Conduct and become members of the Workers Rights Consortium. At their recent national organizing conference held at the University of Oregon in Eugene, 250 USAS organizers geared up for the 2000-2001 academic year by: strengthening their organizational processes and structure; continuing their Sweat Free Campus campaigns, including efforts to enforce legitimate independent monitoring; and lending support to other anti-globalization efforts, such as the September 26th World Bank/IMF protests in Prague and the campaigns in Honduras and Nicaragua against Kohl's and Target garment manufacturing.

How the Campus Movement Works

AT ITS CENTER, THE CAMPUS-BASED ANTI-SWEATSHOP MOVEMENT is anchored in a rather straightforward strategy aimed at exposing the increasingly inhumane

treatment of garment workers in the global economy by targeting the \$2.5 billion collegiate licensing industry. Student leverage is mounted against university administrations who accept royalty income paid by companies like Nike, Gear, Fruit of the Loom, and Champion in exchange for producing campus/athletic apparel donning school logos. Not unlike the wave of campus-based anti-apartheid protesters of 1985-86 who pressured for the “divestment” of university funds from companies doing business in apartheid South Africa, college anti-sweatshop activists have been pressuring university administrations to drop licensing agreements with any company that engages in “sweatshop” activity. But unlike the campus divestment movement, the student anti-sweatshop efforts are not inspired by an internationally-backed, seasoned national liberation movement ready to take power. In the global vacuum of worker’s rights, the need to set standards, define appropriate codes of conduct, and develop mechanisms of oversight for multinational clothing manufacturers has elevated the role of a loose coalition of students, labor, and human rights groups in setting terms in a showdown with the apparel industry.

At the forefront has been USAS who, by combining radical protest tactics with strategic planning, are using the weight of university purchasing power against the industry, and, in the process, opening doors for enforceable international standards for workers in the industry. In an example of radical solidarity, students have gone beyond winning partial or symbolic university agreement to the Campus Codes of Conduct and have fought hard, alongside international labor and the human rights community, to make agreement meaningful by enforcing factory disclosures and structuring monitoring away from industry domination. While securing the “living wage” provision in the Codes of Conduct will certainly prove to be more difficult, students have been enormously successful in establishing factory disclosure and true independent monitoring as standards not only for the universities’ share of the market, but, by example, for the market at large.

Students and the Clinton Administration

ACCORDING TO AUTHORS RICHARD APPELBAUM AND PETER DRIER, writing in the *American Prospect* (October 1999), the early 1990’s anti-sweatshop campaigns by human rights groups and labor went mostly uncovered in the press and major media. These company-specific campaigns, focusing primarily on Nike and Gap, were, according to the authors, given a boost in 1995 and 1996 with two major exposes: the Federal raid on an El Monte, California, garment factory where seventy-one Thai immigrants “. . . had been held in virtual slavery in an apartment complex ringed with barbed wire and spiked fences”;³ and the Wal-Mart exposé in which Kathy Lee Gifford’s endorsed line of clothing was revealed to be made by children in Honduran sweatshops. These scandals emerged at a time when then-Labor Secretary Robert Reich was looking to raise the issue. Reich initiated the White House Apparel Industry Partnership (AIP) — bringing together the Administration, apparel firms, and labor and human rights groups⁴ — but he soon resigned from the Cabinet, and Alexis Herman took over as the Labor Department’s new head.

Under Herman, the AIP set up a monitoring arm called the Fair Labor Association (FLA) which, by all non-industry accounts, was industry-dominated. While

universities can “join” the FLA, Appelbaum and Dreier report that schools “have just one seat on FLA’s 14-member board. Under the group’s bylaws, the garment firms control the board’s decision-making. The bylaws require a ‘supermajority’ to approve all key questions, thus any three companies can veto a proposal they don’t like.” An early supporter of the FLA has been the Inter Collegiate Licensing Company, the major industry representative of the college apparel market. In a bid for support from the university community, the Inter Collegiate Licensing Company is touting the FLA to administrations who may want to avoid student flak. But with a second-wave of student protests in January/February of 1999, USAS took aim at the FLA. In coordination with alienated human rights groups and labor organizations, students hoped to mobilize public opinion against the FLA for its resistance to factory-site disclosures, and the inadequacy of monitoring by corporate firms such as PricewaterhouseCoopers. Stepped-up USAS protests at Duke, Georgetown, and the Universities of Michigan, Arizona, and North Carolina won full adoption of the Codes of Conduct on their campuses.

In an effort to resolve the need for independent monitoring, students took the initiative to develop an alternative to the FLA. Today, the Workers Rights Consortium serves as a legitimate monitoring arm whose mission is to verify and inspect “conditions in factories producing apparel for colleges and universities” (Executive Summary; <http://www.workersrights.org>). The WRC agency will investigate conditions and accurately report on company practices. Their efforts rely on three means of information gathering: self-reporting from the industry, workers complaints, and pro-active investigations. With a list of major endorsers from the human rights community, women’s rights organizations, labor organizations, student groups, and over thirty members of Congress, the Workers Rights Consortium will act to bring industry practices “out into the light of day.” By joining the WRC, universities and colleges “commit to the implementation of broad public disclosure and a mechanism to verify information received through disclosure and workers complaints.” To date, USAS activist campaigns have brought fifty-seven universities into the WRC and away from the FLA. This is a major victory against the sham efforts of the AIP to avoid public scrutiny of the sweatshop practices of the garment industry world-wide. And while their efforts are ongoing, students have been instrumental in keeping the specter of global sweatshops on the conscience of America.

This campaign is also a telling example of what can be accomplished when direct action protest is combined with the strategic politics of labor; by reaching out to students, labor has brought the energy, risk-taking and impatience of youth into an all-too frequently stagnant labor strategy for economic justice in the global economy. Students, in turn, have now been on the inside of politics-as-usual and chosen to retain their outsider status in the effort to build sustainable radical alternative institutions. More remarkably, the alliance has helped re-invent class as a practical and ideological organizing concern for social movements. It has been a mutually beneficial relationship that offers lessons for both labor and other social movement efforts.

NOTES

1. Campus protest on issues of police brutality, racial profiling, and the Mumia Abu Jamal death penalty case were evident in the Spring of 2000 at Rutgers University, CUNY schools, and Temple University. Work on curricula diversification, minority student re-

tention, lesbian and gay rights on campus, and financial aid have also been reported nationally. Students and youth are also heavily represented in the ranks of anti-globalization mobilizations associated with Seattle.

2. The "Sweat-Free Campaigns" were the brainchild of students who participated in "Union Summer" beginning in 1996. Under the new Sweeney administration, the AFL-CIO has placed more than 2000 student interns in practical labor organizing training positions in mostly low-wage service sector jobs. USAS is a direct result of labor's renewed interest in students.

3. See Richard Appelbaum and Peter Drier, "The Campus Anti-sweatshop Movement," *The American Prospect*, Sept./Oct. 1999, pp. 71-78.

4. Industry members of AIP included Liz Claiborne, Reebok, Nike, Wal-Mart's Kathie Lee Gifford brand, and Phillips-Van Heusen, among others. Human rights and labor groups members included International Labor Rights Fund, Lawyer's Committee on Human Rights, Business for Social Responsibility, the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, UNITE and the AFL-CIO.



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Is Socialism Still on the Agenda?

Michael Albert

IN THIS ERA OF TRIUMPHAL CAPITALISM, one hears — even from some on the left — that socialism is no longer a realistic or a desirable goal. To explore this issue, *New Politics* asked Michael Albert to address the question “Is Socialism Still on the Agenda?” His analysis appears below. Editorial board members Marvin Mandell and Barry Finger took issue with some aspects of Albert’s presentation. Albert agreed to having their criticisms and his response to them published along with his article.

—The Editors

TO ANSWER THE TITLE QUESTION, I have to provide answers for three possible meanings of “socialism” and also for a semantic issue, the use of the word “socialism,” in any form.

For some socialists, “socialism” means a particular type of economy including state or collective property plus market or central planning allocation and (derivative) typical corporate divisions of labor in workplaces. Call this Socialism 1.

For other socialists, “socialism” is again about economics, but the word doesn’t refer to specific institutions. It connotes that workers and consumers have appropriate empowerment and receive fair and equitable incomes not based on any structural or personal advantage, but doesn’t make reference to how this happens. Call this Socialism 2.

Finally, some socialists use the word “socialism” to refer to a whole desired society, not just to an economy. They mean one or the other of the two types of economy noted above, but they include as well new political, kinship, cultural, and other relations in the rest of society, though rarely if ever seriously described. Call this Socialism 3.

To be complete, we must ask about each “socialism” in turn, “is it still on the agenda?”

MICHAEL ALBERT maintains ZNet (www.zmag.org) and co-edits Z Magazine. He is the author of numerous books, including *Looking Forward: Participatory Economics for the Twenty First Century* (South End Press, with Robin Hahnel). For further information and references bearing on the content of this article, visit ZNet, and, in particular, the Participatory Economics site at www.parecon.org.

“Socialism 1”

SOCIALISM 1 IS OR AT LEAST SHOULD BE OFF THE AGENDA. But this shouldn't be on the usually asserted grounds that Socialism 1 doesn't work at all. In fact, Socialism 1, which existed (or exists) in the old Soviet Union, throughout Eastern Europe, in China, and in Cuba, actually worked/works rather well by typical economic standards, though with its own array of costs and benefits. The distribution of income and wealth are both typically more just in Socialism 1 than in comparable capitalist economies and there is greater attention to the social conditions of those who are worst off. The proper comparison to draw comparative conclusions is not the Soviet Union circa 1985 as against the U.S. circa 1985, or Cuba 2000 as against the U.S. 2000 — but the old Soviet Union and a capitalist country at the same time of roughly comparable size and resources which was in a roughly comparable state of development in 1917 — and which can therefore be contrasted for the relative impact of taking a capitalist versus taking a Socialist 1 road during the seventy years in question. Brazil would be a good choice. Or an informative comparison can be drawn by contrasting Cuba to Guatemala or any other Latin American country of roughly comparable size, resources, and conditions forty years ago, and compensating for the embargo by taking into account what such isolation would have done to capitalist Guatemala, say, or what its absence would have meant for Socialist 1 Cuba. By such fair comparisons of societies with comparable situations and starting points, it becomes clear that relative to the capitalist model, the Socialist 1 model is far from decrepit. Instead, Socialism 1 can get at least elements of the economic tasks of a society done, and can do some of these better, in many respects, than capitalist alternatives, whether we are comparing growth rates, economic diversification, or the plight of those at the bottom of the economies.

The actual reason Socialism 1 ought to be off the human agenda is the same now as twenty, thirty, fifty, and seventy-five years ago. It is not because Cold War militaristic competition and internal political dictatorship, corruption, and ossification crumbled the Soviet economy, or because Soviet elites felt they could do better in a capitalistically transformed system regardless of the detrimental effects for other citizens. No, the real reason we should remove Socialism 1 from humanity's agenda is that it is not and never has been compatible with the greatest fulfillment and development of an economy's producers and consumers. What's wrong with Socialism 1 is not that it must inexorably collapse into chaos, which is actually false, but, instead, that even at its best Socialism 1 is an authoritarian system with economic class rule of the few over the many and with a propensity for a parallel authoritarianism in its polity. In short, even at its best, Socialism 1 cannot optimally advance desirable values and aims that we aspire to.

Socialism 1, an economic system, is built on state ownership of the means of production, plus markets or central planning for allocation, plus corresponding hierarchies and divisions of labor within production units. This combination of institutions elevates the interests of a subset of economic actors (the economy's planners, managers, and highly educated and empowered sectors in general) above those of all other economic actors (who are busy doing rote and otherwise disempowering labor). Instead of the privileged ruling class being those who own the means of production, as under capitalism, in Socialism 1 it becomes those who monopolize conditions of work that give them collective con-

trol over how all work is conducted, what its outputs are, and who receives its bounty. Socialism 1 is an economic model, therefore, that by its institutions and their inexorable implications necessarily elevates what I call the “coordinator class” into ruling status, leaving the working class subordinate, but to a new boss — not the same as the old boss, but certainly much like the old boss.

Getting rid of private ownership of the means of production as Socialism 1 does eliminates one of the most egregious sources of unwarranted differentials in wealth and power — as in Bill Gates having more wealth than the whole country of Norway and, with a few of his buddies, having more systemic power over economic outcomes than whole swaths of humanity combined, numbering in the billions. But on top of the desirable step of eliminating private ownership and profit seeking, Socialism 1 retains markets or expands central planning in their place and this is negative, as is retaining old-fashioned workplace job hierarchies that elevate a few to control economic decisions. These choices for allocation and workplace organization obliterate all hope for optimal solidarity, equity, diversity, and self-management. They benefit and elevate a few above the many in income, status, and power and create an authoritarianism that tends to permeate all spheres of social life. So on these grounds my answer is that yes, Socialism 1 ought to be off the agenda.

“Socialism 2”

SOCIALISM 2, REMEMBER, DOESN'T POSIT SPECIFIC INSTITUTIONS for a proposed economy, but is instead a label indicating that producers and consumers together self-manage economic outcomes and enjoy equitable remuneration not governed, for example, by property, power, or any other social or personal advantage such as racism, sexism, or different innate productive talents.

If one thinks Socialism 2 is potentially attainable, then to say it should be morally off the agenda would be to say that humanity should stop progressing and resign itself to an economic system that falls short of these virtues. In the U.S. case, it would make sense only if we prefer an economy in which a very tiny few — let's say 1 percent — own the majority of the means of production and accrue gargantuan profits as a result; in which roughly another 4 percent own most of the rest of the productive assets, also becoming immensely rich and powerful thereby; and in which another 15 percent or 20 percent own some residual productive assets and also, more centrally to their life prospects and situations, monopolize the economic positions in society that largely determine daily economic outcomes and circumstances for themselves and for others and as a result enjoy associated status, power, circumstances and, of course, grossly disproportionate income. It would mean that we are satisfied with most people obeying orders throughout their whole economic lives, subordinate in their workplaces and even in much of their consumption, much like citizens are politically subordinate to dictators in brutally oppressive polities.

It is hard for me to imagine a person in full possession of her mental faculties and not morally deprived or depraved, who would argue that less solidarity is preferable to more, that less equity is preferable to more, that less justice and democracy is preferable to more, that less control over our lives is preferable to more, and so on. But this is what it would mean to argue that Socialism 2 should be off the agenda, despite being potentially attainable. So in this sense of course

we should not willingly remove Socialism 2 from the agenda.

There is, however, another logic that many people use to argue that Socialism 2 should go into history's garbage bin. That is, they say that Socialism 2 is simply impossible, and that trying to attain it is a deluded pipe-dream detracting from useful pursuits. One could feel sure that Socialism 2 would be wonderful, we should note, thus being a morally sound and sensible person, but also feel that regrettably there is no combination of institutions that could bring it about. Any effort to improve economic solidarity, equity, justice, self-management, diversity, etc., would (a) fall short of our intentions, and (b) cause so much loss of output and/or other desired outcomes (such as privacy, say) that the relatively modest gains it did attain in equity or self-management or whatever else we seek would be far outweighed by huge losses in output, privacy, etc. This is the logic of TINA — Margaret Thatcher's famous assertion that "there is no alternative" — which is really, in fact, better termed TINBA, for "there is no better alternative."

The first reply to TINA or TINBA is why would anyone in her right mind utter such a phrase gleefully? Imagine at some point in history someone yelling TINA or TINBA about slavery, or about child labor, or about overwhelming illiteracy, or about average life spans in the 20s, 30s, 40s, or 50s, or about dictatorship, and so on. Any sane and morally sound person yelling TINA or TINBA about such things would presumably do so only tearfully, and at that only if he or she had had his or her hopes dashed by a very powerful set of arguments and associated evidence. Why else would one erect a "do not enter sign" in front of domains that of course everyone moral would like to enter? It would be pathological, or, of course, grotesquely self-serving on the part of a few who benefit from slavery, child labor, overwhelming illiteracy, short life spans, dictatorship, or, in the modern instance, stupendous inequalities of economic wealth and power to decry that nothing more is possible and be gleeful about it.

The second reply to those proclaiming TINA or TINBA is that there is, in fact, not only nothing compelling supporting their stance, but in fact no argument whatsoever on behalf of TINA or TINBA other than the loud pronouncements of sectors of the populace who greedily benefit from such beliefs. There is no operational evidence or analytic argument, that is, that economic institutions which empower workers and consumers to impact decisions proportionately as they are affected by them, or that reward actors in accord only with their efforts and sacrifice rather than property, power, or output, or that disperse economic responsibilities in a manner which balances empowerment and quality of life, are either impossible or fraught with problems so damning that they outweigh their virtues — or with problems at all, for that matter. Quite the contrary. Those of us who have made preliminary studies of such institutions have found them to be quite promising, while the advocates of TINA or TINBA have (predictably) virtually ignored these analyses.

At a minimum, therefore, until and unless someone makes an overwhelming, unassailable case that equity, justice, self-management, diversity, and other desirable values unmet by current economic institutions are either (a) incapable of being delivered by different economic institutions, or (b) in being delivered would consign us to other horrible ills offsetting the benefits, of course Socialism 2 should be very much on the agenda. More, I would urge that a particular proposed economic model currently exists — called Participatory Eco-

nomics — which can accomplish Socialism 2's desirable ends, and more, without any of the feared negative consequences, and therefore ought to become a plausible starting point for realizing our aspirations.

Just a brief word on this real alternative, since one of the most obvious and compelling ways to argue that some aim should be on our agenda — in this case Socialism 2 — is to indicate what it might look like, why it might work well, and what its diverse properties might be. Participatory Economics — a particular implementation of Socialist 2 sentiments — accomplishes production, consumption, and allocation efficiently while also furthering preferred social and economic values including solidarity, equity of circumstances and income, diversity, and self-management (which is just decision-making input in proportion as one is affected by the decisions in question). Participatory Economics is built on a few centrally defining institutions: democratic self-managing workers and consumers councils and federations of councils (instead of autocratic corporate hierarchies), remuneration according to effort and sacrifice (instead of remuneration according to property, power, or even output), balanced job complexes that equally empower all workers in their economic activities (instead of invidious divisions of labor and monopolies of information, knowledge, and access to decision-making levers for an elite), and participatory planning (instead of markets or central planning). This short essay offers no room to fully explicate these structures and their logic and implications, but interested readers might take a look at <http://www.parecon.org> where there are interviews, essays, and even full-length books available on the topics. Participatory Economics is one positive answer to TINA or TINBA. It is a fully specified alternative spelled out in sufficient detail to permit cogent evaluation of the values and outcomes the model would further. Likewise, the question of strategic vision — how we get there from here — is also essential, but beyond the scope of this article. Some preliminary thoughts on the question of left strategy can be found in my forthcoming book, *Moving Forward*, available in early 2001, from A. K. Press.

Socialism Writ Larger Than Economics & the Semantics of the Label “Socialism”

WHAT ABOUT FOLKS WHO USE THE WORD “SOCIALISM” to refer to a whole better society? Should this type of socialism be on the agenda as Socialism 3?

Well, this will depend on which economic model forms the core of the proposed better society. If we start with Socialism 1 for the economy plus other compatible comparably authoritarian changes in other realms (such as political dictatorship, continuing patriarchy only more or less attenuated, and cultural homogenization), then Socialism 3 would be as undesirable as Socialism 1. On the other hand, if we have the attributes of Socialism 2 for the economy and add compatible attributes in other facets of life as well, then Socialism 3 would be a good idea. This much follows immediately from all the above arguments.

The real issue regarding Socialism 3, in my view, is (a) should we use this term socialism to refer to something beyond economics? and (b) should we use it, in fact, at all?

I think the answer to (a) should be no. First, the word “socialism” means nothing specific outside the economic realm, so that using it outside economics even at best conveys nothing compelling, and arguably nothing much at all.

There is no practical “socialist” vision spelled out, I think, in any serious detail, for addressing sexism, heterosexism, racism, national oppression, or political institutions that fail to empower people. And the actual historical experience in countries that have called themselves socialist (which were all in fact Socialist 1 or, in my terminology, Coordinatorist in their economics) have been nothing worth serious emulation, to be generous about it. Who would want to celebrate as a goal slightly attenuated or aggravated patriarchy, slightly reduced or horribly obliterated democracy up to and including adopting grotesque Stalinism, and barely touching or horribly homogenizing the problems afflicting cultural communities whether religious, ethnic, or racial? There is, not surprisingly given the inadequacies of Socialism 1/Coordinatorism, nothing much to aspire to as ultimate goals in this mix.

We do need a feminist vision, of course, and those who aspire to Socialism 2 should aspire to a positive feminist vision as well. And the same goes for needing a political vision that achieves true democracy and a cultural vision that yields a non-racist society. And yes, this does mean that Socialism 2 (in my view, Participatory Economics) needs to be compatible with preferred, still to be fully enunciated, kinship, political, and cultural visions — just as the reverse also needs to hold. But it is a mistake, I think, to have a conceptual label that is primarily about one sphere of social life stand in for our liberatory aspirations in all spheres of social life. Thus, my answer to (a) is no, we should not use the term “socialism” (nor the label “Participatory Economics”) to refer to realms beyond the economy, other than that those other realms will need to be compatible with the economy and vice versa.

But what about (b) — should we use the term socialism at all? We have said that Socialism 2 ought still to be on the agenda, and I have suggested that the economic model Participatory Economics qualifies as an implementation of Socialism 2. So why isn't it called Socialist 2 Economics, or perhaps Participatory Socialism?

The answer is because I don't think the word “socialism” has much communicative value. For most people, due to the history of the past century, “socialism” means Socialism 1. For me and you, I hope, it means Socialism 2 where Socialism 1 is instead an economic system that we reject, one that I call Coordinatorism after the ruling class it elevates to economic dominance. Sometimes it is necessary to wage a war of words, because in losing a word something of great value is removed from public discussion. The thing is, this word, “socialism,” was lost a long time ago, when both the Eastern and Western blocs decided to append it to the Soviet economic model. The West did this to delegitimize the word “socialism” by making it connote Socialism 1. The East did it to try to append to the Socialism 1 model some legitimacy by making it seem to encompass all hope for Socialism 2. In both cases, the word “socialism” was robbed of its Socialist 2 connotations.

I doubt that the word “socialism” can be extricated from this mess. And to cap the case, it no longer seems that very much is at stake. Do we really need this word in order to be able to stand up for real self-management, real equity and real justice? So I have Socialism 2 on my agenda in the form of Participatory Economics. I have Socialism 1 off my agenda, as I have always had it off my agenda, but under the name Coordinatorism. And I have no more idea what Socialism 3 means than anyone else, and so don't have that, per se, on an agenda

either, though I do very much hope to be able to give my allegiance to worthy political, kinship, and cultural visions in the near future, if people would only hammer those into workable, supportable, shape.

HAS ALL THIS SEEMED A BIT ABSTRACT, DRY, AND ACADEMIC? If so, perhaps it is the question I was asked to address. To make it more alive and engaged, I would suggest that we ought to stop talking about vague or even misleading “socialism,” and start talking about well-described economic, political, kinship, and cultural aims in understandable terms that don’t carry extensive baggage. If we do that, then I think the abstract, dry, and academic tone may give way to living, breathing language that can fire imaginations, hope, and struggle.

For the economy, I want workers and consumers to have control over their own economic lives. I want everyone to have fair conditions that fully utilize their talents and potentials. I want incomes that accord with the efforts people expend in their labors. I want what is produced, by whom, under what conditions, and with whom consuming the result — all to be determined in accord with enhancing human well-being and development and all decided by the people involved and affected. I want an end to hierarchies of power and wealth and to class division with most actors subordinated to an elite few. To accomplish all these ends I favor the institutions of participatory economics — worker and consumer councils, remuneration for effort and sacrifice, balanced job complexes, and participatory planning. If someone should demonstrate that those institutions somehow fail to accomplish necessary economic functions or have social or personal by-products that outweigh their benefits — I would simply return to the drawing board. Exploitation, alienation, poverty, disempowerment, fragmenting and debilitating labor, production for the profit of a few — much less harsh homelessness, starvation, and degradation — are not like gravity. They arise from institutional relations established by human beings. New institutions, also established by human beings, can generate other, vastly superior outcomes. Defining and working to attain those new institutions ought to be our economic agenda.

Marvin Mandell Comments:

MICHAEL ALBERT CLAIMS THAT “THE DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME AND WEALTH are both typically more just in Socialism I (countries) than in comparable capitalist economies.” I shall try to show that this is not true. Both are unjust, but in some capitalist countries (e.g. Scandinavia and the Netherlands) far less unjust than in Stalinist (viz. bureaucratic collectivist) nations.

Albert wants to draw his comparison to the USSR by using Brazil, which, he claims, was in a roughly comparable state of development to Russia in 1917. This is very odd. In 1915, Brazil, with a population of 30,636,000, had a total revenue of \$189,375,000 (1915 was the closest year to 1917 for which I could find a revenue figure for Brazil); in 1917, Russia, with a population of about 130 million, had a total revenue of \$60 billion (“National Wealth of Nations,” in *World Almanac*, 1920). Per-person revenue in Russia, then, was several times that in Brazil — hardly indicative of a comparable state of economic development. Equally far-fetched is using Guatemala as comparable in state of devel-

opment to Cuba. In 1957, before the revolution, there were 9,000 miles of railroad in Cuba, whereas Guatemala, the same physical size as Cuba, had one rail line. Before Castro, Cuba was one of the most economically advanced countries in Latin America; Guatemala was one of the most backward.

Over the years, one often heard the argument: "Look, we don't have political freedoms in the Soviet Union — that's because of capitalist encirclement — but we do have a better distribution of wealth."

It's untrue.

It wasn't even a goal of the Stalinists. While Lenin, in *State and Revolution*, called for "payment no higher than that of ordinary workers" for bureaucrats (Ch. 6), Stalin, in his six point speech of June, 1931, said *uravnilovka*, or equal pay, became "alien and detrimental" to socialist production, a "petty bourgeois deviation," a crime against the state, a bogey word like "counterrevolution" and "Trotskyism." The early Chinese Communist leaders were just as emphatic. "We oppose egalitarianism in wage payments," said Li Li-san, then Minister of Labor (People's China, Beijing, Jan. 16, 1950). And they were true to their word. In an average USSR mine in 1936, the salaries of directors, chief engineers, and administrators in the top stratum were up to 100 times the average wage and up to 300 times higher than the minimum wage (from Moscow newspaper *Trud*, Jan. 20, 1936).

And how does Albert's assurance of relative egalitarianism in "Socialism I" compare to the fact that while a deputy to the Supreme Soviet was paid 1,200 rubles for four days' work, a charwoman, for the same period, received on average 14.8 rubles?

And his assurance of greater egalitarianism under "Socialism I" is also undermined by the fact that the ratio of an unskilled laborer's salary to a physicist's salary in 1957 was 1:5 in the U.S., 1:7 in the UK, and 1:25 in the USSR. Following was the pay scale in the Russian Army in World War II:

1943 pay
private in Russian Army: 10 rubles monthly
lieutenant " " " : 1,000 rubles monthly
colonel " " " : 2,400 rubles monthly

Note: ratio of private to lieutenant's pay in World War II:
British Army: 1:4
U. S. Army: 1:3
Russian Army 1:100

OF COURSE THERE ARE THOSE WHO ARGUE THAT NUMBERS don't tell the whole story: that low wages were subsidized by a social wage such as state-subsidized housing and universal health care. There is something to be said for this, but not much, since one must also factor in the reality that state-supported housing in the old Soviet Union often obliged a family to live in one room and wait a decade or two to get an apartment of notoriously inferior construction. And the quality of health care was abominable for the average citizen, quite different from what top bureaucrats received.

The Stalinist leadership did not share Albert's illusions about the distribution of wealth in their country. In 1928, while still a full member of the Politburo, Bukharin had some interesting things to say in a speech delivered to the Program Commission of the Sixth Congress of the Communist International:

Can there exist in this society a contradiction between the restricted consumption of the masses... and the growing productive forces? Yes, that may be. The consumption of the ruling class grows continuously . . . but the consumption of the masses is retarded. . . . The slave in this society receives his share of the fodder. . . . He may receive very little. . . . (*Kommunistische Internationale*, 1928, No.33/34, p. 2063).

In 1962, Nicolas Spulber, after a decade of study of the Soviet economy, concluded: "Available data point clearly toward an even broader wage dispersion in the U.S.S.R. than in the West" (*The Soviet Economy* [N.Y.: Norton, 1962], p. 42).

The clearest index of the quality of life is just how many people risked their lives in escape attempts — some, true, because of political repression, but many because of economic injustice. Like Bukharin — and unlike Albert — they saw themselves as wage slaves. This is hardly indicative of a more just income and wealth distribution in those countries.

Of course, Michael Albert is not promoting what he calls "Socialism I." But he is doing a grave disservice by claiming that the distribution of wealth was something that it clearly was not.

Barry Finger Comments:

ALBERT TOUCHES ON A SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM by raising questions and doubts about retaining the term "socialism" by those of us who favor fundamental, democratic political and social transformation. Perhaps it would be best, as he suggests, to abandon the term, since its meaning is tainted in the public consciousness by, on the one hand, its broad identification with particular authoritarian and totalitarian societies, and, on the other hand, by its equally wide acceptance as the appropriate term for social democratic parties in western Europe that, while in power, have been in the forefront of slowly dismantling the very welfare states which they themselves had once pioneered. In brief, "socialism" has been so drained of its early, democratic essence — so tainted in the popular mind — as to arguably render its continued use counterproductive.

Many of us, after all, abandoned "Communism" — actually surrendered it — for the sake of clarity, accepting, in effect, the (mis)application of the term to reactionary anti-communist Stalinist states.

But the question Albert raises in his discussion of "Socialism 1" is more than a terminological one. To engage his point requires us to put any proposed semantic change in historical and social context. Albert is obviously aware of this, but I must take issue with how his treatment of the problem is introduced. Here Albert reminds us that the term "socialism" is often applied to politically repressive societies with "a particular type of economy including state or collective property plus market or central planning allocation and (derivative) typical corporate divisions of labor in the workplace."

The point of departure for my disagreement with the views expressed or implied by Albert's discussion of "Socialism 1" can be found in his opening paragraph. "Socialism 1," he asserts, "which existed (or exists) in the old Soviet Union, throughout eastern Europe, in China, and in Cuba, actually worked/works rather well by typical economic standards, though with its own array of costs and benefits. The distribution of income and wealth are both typically more just in So-

cialism 1 than in comparable capitalist economies and there is greater attention to the social conditions of those who are worst off.”

Albert leaves the indelible impression that he prefers collectivism over private-property-centered societies which were praised as “economically progressive” by many apologists of Stalinism. But within the universe of conceivable “collectivisms,” totalitarian forms, Albert concedes, are the least advantageous. The least advantageous, that is, because they cannot “optimally [!] advance desirable values and aims that we aspire to.” Nevertheless, for all its moral and social liabilities, Albert writes that “Socialism 1 does eliminate one of the most egregious sources of unwarranted differentials in wealth and power — as in Bill Gates having more wealth than the whole country of Norway. . . .”

What Albert labels “Socialism 1” has better been characterized as “Bureaucratic Collectivism.” It is the antithesis of the revolutionary democracy of classical socialism which seeks to put into the hands of the working class a participatory machinery that fuses political democracy with economic democracy; which imbues the institutions of society with the spirit of solidarity, and which consciously emancipates historical and material progress, at long last, from the lash of class oppression. But, where — as in “Socialism 1” — economic power is centralized in the hands of an autonomous, self-perpetuating state bureaucracy, such “collectivism” acquires unprecedented powers of oppression, exploitation and enslavement. The privileges of this “managerial hierarchy” — in the spirit of Albert’s piece — are necessarily directed against the interests and aspirations of the masses of that society and could not last for an instant without the permanent withdrawal of all democratic rights and institutions from the society it totally dominates. Property under such circumstances can be collectivized, but it cannot be socialized; it can never be the property, in any sense, of the people.

To assess this bureaucratic collectivism as being either more efficient or more egalitarian than capitalism, as Albert does, is untenable. The crisis of economic efficiency in “bureaucratic collectivism,” of Stalinism — that is of “Socialism 1” — is a chronic condition of society. Capitalism has as its economic feedback system the regulatory institutions of the marketplace, the “invisible hand” — more precisely, the laws of value, which episodically require the purgative of crises to eliminate overproduction. Classical socialism has as its corrective feedback the active democratic engagement and supervision of the masses in the economic metabolism of society. It depends on its initiative from below and is self-corrected from below.

There is no self-correcting mechanism to “Socialism 1.” The Stalinist state has, it is true, an economic plan, but without an internally generated mechanism of self-regulation the plan is continuously plagued with bottlenecks, snags, disproportionalities, duplications and squalor. It forever vacillates between the application of totalitarian terror, the imposition of additional bureaucratic controls, and the expedient of market forms to enforce its will. It is precisely Stalinism’s inherent economic inefficiency, its pervasive scarcities, that produces the mirage of relative material “equality” which confuses Albert. But behind this mirage of material equality lies a monstrous discrepancy in social and economic power between the Stalinist rulers and its semi-enslaved subjects, that indeed vastly overshadows the relative social power of even a Bill Gates under capitalism.

The Stalinist ruling class wields the entirety of the social resources and wealth of society — including its working classes — as its collective property to be disposed of in accordance with its unchecked appetites. It is limited only by the inherent unwieldiness of totalitarian “planning.” But when the frenzied attempt at Stalinist industrialization meant the suppression of the living standards of its subjects, enforced famines in the Ukraine, the system of gulag labor — millions of people were effectively sentenced, with a stroke of the pen, to enslavement and death. This is a power that no one capitalist potentate can yield. For it is not the poshness of living standards that determines the relative degree of economic inequality between disparate social systems, but the discrepancy in social power. The social power derived by virtue of his immense wealth cannot protect even the mighty Gates from having his empire dismantled at the behest of the capitalist court system. He, in Stalinist terms, can be socially demoted despite a degree of personal wealth beyond the dreams of any individual Stalinist apparatchnik. It is by this analog that the relative degree of socio-economic inequality must be measured. And it is by this standard that the Gateses of capitalism are dwarfed in their relative social positions by the Stalins and the Maos of bureaucratic collectivism and against which there is no comparable capitalist counterpart.

Finally, I do not expect Albert to share my enthusiasm for the Bolsheviks or the October revolution. Still, I was taken aback by his tangential and perhaps unintentional suggestion that revolutionary Russia of 1917 was of a piece with the Soviet Union of 1937 or 1987, and, by extension, with Eastern Europe, China and Cuba — all to be subsumed under the unhappy rubric of “Socialism 1.” Revolutionary Russia, for all its weaknesses, frailties and faults, was supported by a majority of its workers and peasants. And of equal importance — it was characterized by a working class that played an autonomous historical role in refashioning society on a new basis reflecting its own interests and aspirations. How can this be equated with the fate that was to stand before it under Stalinism — to be reduced to a passive industrial serfdom, a pawn of other entrenched forces, mobilized for social purposes which were not its own and which were indeed inimical to its own emancipation?

Albert Responds:

AM I SOMEHOW SOFT ON CENTRALLY PLANNED SOCIALISM? Let me reassure Mandell: I am not. I abhor it. On the other hand, there is no point decrying this economic structure because it can exist intertwined with and supporting a grotesque political dictatorship, nor to pin the problems of the latter on the former. Yes, we can reasonably claim that economic aspects of Centrally Planned Socialism militate toward political authoritarianism, but that is different from saying that Centrally Planned Socialism requires political dictatorship.

Mandell also wonders about my comparisons — Russia/Brazil and Cuba/Guatemala. I agree they aren't perfect — but I think they made the point intended, which was that the usual comparisons, Russia/U.S. or Cuba/U.S., are ridiculous.

Mandell's more substantive issue is that he disputes my statement that the distribution of income and wealth are both “typically more just in Socialism 1

(economies) than in comparable capitalist economies.” But Mandell’s effort to rebut my statement not only errs in taking the best from the capitalist side and the worst from the Socialist 1 side for his comparison — Sweden at its most egalitarian against Stalinist Russia, rather than, say, capitalist France against Socialist 1 Czechoslovakia — but it also ignores the contribution of private ownership to income and wealth in the form of profits.

Mandell’s comparisons of the wages of a charwoman and of a deputy to the Supreme Soviet or of unskilled laborers and physicists do not prove his claim. First, the widest disparities in an economy are not a particularly relevant measure when discussing overall distribution of income, and, even if they were, comparing low-end laborers with high-end CEOs and athletes, much less with capitalists earning profits on property, would more than equal the grotesque disparities Mandell rightly decries. But the key point, which I hope Mandell and I agree on, is that Centrally Planned Socialism, with or without political dictatorship, will engender a class division between planners and other Coordinator class members on the one hand, and the working class on the other, and that the former will accrue to itself a disproportionate share of the social product.

Likewise, Mandell quotes Nicolas Spulber that there is “an even broader wage dispersion in the U.S.S.R. than in the West.” I am dubious about Spulber’s claim, but, in any event, a claim about wages alone cannot refute my claim about income based on profits plus wages.

Mandell ends, “Of course, Michael Albert is not promoting what he calls Socialism 1. But he is doing a grave disservice by claiming that the distribution of wealth was something that it clearly was not.” Disservice to whom and to what, I wonder? Socialism 1, by virtue of having eliminated private ownership of the means of production, tends to reduce wealth and income differentials. At the same time, by virtue of its class division, it tends to maintain differentials as wide as it is able. With this, I suspect Mandell would agree. Mandell then seems to feel, or worry, that by indicating that the first effect is large and even outweighs, typically, the ability of the Socialism 1 ruling class to enlarge wage advantages via the second effect, I am somehow saying Socialism 1 is an egalitarian system. But no, I am just saying it isn’t intrinsically as egalitarian as capitalism, typically.

MOVING ON TO THE SECOND CRITIQUE, Finger says “what Albert labels ‘Socialism 1,’ has better been characterized as ‘Bureaucratic Collectivism.’” But why is that better? I actually call the economy in question “coordinatorism,” which I think highlights the class that rules. And I think Finger’s phrase is about the polity as much as about the economy, which was not my topic. That is, what I am referring to by the phrase “Socialism 1” (or “centrally planned coordinatorism”) is not the Stalinist polity, or the Stalinist polity plus centrally planned socialism, but instead just the economic system which utilizes central planning for allocation, eliminates private ownership of the means of production, and derivatively and inexorably employs typical corporate organizational structure in workplaces.

Finger says, “where — as in ‘Socialism 1’ — economic power is centralized in the hands of an autonomous, self-perpetuating state bureaucracy, such ‘collectivism’ acquires unprecedented powers of oppression, exploitation and en-

slavement.” But Socialism 1 makes no reference at all to a specifically state bureaucracy. It does not have as a defining feature centralizing economic power in a political, state institution. This is Finger, re-naming the object of my discussion, and then talking about features that his label connotes but which are not a part of what I was talking about.

When economic power and political power are in the same central authoritarian political hands, which has happened, of course, I agree with Finger, it is abhorrent. But what Finger's comment does is to find the ills of the economic model largely in a political apparatus — a state bureaucracy — which has often but need not, in fact, accompany that economic model. There are two problems that this causes: ills from the polity are wrongly claimed to be due to the economic model, and, even worse, the actual ills of the economic model are obscured from view.

This matters because a society could have a parliamentary state with free elections along with a centrally planned socialist economy. That would not be Finger's “Bureaucratic Collectivism” and his criticisms of “Bureaucratic Collectivism” would not apply to it. But it would include as its economy Socialism 1, and my criticisms of Socialism 1 would apply to it.

Put another way, the sector of planners and administrators that rises to dominance over the economy in Centrally Planned Socialism needn't be a political elite and needn't carry out its functions through a political state apparatus. That can occur, yes, but it can instead also be an economically defined class working through planning boards, workplace hierarchies, etc. Yes, in backward economies that lacked a mature coordinator class, the control of the emerging planning apparatus and economy wound up in the hands of a political Leninist elite doing double duty — political and economic — and becoming, in the process, Stalinist. But this isn't intrinsic to the specifically economic system. Suppose a political movement came to power in the U.S. that rejected private ownership and markets and favored central planning while maintaining corporate structures. Is there any reason why such a coordinator-inspired and -led economic revolution could not throw out private owners and institute planning but preserve free elections? Does the Bill of Rights have to disappear and a dictatorial party have to seize the state and impose itself on the economy for the economy to arrive at such features? I don't think so.

Finger says the privileges of the bureaucracy “could not last for an instant without the permanent withdrawal of all democratic rights and institutions from the society it totally dominates.” Well, if this indicates that Finger thinks a coordinator class can't dominate without elimination of all democratic political forms, I think he's wrong. After all, we live in the United States and it has a ruling economic class whose actions are directed against the interests and aspirations of the rest of society, too. But the U.S. polity grants substantial freedoms and rights, and the system doesn't fall apart at the seams for doing so. I say Centrally Planned Socialism is vile in its own right, economically. Finger doesn't refer to its explicitly economic features but says the system would collapse with anything but political dictatorship, so that it can only come bundled with political dictatorship. Even if so, which I doubt, that would just be another horrible mark against Socialism 1, but no reason to overlook the specifically economic dynamics, which was my topic.

Finger says, “To assess this bureaucratic collectivism as being either more

efficient or more egalitarian than capitalism, as Albert does, is untenable.” First, I don’t think I called anything more efficient than anything else. Second, I never talked about bureaucratic collectivism at all. Third, what is untenable is for Finger to say that I am talking about “bureaucratic collectivism” when I say I am talking about only the intrinsic tendencies of the abstract economic system called Socialism 1. Finger believes Centrally Planned Socialism imposes and requires political dictatorship, but I don’t. And if it were so, it certainly wouldn’t change my rejection of the model. It would only make it more intense. Finger thinks Socialism 1 is intrinsically worse than capitalism vis-a-vis distribution of the social product. I disagree, though if this too were true, again, it would only make my absolute rejection of the system into a more absolute rejection of it.

Finger says “There is no self-correcting mechanism to Socialism 1,” by which I think he means that in Centrally Planned Socialism there is no dynamic creating a match between what people produce and what they expect or hope to consume (including for workplaces and intermediate goods) other than the elite planners saying what they think is good for society. But this is simply false. One can have, in a centrally planned economy, many methods for bringing the will and opinion of the public to the attention of planners.

Yes, we could have Castro sit down in a room and simply decree a plan. Or we could have a thousand accountants do it, each with no contact with anything beyond their own thoughts. This is Finger’s image, more or less, and he is right that it would be a ridiculous choice, but it is also a horribly unlikely one. The economic ruling class in Centrally Planned Socialism in a developed economy — the coordinator class — is a substantial group, unlikely to subordinate itself to a very small sector of detached planners, or, even more, to a tiny and detached political elite, or one master ruler.

THESE PHENOMENA, TO THE EXTENT THEY HAVE EXISTED, I would suggest, owe more to the history and initial conditions of the societies that have incorporated Socialism 1, than to the logic of the economic model itself. What is, however, built-in to the economic model regardless of prior history and the accompanying polity is that the ruling coordinator class will use its grasp on the economy to benefit itself relative to those below. But the new ruling class can also choose to use limited markets in the form of outlets watched for when shelves clear, or to use polls, or to use dialog of various sorts, and so on, to inform the construction of a central plan. Indeed, even in Stalinist variants this occurs, though not as well as it could without the political domination.

Now Finger might want to claim that the intrinsic authoritarianism of central planning will militate against all reforms that would impede the coordinator class manifesting its own preferences, so that it becomes an uphill struggle to win and maintain desirable reforms — just as, say, in capitalism it is an uphill struggle to win and maintain desirable labor laws or serious watchdog agencies, or redistributive taxes, and so on. I agree. My point is, however, that you can give Centrally Planned Socialism every benefit of every doubt, and it still fails as an economic vision — just as you can give capitalism every benefit of every doubt, and it still fails.

Finger says, “The Stalinist state has, it is true, an economic plan, but without an internally generated mechanism of self-regulation the plan is continu-

ously plagued with bottlenecks, snags, disproportionalities, duplications and squalor.” Stupid central planning will be a mess. I agree.

So it is necessary in a sensibly Centrally Planned Socialist economy to have various techniques for amassing accurate information about tastes, preferences, and productive possibilities. Quite so, and arguing that this is impossible, which is false, or even that efforts to do this will be made difficult by certain features intrinsic to the system, which I agree with, is not nearly as instructive, it seems to me, as understanding why the system is decrepit even if sensible information is attained.

Finger rejects Stalinist repression, and combining political and economic functions in one authoritarian state apparatus. I do too, and that is in no way contrary to my additional rejection of the purely economic system that I label “Socialism 1,” and of all authoritarianism in any institutions, for that matter.

Finally, Finger says he is “taken aback” by my “tangential and perhaps unintentional suggestion that revolutionary Russia of 1917 was of a piece with the Soviet Union of 1937 or 1987, and, by extension, with Eastern Europe, China and Cuba.” I don’t know what words of mine Finger has in mind as saying that, but in any event, I don’t equate the workers’ soviets in their initial revolutionary phase with what followed in later years. On the contrary, I think the early workers’ soviets were an honest and worthy and even historically exemplary expression of truly socialist aspirations, which were, however, repressed, suppressed, and otherwise brought to naught later. The difference I have with Finger on this score is that while I agree with him that Stalinism was despicable, I think it was the Bolsheviks whom Finger seems to celebrate — or, much more accurately, the Bolshevik leadership, and, at the top, Lenin and Trotsky, who crushed the true revolutionary and socialist aspirations of the workers’ and peasants’ councils. But none of this was my topic, of course.

Spinning History

The Labor Party & its Centenary

Roger Spalding

THE LABOR PARTY'S CENTENARY CLEARLY PRESENTED PROBLEMS for the current leadership. Since Tony Blair took control he and his supporters have attempted to draw a line under the past by packaging *their* Party as a new, improved version, in distinction to the pre-Blair Party, which was old, and therefore bad. How then to celebrate the 94 (bad) years when the Party did not enjoy the benefits of Mr. Blair's leadership? Part of the answer to this question was to employ Joe Haines, one-time Press Secretary to former Labor Prime Minister Harold Wilson, to write what was billed as "a fascinating 16-page special" that "recalls the highs and lows of the people's party" for *Inside Labour: The New Labour Magazine*. This is indeed a fascinating piece, although for entirely different reasons from those intended by the magazine. The article reveals very little about the history of the Labor Party but a great deal about New Labor, and is nothing less than an attempt from a Blairite perspective to bring History "on message."

At first sight Haines' account of the conditions out of which the Labor Party was born appears very radical. He talks about slums, sweatshops and malnutrition. However, as his eloquence gathers pace some of the claims made seem, to say the least, questionable. According to him the late 19th century was "... an age when women were driven into prostitution and men into thievery, not as a way of life, but as a way to sustain life."¹

This takes some puzzling through. At first sight it seems strange to imagine that people would adopt prostitution and thievery as a way of life unless they needed to do so to sustain life. However, that is exactly what Haines is saying. His problem is to justify practices such as prostitution and thievery at a time when the existing Labor Government rejects any social explanation for crime of any kind. So, in the late 19th century, people were forced into these practices in order to sustain life, and now these practices are simply adopted as lifestyles by people who do not need to do so. It is perhaps worth noting that in his massive 1889 survey of London's working population, Charles Booth claimed that what he described as "[t]he lowest class of occasional labourer, loafers and semi-criminals" made up no more than 1.25 percent of the population.² This hardly conjures an image of a population driven to "prostitution and thievery."

The reason why such lifestyles are no longer essential for survival was the

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formation of the Labor Party. "It was out of that universal agony, a sense of injustice, a desire for a decent life and a semblance of education for the children, that Labour was created. If it couldn't at first institute change, it certainly speeded its arrival."³ This, then, is the reason for Haines' negative presentation of the late 19th century. He is constructing a narrative which begins with, as he puts it, "universal agony," which is progressively abolished as the 20th century unfolds, by the efforts of the Labor Party. It is also a narrative that justifies the illiberal attitudes of the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, and indeed the entire Labor Government. Crime could be explained by reference to social conditions in the late 19th century, but not in the late 20th century, because of Labor's efforts through the century.

ONE WONDERS HOW, IF "AGONY" WAS "UNIVERSAL," Haines reconciles this with his claim that the Trade Union Congress only gave "fitful and tepid support" to the Party's formation. One senses that the Trade Unions present Haines with another problem. His attitude is made clear when he praises John Smith for "ending the iron grip of the block vote [of the Trade Unions] on party decisions and paving the way for the fundamental changes made by Tony Blair."⁴ The block vote was the system that allowed trade union leaders to wield the votes of their membership affiliated to the Labor Party, hence the leader of a large union carried tens of thousands of votes into Labor Party conferences. Taking a positive view of the Unions' role in the creation of the Party hardly fits with a perspective that sees the weakening of their role as a fundamental pre-condition for Blair's reforms. It is worth remembering that delegates representing over half a million trade unionists attended the founding conference of the Labor Party.⁵ Indeed, the founding conference of the Labor Party would not have taken place had it not been for a resolution passed at the TUC of 1899.

Haines' account of Labor's birth contains no reference to the role played by the hostility of the Liberal Party towards the adoption of working class candidates. At the end of the 19th century many, if not most, members of the Labor movement supported the Liberal Party. After the 1884 Franchise Act extended the household franchise to the counties, many mining constituencies, which now had a concentrated working class electorate, attempted to select miners as their candidates. Some of these were eventually returned to Parliament, and subsequently labelled Lib-Labs. However, in many constituencies such attempts were met with opposition from the local Liberal Associations. This, indeed, was Keir Hardie's experience. In 1887 he was selected by Scottish miners as the candidate for North Ayrshire. According to Hardie's first biographer, "immediately there developed a situation which has been repeated hundreds of times since all over the country."⁶ By this he meant that Hardie's candidacy was rejected by the local Liberal leadership and a precedent set for many similar rejections over the next two decades.

In any case, Hardie did not stand at North Ayrshire, but he did stand the following year, again as a miners' candidate, against Liberal opposition, for Mid-Lanark. This election marked an historic watershed:

"... the election had cleared the air, and had settled one thing for ever, the impossibility of a Labour Party *within* the Liberal Party."⁷ Hardie's experience of standing as an independent Labor candidate in Mid-Lanark set in train a process that led to the establishment of the Independent Labor Party (ILP) in

1893, and the Labor Party in 1900. Liberal hostility was then a key factor in the emergence of the Labor Party. Many would-be working class Liberal candidates had similar experiences to Hardie. In 1903, for example, the attempt by William Brace, vice-President of the South Wales Miners' Federation, to win the candidacy for South Glamorgan was rejected with the following resolution:

That this public meeting of the progressive voters of the Penarth Urban District is of the opinion that the South Glamorgan Parliamentary division cannot be won by a purely Labour candidate, but is convinced that the seat can be captured by a united effort of Labour, Liberal and other progressive forces.⁸

This growing animosity between Liberalism and organized Labor did not remain confined to the selection of parliamentary candidates. Industrial conflicts in the period up to the outbreak of the First World War increasingly saw Liberal employers on the other side of the industrial trenches. When Tom Mann declared his decision to oppose the sitting Liberal member for West Bradford in the 1892 election, he gave as his reason the response of the Liberals in the 1891 Manningham Mills strike:

... official Liberals joined hands with Tories to bring soldiers and police to Bradford, to intimidate the work people of Manningham . . .⁹

Neither was this an isolated episode. In the second decade of the 20th century strikes within the South Wales coalfields and the cotton textile industry would redefine the relationship of organized Labor to leading Liberal industrialists like D.A. Thomas and Sir Charles Macara, the chair of the Cambrian Coal Combine, and the President of the International Federation of Master Cotton Spinners and Manufacturers Association, respectively.

Haines, however, says absolutely nothing about this growing antipathy. This, despite the fact that the cover of *Inside Labour* features a picture of Hardie and Blair side-by-side, implying a continuity of outlook between the two leaders.¹⁰ The reason for this absence is not hard to find. Within Tony Blair's writings there is a strong sense of regret that what he calls a progressive consensus between the Labor Party and left-wing Liberals was broken up in the aftermath of the First World War. In actuality, Blair and Hardie have diametrically opposed views on the period of the 1906-16 Liberal government. Hardie frequently denounced this administration as "in reality a Tory Imperialist Government."¹¹

Against this, Blair stresses the influence of New Liberalism, a movement that called for measures of state intervention to promote social reform.¹² According to Blair's account the New Liberalism together with the Labor Party represented a reforming progressive alliance. However, this development was terminated by Labor's adoption of an explicitly socialist constitution in 1918. Blair has set himself the task of reconstructing that progressive alliance, and it is this objective that led to the re-writing of Clause IV of Labor's constitution — the clause committing Labor, as a principle, to nationalizing the greater part of the economy. As he put it:

The first task came to fruition in the re-writing of Clause IV, in which far from escaping our traditions we recaptured them . . . The ultimate objective is a new political consensus of the left of centre . . . To reach that consensus we must value the contribution of Lloyd George, Beveridge and Keynes [all Liberals] and not just Attlee, Bevan or Crosland. We should start to explore our own history with fresh under-

standing and an absence of preconceptions.¹³

In Haines' article there is an absence, not of preconceptions, but of any reference to those developments — like the adoption of the 1918 constitution — that the Blairites would sooner had not happened.

People Like Us

INDEED, THE IMAGE OF THE PRE-1918 LABOR PARTY that Haines presents looks remarkably familiar. It was not, he tells us, a one-class party. To support this contention he notes that “[i]t had significant support from the middle class Fabian Society . . .” The exact nature of this “significant support” is not elaborated, although we are told that it included “the two most famous writers of the Western world, H.G.Wells and George Bernard Shaw.” Wells and GBS may or may not have been the two most famous writers of the Western world and, indeed, Oasis may or may not have been the best British rock band of the 1990s, but neither Wells, Shaw nor the Gallagher brothers were or are likely to effect major changes in Britain's political balance. Perhaps the most significant facts about the Fabian Society are that it was a late convert to independent Labor representation, and had spent the first 17 years of its existence unsuccessfully attempting to promote socialist policies, through a process of permeation, within the established parties. Second, that it had a membership of 861, compared to a combined membership of 22,000 for the ILP and the Social Democratic Federation, the other two socialist groupings participating in Labor's founding conference. Furthermore, the vast majority of the members of these two parties, along with the 500,000- plus trade unionists belonging to the affiliated trade unions, were overwhelmingly working class.¹⁴

Haines also tells us that the MPs sponsored by the Labor Representation Committee (the name “Labour Party” was adopted in 1906) had “little time for Hardie's socialist evangelism.” (This downplaying of Hardie's socialism is also indicative of the difficulties that the Blairites have with history, in that they have simultaneously to claim and to reject Hardie — reject his socialism, and claim him as a politician in their own image; see note 12.) Indeed, one might almost describe Ramsay MacDonald, the LRC's first secretary, as a premature Blairite. In 1903, for example, he was looking forward to the development of

. . . a united democratic party appealing to the people on behalf of a single comprehensive belief in social reconstruction. The party may not be called Liberal, and it will be as far ahead of Liberalism as Liberalism itself was of its progressive predecessor Whiggism.¹⁵

Given the obvious similarities between Blair's and MacDonald's views, it is perhaps not surprising that Haines should find that “. . . in the days before the Great War . . . MacDonald turned the party into an effective fighting force.”¹⁶

So, according to Haines, before the First World War, the LRC/Labor Party had no interest in socialism, and was turned into an efficient parliamentary party by a man whose vision of “progressive reconstruction” was remarkably like that of the present leader. History would, therefore, seem to agree with Blair. The abandonment of Clause IV did not mean the rejection of Labor's traditions, but rather their re-discovery. However, as always, Haines simply ignores a number of uncomfortable details. First of all, there is some dispute as to

how effective Labor actually was as a parliamentary party. In 1910 Keir Hardie claimed:

The Labour Party had ceased to count: the Press ignored it; Cabinet Ministers made concessions to the Tory Party and to the Irish, seemingly oblivious of the fact that there was a Labour Party in the House.¹⁷

Hardie was not the only one who felt dissatisfied with the performance of the Labor Party. Outside of the House of Commons there was a considerable body of socialists who increasingly felt that, to put it mildly, the Labor Party had not lived up to expectations. This discontent manifested itself in a variety of ways; for example, by moves within the ILP to disaffiliate from the Labor Party; by the breakaway of some ILP branches to form, with the Social Democratic Federation, the British Socialist Party; and in the espousal of syndicalism by a significant number of militant trade unionists. After 1911, there were sufficient socialists in the country, if not in Parliament, to generate a readership of between 50,000 to 150,000 for the socialist *Daily Herald*.¹⁸ In 1995, Tony Blair declared that Sidney Webb, its principal author, saw the “‘socialist’ [Clause IV] as a fudge.”¹⁹ This is undoubtedly true. Writing about the 1918 constitution shortly after its publication Webb declared: “. . . it is a Socialism which is no more specific than a definite repudiation of the individualism that characterised all the political parties of the past . . .”²⁰

In other words, Clause IV represented the absolute minimum that could be set down on paper to enable the Labor Party to call itself socialist. This immediately raises the question of why the party felt that this was necessary. The only credible answer is that the spread of socialist sentiment in the country made it necessary for the Labor Party to drape itself in the Red Flag to retain the support of its natural constituency. There may have been few socialists among the LRC MPs elected in 1906, but there was an ever-increasing number of them in the country at large.

If, however, for the time being, we accept Haines' view that socialism was weak within the pre-First World War Labor Party, we are naturally led to ask: what did members of the new party believe in? According to Haines their core values consisted of a commitment to: “. . .equality of opportunity in life, justice for all before the law, fairness for all in society, employment and education.”²¹

Haines also notes that these aspirations “remain today.” In this he appears to be absolutely correct, for, in Tony Blair's speech celebrating the centenary of the Labor Party we find the leader describing Labor's line of development in the following terms:

Progress towards the fulfilment of each person's human potential to its fullest extent, progress that means true equality for all. Hence the values of our political ends: Justice, fairness, equality, responsibility to all, opportunity for all.²²

If we accept the claims made by Haines then we are left with a view of the Labor Party before the First World War as essentially Blairism in wing collars. He presents a party that contains a significant middle class element, that has no interest in socialist fundamentalism, and espouses a set of values that no Liberal (or Blairite) would feel uncomfortable with. As we have shown, all of these claims are open to question. However, even from Haines' perspective they do pose certain historiographical difficulties. If the Labor Party at its inception was Blairite in outlook, why has it been necessary to launch the New Labor

“project” in the 1990s, a process that clearly represents a disowning of Labor’s past?

Villains, Fools and Heroes

FOR HAINES THE ANSWER IS TO BE FOUND in the characters and qualities of Labor’s leaders. The first of these that he considers at any length is Ramsay MacDonald. There are undoubtedly good reasons for this. MacDonald was revered within the Labor Party, and was the leader of Labor’s first two governments. He also abandoned the Party in 1931 to become head of a Tory-dominated coalition government formed to deal with the financial crisis of that year. MacDonald subsequently became Labor’s Lucifer, reviled all the more for having been loved so much.

He had earned the admiration and devotion of the great body of the Labour Party by his oratorical ability, by his intellectual ascendancy, by his personal attractiveness, by his specialized aptitude for his job, by his debating skill, and by his knowledge of Parliamentary technique.²³

However, the Ramsay MacDonald of 1931, of the great betrayal, that is, was “tired, dispirited, helpless, corrupted by flattery and adulation.”²⁴

MacDonald does present Haines with certain problems. First, there is an all too obvious similarity between the political philosophies of Blair and MacDonald. For example, there is MacDonald’s view of socialism as “. . . the growth of society not the uprising of a class,” and it was naturally to be furthered by the close collaboration of all men of good will, on the basis of “conceptions of right and wrong common to all classes.”²⁵ This is virtually paraphrased by Blair, whose “. . . concept of socialism requires a form of politics in which we share responsibility both to fight poverty, prejudice and unemployment, and to create the conditions in which we can truly build one nation — tolerant, fair, enterprising, inclusive.”²⁶

MacDonald’s actions in 1931, which devastated the Labor Party, make it impossible, however, for Blair to embrace him as one of his own. This is particularly so as some historians argue that MacDonald’s decision to join the Conservatives flowed directly from his commitment to the national interest, the success of the national (capitalist) economy, and the “close collaboration of all men of good will.”

Haines deals with the problems raised by MacDonald with a very neat sleight-of-pen. First of all, he raises the old chestnut of the aristocratic embrace, the argument that MacDonald deserted the Labor Party because of his fondness for high society.²⁷ However, having raised it he goes on to question, in part, its validity. “The judgement was bitter and in some respects grossly unfair, with enough truth in it to make him unforgiveable . . .”²⁸

By this approach Haines avoids expressing any view on either MacDonald’s politics or his reasons for joining the coalition National Government. The only explanation that is offered for MacDonald’s behavior relates to his personal character defects, primarily his fondness for the comforts of bourgeois life, the culmination of which tendency rendered him “unforgivable” as far as the Party was concerned. By then qualifying this view as “grossly unfair,” how, or why, we are not told, Haines manages to both condemn and rescue MacDonald without ever examining the part that his politics played in placing him at the head of a Conservative-dominated government.

HAINES IS MUCH LESS EQUIVOCAL ABOUT LABOR'S NEXT LEADERS, George Lansbury and Clement Attlee. Lansbury is written off in a sentence as "kindly, but ineffective." On the other hand, Attlee's accession to the leadership is presented as the point at which "the party began to climb back," at the end of which process was the landslide election victory of 1945. Lansbury as a left-winger and a pacifist who never led a government is relatively easy to marginalise. Attlee, as the leader of Labor's most successful administration, responsible for creating the Welfare State and the National Health Service has to be appropriated, come what may. This approach is quite clear in Blair's own writings. Commenting on the 1945 government Blair claimed:

It was not a raft of detailed policies that took the government to power, but a clear sense of purpose and direction . . . What the 1945 government did have, however, was a very strong sense of direction based on core Labor values — fairness, freedom from want, social security.²⁹

There are a number of problems with this treatment of Lansbury and Attlee. First of all, there are many, including Attlee, who did not share Haines' dim view of Lansbury's abilities. Writing in his autobiography, Attlee argued:

. . . during those years in which he led the small Party in the House he showed great skill and powers of everyday leadership. A leading Conservative once replied to a Labour Member who said that he thought George Lansbury was one of the best men he had ever known — "The best! Is that all? He's the ablest Opposition Leader that I have ever known."³⁰

The gross underestimation of Lansbury is indicative of a tendency within New Labor historiography to label past Labor figures simply as friends or enemies. Friends are those who are like, or can be made to appear like, supporters of New Labor; enemies are those who adhere to ideas such as class, socialism and nationalization, and these are perfunctorily dismissed as "ineffective." Hence Gaitskell and Harold Wilson are granted the accolade of being "modernisers," whereas Foot, according to Haines, "was another Lansbury."³¹

Haines' account implies that there was a smooth transition from Attlee's accession to the 1945 victory, and, furthermore, that this was the product of Attlee's break with all the works of Lansbury. This ignores the view, widely held at the time, that Labor would not win the 1940 General Election (it was not held because of the outbreak of war).³² This rather undermines the idea of unimpeded advance under the sensible Attlee, after years of drift under the "ineffective" (read left-wing) Lansbury. Haines' view also ignores the fact that Attlee continued to hold some alarmingly left-wing ideas. As late as 1937 he was still arguing that an incoming Labor government might have to take emergency powers to deal with ruling class sabotage.³³

EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT ATTLEE DID NOT REPRESENT a clean break with Lansbury's leadership, and that it was the experience of fighting the Second World War, rather than Attlee's leadership, that fundamentally altered Labor's fortunes. For confirmation of the first point, one need only refer to Attlee's published account of the 1945 general election. "Our policy was not a reformed capitalism but progress towards a democratic socialism."³⁴ The rhetoric that Attlee deployed in his account was clearly based on a commitment to the old Clause IV of the 1918 constitution. Furthermore, contrary to Blair's view of the 1945 govern-

ment, Attlee believed that the Labor Party came to power with a detailed political program, although, given the way Attlee described it, it is easy to see why Blair would be uncomfortable with it.

The Labour Party came to power with a well-defined policy worked out over many years. It had been set out very clearly in our Election Manifesto and we were determined to carry it out. Its ultimate objective was the creation of a society based on social justice, and in our view this could only be attained by bringing under public ownership and control the main factors of the economic system.³⁵

In their various ways, both Haines and Blair have attempted to appropriate Attlee's legacy for New Labor. This can only be done by ignoring the specifics of Labor politics in 1945, and by talking in very general terms about "core Labour values." One might question how far Labor actually moved towards "democratic socialism" in the 1945-50 government; however, it is surely clear that Labor's ideological matrix, linking as it did, social justice with public ownership, had very little in common with the pro-business orientation of New Labor.³⁶

One Party, One Policy, One Leader

IF, HOWEVER, FOR THE SAKE OF ARGUMENT, we put aside these objections and accept that the "core Labour values" of the 1945 government were, in essence, the same as those espoused by New Labor, we are then faced with the question: what went wrong between 1951 and 1994, when Blair was elected leader? Further, we have to ask why it is that the Blairites wish to disown Labor's past by assuming the title "New Labour"? According to Haines the answer can be summed up in one word: disunity.

The 13 barren years between 1951-64 and the further 18 years between 1979 and 1997 were the direct result of unending public splits — over the Bomb, Vietnam, income policy, nationalization and Europe — during which prominent members seemed to care more about who triumphed at conference than about which party would govern the nation.³⁷

The assumptions that underpin this statement are much more interesting than its surface content. Why do delegates to party conference stand up and move resolutions? It is surely because they believe that successful resolutions will become Party policy and, eventually, therefore the policy of a Labor government. Labor Party publications are quite clear about this. An information pack for new members, issued in 1975, states that conference delegates: "...meet once a year at the Party conference to decide Labour policies."³⁸

Haines' position runs entirely counter to this notion of inner party democracy. It is an attempt to justify the fact that Labor leaderships have often ignored conference decisions. For many Labor leaders, therefore, conference resolutions had no relationship to the construction of Party policy. From such a perspective it is easy to see why Labor leaderships often have such a hostile attitude towards their own annual conferences. In the aftermath of the 1952 conference, at which the *Tribune* group, a left-wing group of Members of Parliament based around the journal of the same name, made a number of gains on the National Executive Committee (NEC), Gaitskell made a speech claiming, on the basis of no evidence at all, that "about one-sixth of the constituency delegates appear to be Communist or Communist-inspired."³⁹ Gaitskell, like Haines, apparently found it impossible to believe that conference votes were the product

of sincerely held and rationally constructed political views.

The fact that Haines believes that publicly conducted inner-party debate is of itself a bad thing is confirmed by the way that he handles major internal party divisions. The only reason that Haines gives for the fall of the Attlee government in 1951 was the “damage” caused by the resignations of Harold Wilson and Aneurin Bevan. There is, though, a major internal contradiction in his argument because, as he acknowledges, although it lost the election, Labor achieved its highest ever vote, nearly 14 million, 224,000 more than the Conservatives. Indeed, it would seem that Labor lost the election, not because of Bevanite “damage,” but because of the very significant reduction in the number of three-cornered contests, which was a consequence of the Liberal Party’s financial problems.

Having raised the issue of Bevan’s resignation, what does Haines have to say about it? Nothing, beyond the fact that it was damaging. Bevan and Wilson resigned in 1951 because of the imposition of health service charges within the new National Health Service. The context for the introduction of these charges was the escalation of the Cold War, the outbreak of the Korean War, and the framing of a greatly increased program of arms expenditure. Gaitskell, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, proposed to spend £4,700 million over three years on arms. His program of health service charges was calculated to bring in £30 million in a full year. Health service charges would, therefore, only make a minimal contribution to the arms program. Bevan, totally opposed to this level of arms expenditure, further argued that given the available resources Britain simply would not be able to spend the amount on arms proposed by Gaitskell. This opinion was subsequently confirmed by Winston Churchill after the Conservatives took office at the end of 1951.⁴⁰ None of this concerns Haines. His interest is not the validity of the arguments, but the desire to promote the view that open disagreement and disunity are bad *per se*.

The same approach is evident in Haines treatment of the Kinnock leadership. Neil Kinnock, Haines claims, made “the party electable again.” Within the same sentence, recognising that Kinnock never won a general election, Haines has to qualify this claim with an “almost.” Almost electable, of course, implies unelectable. However, if we ignore the *non-sequiturs* of Mr. Haines’ journalese, it is clear from his comments that he believes that Kinnock was responsible for a recovery within the Labor Party. As Haines only refers to one specific Kinnock action, his defeat of the Militant Tendency, one can only assume, given their juxtaposition that Labor became electable (“almost”), because Kinnock defeated the Militant Tendency. Within his account Haines approvingly quotes the following from Kinnock’s 1985 conference speech attacking Militant:

You start with far-fetched resolutions . . . pickled into a rigid dogma . . . and you end in the grotesque chaos of a Labour council — a *Labour* council — hiring taxis to scuttle round a city handing out redundancy [lay-off] notices to its own workers.⁴¹

The gist of Kinnock’s argument is that the redundancies that Liverpool’s Militant-dominated council made were the product of the group’s ideological priorities. Furthermore, those same ideological commitments to a version of Marxism, Haines implies, produced electoral failure for the Labor Party nationally. The logic of this argument is that the Labor Party can only enjoy electoral success to the extent that it abandons socialism. Militant, as a self-proclaimed Trotskyist organization, was an easy target for the Kinnock leadership, but it

should be remembered that the drive for respectability also led that leadership to abandon the miners in the 1984-5 strike and the commitment to nuclear disarmament as well.⁴² The attitude displayed here by Haines is exactly the same as that of Philip Snowden, Chancellor in Labor's first government (1924), when he stated that the Party's biggest problem when it formed a government would be its own left-wingers, who would damage attempts to prove the Party's fitness to govern.⁴³

Haines (like Kinnock) has no interest in a reading of the Liverpool situation which sees it as a product of a clash between the council's commitment, among other things, to an ambitious public housing program, and the Thatcher government's commitment to limit the spending of large local authorities. His desire is to show the evil effects of disunity. The Liverpool example is particularly useful to him because it enables him to demonstrate how doubly disastrous disunity can be when it is the result of left-wing socialist commitments. History thus confirms Tony Blair's view that

... we also have to accept that, at times, we failed as a party to keep the trust of the people. This was not because of our values, which remain those of the overwhelming decent majority of the people, but because the ideology on which they were built became fossilised and out of date.⁴⁴

The Once and Future Blair

BY THIS STAGE IT SHOULD BE CLEAR THAT HAINES and the supporters of New Labor in general are attempting to construct a Blairite historiography of the Labor Party. On one level this posits a narrative in which a weak and divided party is progressively reconstructed until health, vigour and office are attained under Blair's leadership. "Blair's election in 1994, and his creation of new Labour, symbolised by the replacement of the old Clause IV, closed the door on the divisions of the past."⁴⁵

This is definitely a part of the interpretation being advanced, but overall the history is rather more complex. The key to understanding it is contained within the extract from Blair quoted above. This is a very strange statement in the sense that it attempts to draw a distinction between values and ideology when, for most political theorists, an ideology is, by definition, a system of values.⁴⁶ However, the purpose of the distinction is to enable the Blairites to celebrate some aspects of the past as representing points at which Labor values were applied, and reject others as the products of outmoded ideologies. So, for example, the 1924 Labor government is applauded for cutting taxes, and boosting housing and pensions.⁴⁷ However, even where the Blairites find something they can celebrate, they can only do so by carefully shaping it in their image. The term that is used — "boost housing" — obviously omits the fact that it was municipal housing for rent that the 1924 government "boosted." Similarly, the first point that the Blairites make about this government is that it cut taxes. However, in a sympathetic account of that government published in 1935 by Odhams Press, no mention is made of cutting taxes.⁴⁸ The government may or may not have cut taxes, the point is that such a measure was not a priority to Labor Party members in the inter-war period. Furthermore, the program of that government was contextualised in the following manner: "Ramsay MacDonald formed a Labour Government, relying on the Support of the 159 Liberal M.P.s.

In such circumstances a full Socialist programme was not attempted.”⁴⁹

By a process of omission, selection and de-contextualisation, the 1924 government is made to look rather Blairite. The same approach is applied to Harold Wilson's two administrations. According to Haines, who, of course, has first-hand knowledge of these events, the highpoints of the 1964-70 government were: the abolition of capital punishment; the legalisation of abortion; the ending of racial and homosexual discrimination; and the introduction of equal pay for women. He fails to note that two of these measures, abortion law reform and the (limited) legalisation of homosexuality, were private members' bills, that is, that they were not initiated by the government. Indeed, Wilson and other senior members of the government were unhappy about both of them.⁵⁰ It is also worth noting that none of these measures are explicitly socialist; for example, abortion law reform was sponsored by David Steel, a Liberal. The measures listed are, however, just the kind of reforms that a New Labor government would support. Wilson's policies, like MacDonald's in 1924, represent, in Blairite terms, Labor values in action.

Wilson's first government fell, we are told, because it had been “wounded by a bitter seaman's strike and enforced devaluation.” There are many who believe that devaluation was a problem for the government, not because of its economic consequences, but because Wilson's protracted resistance to it had made it an issue for Labor's prestige. One can push parallels too far, so we shall simply note in passing that the current government also seems wedded to a highly valued pound. The claim about the Seamen's strike is totally bizarre. The strike took place in 1966, and the government fell in 1970. The claim that the strike had an impact in the General Election four years later seems, at the very least, highly unlikely. Haines will, though, be aware that in the course of that strike Wilson publicly denounced its leadership as Communists.⁵¹ Within a Blairite perspective the strike would, no doubt, appear to be an example of the damage wrought by “fossilised ideologies.”

WHAT DEFINITELY WAS ON THE MINDS OF TRADE UNIONISTS in the late 1960s was the attempt by the Labor Government to impose legal restraints — outlined in the document *In Place of Strife* — on the actions of their organizations. This attempt was met by such a wave of resistance that Wilson was forced to drop it. This combined with the government's program of wage restraint had a major impact on traditional Labor voters. As activists suggested at the time:

And so, as the present Government's retrogressive industrial relations policies develop, while the aim of 'protecting the pound' prevails over the commitment to full employment, in the midst of severe wage restraint and ominous attacks on trade union rights, while the electorate registers its dismay and bewilderment in fierce abstention and the Rhondda becomes for Labour a marginal seat, the debate continues.⁵²

Haines makes no mention of the difficulties produced by *In Place of Strife*, even though these undoubtedly had a major impact on that government's fortunes. The reasons for this omission are, one suspects, related to the Blairites' twin objectives of playing down Labor's working class origins and of reducing the role of the Trade Unions within the Party. If nothing else the *In Place of Strife* episode demonstrated the power that the British working class could exert through the Trade Unions on the Labor Party.

The same motivation appears to underpin Haines' interpretation of the Labor

government elected in 1974. Haines notes that, once in office, Wilson ended the Miners' Strike of that year, but does not acknowledge that it was the Miners' Strike, and the support it generated, that forced the Heath government to call the general election in the first place. Neither does Haines acknowledge that the circumstances that brought Wilson back into office — a massive display of industrial power — had a marked effect on the style and content of the language the party deployed. According to Haines, Wilson "fulfilled most of Labour's Manifesto promises to restore the road to a fairer Britain."⁵³ However, among other things, the Labor manifesto of October 1974 promised to bring about "a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of power in favour of working people and their families."⁵⁴ There is a world of difference between these statements. The term "fairer Britain" signifies an aspiration for relative improvements within an existing social system. Against this, talk of fundamental and irreversible shifts in the balance of power' implies the creation of a completely new social system. Haines attempts to give a Blairite spin to this government, when it is quite apparent that it was using the language of traditional social democracy. The 1974-6 Wilson government clearly did not achieve this objective, but it was nevertheless indicative of the ideological terms of reference within which the party operated at that time.

Blair's distinction between ideology and values enables him and his co-thinkers simultaneously to embrace and reject Labor's past. As we have seen, by a process of editing and re-interpretation, Haines has identified key moments within Labor's history during which advances have been made. The politics of these moments very closely resemble those of Blair and company. The sub-text of this approach is that Labor has only advanced when it has applied politics of this kind. "When we have won," as Blair puts it, "we have related our values to the needs of the people."⁵⁵ This, in essence, is Blair's interpretation of the Party's 1997 victory. Furthermore, he would claim, the victory of 1997 was one that followed in the footsteps of previous successful Labor administrations. To put it another way, when Blair states that "[i]t was our reforms that civilised the 20th century,"⁵⁶ he means that New Labor style politics civilized the 20th century. What Blair and Haines and others of the same ilk are doing is using History to promote the idea that only New Labor style politics can effect progressive reform within Great Britain.

However, this substructure of support can only be constructed by a process of historical suppression. This involves down-playing the hostility of the Liberal Party as a factor in the formation of the Labor Party. It involves the downgrading of the role of the working class and the Trade Unions in the development of the party. This goes hand-in-hand with the promotion of the role of the Middle Class in Labor's development. Finally, it involves attempting to write out of history the ideological presence of Clause IV in every Labor administration up to and including James Callaghan's. Clearly, no Labor government has ever seriously tried to implement Clause IV in full. However, the significance of its existence was that it provided a yardstick against which the achievements of a Labor government could be measured. In true social democratic style Clause IV represented the distant objective towards which the Party strove. The Blairite view of Labor's history, by seeking to conceal this role, also seeks to aid their project of fundamentally altering the nature of the party. This approach is evident in the following extract from Blair's speech marking the Party's centenary:

The vote, the NHS, educational opportunity, the minimum wage, what do they all have in common? They are symbols of what Labour believes in: harnessing collective power to recognise the equal worth of all and to develop the potential of each individual. That is our historic mission.⁵⁷

Here key milestones within the Party's history are re-cast, not as markers on the road to socialism, but as reforms that enabled individuals to develop their potential within existing capitalist society. This outlook is clearly apparent within the new Clause IV, which talks about creating

... a dynamic economy, serving the public interest, in which the enterprise of the market and the rigour of competition are joined with the forces of partnership and co-operation to produce the wealth the nation needs and the opportunity for all to work and prosper.⁵⁸

The original Clause IV, based on the belief that the forces of private enterprise and the public interest were incompatible, promised the working class a new society within which they would enjoy the full value of the fruits of their labor. Blair promises measures that will enable people to achieve as individuals within the free market economy. "That," he concludes, "is our historic mission." Blair and Haines would have us believe that such was always the case.

Conclusion

HAINES'S ARTICLE DOES NOT STAND ALONE; it closely reflects the views of the Labor leadership.⁵⁹ It can therefore be seen as representative of a process unfolding at the highest level of the Party. This involves an attempt to entirely shed the party's social democratic heritage, that is, to abandon even a formal commitment to fundamentally transform British society. As part of that process, the Party leadership has attempted to re-write the Party's history in such a way as to portray the 'New Labour Project' as a recovery and not a rejection of the Party's traditional values. According to this view, what is new about New Labor is that it has finally discarded "fossilised ideology," represented principally by the old Clause IV.

This view of New Labor involves the construction of a completely bowdlerised version of Labor Party history. This alone should make it an area of concern for historians. On top of this, it is indicative of the state of mind of the contemporary Labor Party, which would sooner "spin" opponents and opposing ideas out of existence rather than defeat them in political debate. Finally, New Labor has been strongly committed to recruiting new members for some time. There is some evidence that they have had some success, at least until quite recently. As such people enter the Party and are presented with this spurious historical tradition, so their capacity to draw on the past to shape critical perspectives on the party's policies is severely reduced. Prime Minister Thatcher once famously proclaimed that there was no alternative to her policies; according to Haines, the message of History is that there is no alternative to Blairism.

There are, however, early indications that Labor's abandonment of its socialist heritage may have unforeseen consequences. Historically the Labor Party has acted to bind the radical elements of British society to the constitutional parliamentary process. Even self-avowed Marxists like Aneurin Bevan, the effective leader of the Left in the Labor Party for most the 1940s and 1950s, was

committed to the parliamentary process. That commitment was based on the belief that the ultimate objective of the Labor Party was socialism. As Bevan put it in 1944, the prospect of a Labor government meant the arrival of the moment at which democracy could be used to destroy the power of private property.⁶⁰ But the Labor Government of 1945 did not do that. For most of the post-Second World War period, Labor leaders attempted to placate their left-wingers by explaining their lack of social progress in terms of economic or political difficulties. Blair's approach is entirely different. He rejects the idea of socialism as a principle, and supports the attempt to root it out of Labor's history. Under Blair the Labor Party has ceased to provide an umbrella for the radical elements of British society. Such people are not wanted by the Blairites. This, potentially, creates the possibility of a new non-parliamentary focus for British left-wingers. An early indication of what such a formation might look like was given by the coalition of eco-activists, socialists, and anarchists who took part in the direct action events, particularly in London, last May Day (2000). It is possible that the Blairites are helping to bring into being their own grave-diggers, but that development still remains well in the future.

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NOTES

1. Joe Haines, "A Century of the People's Party," *Inside Labour: The New Labour Magazine*, Feb. 2000.

2. Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People of London* (1889).

3. Haines, op.cit.

4. Ibid.

5. *Conference on Labour Representation: List of Delegates and Abstract Report of Proceedings* (Trade Union Congress, Parliamentary Committee, 1900).

6. William Stewart, *J.Keir Hardie* (ILP, 1921), pp.22-3.

7. Ibid., p.43

8. *South Wales Daily News*, Dec. 9, 1903.

9. Quoted in David Howell, *British Workers and the Independent Labour Party* (Manchester University Press, 1983), p.178.

10. Hence John Prescott's claim that "the values that motivated Keir Hardie are the same ones that motivate Tony Blair" (Prescott, "Keir Hardie, Tony and Me," Letter to *The Guardian*, June 6, 2000).

11. Stewart, op.cit., p.267

12. Tony Blair, *Let Us Face the Future: The 1945 Anniversary Lecture* (The Fabian Society, 1995), p.11.

13. Ibid., p.4.

14. *Conference on Labour Representation*, op.cit.

15. Quoted in Ralph Miliband, *Parliamentary Socialism* (Merlin, 1975) p.20.

16. Haines, op.cit.

17. Quoted in Miliband, op.cit., p.29.

18. James Hinton, *Labour and Socialism: A History of the British Labour Movement, 1867 — 1974* (Wheatsheaf, 1986).

19. Tony Blair, op. cit., p.12

20. Sidney Webb, *The New Constitution of the Labour Party* (Labour Party, 1918).

21. Haines, op. cit.

22. Tony Blair, Speech Marking the Centenary of the Labour Party, Feb. 27, 2000. Available at <http://www.labour.org.uk>.

23. L. Macneil Weir, *The Tragedy of Ramsay MacDonald: A Political Biography* (Secker

and Warburg, 1936), p.ix.

24. Emanuel Shinwell, *Conflict Without Malice* (Odhams Press, 1955), p.120.

25. Miliband, op.cit, p.20.

26. Tony Blair, *Let Us Face the Future*, op.cit., p.12.

27. For an early example of this, see L.Macneill Weir, *The Tragedy of Ramsay MacDonald* op. cit.

28. Haines, op.cit.

29. Blair, *Let Us Face the Future*, op.cit. p.6

30. C.R.Attlee, *As It Happened* (Heinemann, 1954), p.76.

31. Blair refers to Foot as “a wonderful human being who led us through our darkest hour” (Speech Marking the Centenary of the Labour Party, op.cit.). The ambiguity of this rests on the meaning of “led.” Does it mean that he provided leadership, or that he simply happened to be leader at the time? A fine example of damning with faint praise!

32. “. . . the fact had better be candidly faced that Labour's dynamic drive forward as a national force stopped in 1929.” *Daily Herald*, 1936; quoted in Allen Hutt, *The Post-War History of the British Working Class* (Left Book Club, 1937), p.301.

“ . . . I do not regard a Labour majority at the next election as possible, unless the situation changes in a totally unexpected and unpredictable manner. . . ” G.D.H.Cole, *The People's Front* (Left Book Club, 1937), p.271.

33. “While, as I have stated, the Labour Party has steadily opposed the tactics of revolutionary action and violence, and has always pinned its faith to constitutional action, it has never ignored the possibility that occasions may arise when extra-parliamentary action may become necessary. Its faith in constitutional action inevitably depends on its opponents also adhering to it.” C.R.Attlee, *The Labour in Perspective* (Left Book Club, 1937), p.117.

34. *As it Happened*, op.cit., p.163.

35. *Ibid.*, pp.162-3.

36. See the following as a local example of the “spirit” of '45: “The time has come when finance should be controlled because it was an irrefutable economic axiom that whilst those in command took huge profit, they could not give those who laboured to produce wealth a fair share of the things they ought to have.” Jack Jones, Labor candidate for Bolton in the 1945 general election; reported in *Bolton Evening News*, June 29, 1945.

37. Haines, op.cit.

38. *The Labour Party and You* (Labour Party, 1975).

39. Quoted in Mervyn Jones, *Michael Foot* (Victor Gollancz, 1994), p.192.

40. Quoted in *ibid.*, p.190.

41. Haines, op.cit.

42. In 1972, during the Miners' strike, Kinnock made a speech in the commons in which he declared: “Hon. Gentlemen opposite have bemoaned picketing. If they had been on strike for five weeks, if their families' total income was £7 a week social security benefit, if they were worried about smoking their next cigarette, if they were worried about paying the rent, and they saw some cowboy coming along, driving a bald-tyred wagon without a road fund licence, what would their reaction be? What would be the instinct of any red-blooded man in this House, having put his family to all that inconvenience and near misery if he saw someone riding roughshod over his picket line? I know what my attitude would be. In fact I should be worried if it were not the case.” Quoted in Tony Cliff and Donny Gluckstein, *The Labour Party: A Marxist History* (Bookmarks, 1996), p.367.

At the 1984 Labour Party conference, Kinnock's speech included the following: “I condemn violence, I abominate violence, I damn violence — all violence, without fear or favour. That's what I do. . . the only side I'm prepared to take when it comes to violence is to oppose it.” Quoted in Richard Heffernan and Mike Marqusee, *Defeat from the Jaws of Victory: Inside Kinnock's Labour Party* (Verso, 1992), p.56.

For an account of Kinnock's changing attitude to CND, see Heffernan and Marqusee, pp.236-259.

43. "A Labour Government would undoubtedly disappoint its critics in one very important and vital respect. It would not be a class government. I know there will be strong pressure from certain quarters to use a Labour Government to serve the interests and meet the claims of certain sections of Labour. That, and not even the opposition of capitalist and financial interests, will be its greatest difficulty . . . " Philip Snowden, writing in 1923, quoted in J.T.Murphy, *Preparing for Power* (Pluto, 1972).

44. Tony Blair, "My Vision of the Future," *Inside Labour*, Feb.2000.

45. Haines, op.cit.

46. "Ideology is part of the deep structure of self-consciousness. By self-consciousness I understand that capacity of human beings to conceive themselves in relation to other humans, to human structures and institutions . . . " David Gauthier, "The Social Contract as Ideology," in Robert E. Goodin and Philip Pettit (eds.), *Contemporary Political Philosophy* (Blackwell, 1997), p.28.

47. *Inside Labour*, Feb. 2000

48. *Everybody's Book of Politics* (Odhams Press, 1935), p.285.

49. Ibid.

50. "He [Harold Wilson] has a number of moral convictions: he's a perfectly sincere Sunday Methodist; he's against the legal reforms to deal with homosexuality or abortion." Richard Crossman, Dec. 11, 1966; quoted in Anthony Howard (ed.), *The Crossman Diaries: Condensed Version* (Magnum Books, 1979), p.282.

51. Harold Wilson, *The Labour Government 1964 — 1970: A Personal Record* (Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), pp. 235-6.

52. Ken Coates and Tony Topham (eds.), *Workers' Control* (Panther, 1970), p.437.

53. Haines, op.cit.

54. *The Labour Party Manifesto* (Labour Party, Oct.1974), p.30.

55. Blair, Speech Marking the Centenary, op. cit.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.

58. Quoted in Roger Spalding, *Socialism and Communism* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1999), p.110.

59. Note Blair's claim: "Neil Kinnock, without whom the Labour Party would never have attained the office we hold." Speech Marking the Centenary, op. cit. Haines similarly claims that Kinnock made Labor "electable" again.

60. Aneurin Bevan, *Why Not Trust the Tories* (Gollancz, 1944), p.88.

The Crisis of “New Labor” and Prospects for the British Left

Introduction

FROM 1979 TO 1997, BRITAIN WAS RULED BY A SERIES of hard-right Conservative governments committed to using the power of the free market and the strong state to remake society. During the “Thatcher Revolution,” the trade unions suffered a series of crushing defeats in bitter, protracted, and violent industrial confrontations. New laws shackled the unions further. Nationalized industries and public utilities were privatized. Inequality soared and greed was sanctioned as good. Public services decayed, crime spiralled, and the culture coarsened.

The Labor Party reacted to defeat in the General Elections of 1979, 1983, 1987, and 1992 by carrying out its own revolution. Beginning under Neil Kinnock and John Smith, then accelerating under Tony Blair, the far left was expelled, nuclear weapons were embraced, party democracy was gutted, and the historic commitment to socialism, contained in Clause Four of the Party constitution, dumped. Although there was talk of a new, modern, “social-ism” no one knew what that meant. Much clearer was the Party’s adoption of a raft of Thatcherite policies. “New Labor” was born.

In 1997, riding a wave of anger at the results of eighteen years of Tory rule, and revulsion at Government “sleaze,” New Labor was swept to power in a landslide election victory. As Sean Matgamna commented in *New Politics* at the time, “The death of the Tory government has given birth to hope, and released much pent-up feeling. People want change. They expect change. They expect better from Blair.”

They didn’t get it. Instead they got what Simon Jenkins of the London Times has called “Thatcher’s fifth term.” Earlier this year, in return, the people, briefly, gave New Labor the first Tory opinion poll lead since 1992. Disaffection with New Labor’s record since 1997 crystallized this year in overwhelming public support for fuel protests which brought the country to a standstill, and for a new deal for Britain’s pensioners, which caused a revolt against the government at the Party Conference.

In this symposium a range of British socialists, long-standing leaders of the left inside and outside the Labor Party, reflect on New Labor’s crisis and the prospects it offers the socialist left to build an alternative to Blair.

A new politics of non-sectarian debate and unity-in-action may be slowly taking shape on the British left. Precious advances have been made in both “single-issue” campaigning — for the rights of asylum-seekers, free higher education, a state-of-the-art health service, decent pensions for the elderly — and in new left-wing electoral alliances. A new left may be blinking into the light.

WE ASKED EACH CONTRIBUTOR THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. Why, with its enormous parliamentary majority, the absence of economic recession, and with public opinion running to the left of the Cabinet, is the New Labor government in crisis?
2. Are we witnessing a Europe-wide crisis of social democracy?
3. How do you see the future of trade union politics?
4. What should the socialist left say about the European Union?
5. What is the “third way”?
6. What are the prospects for the socialist left in the new devolved institutions (Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly, London Assembly and Mayor)?
7. How should the socialist left respond to the crisis of New Labor?

These articles were written in October 2000, during Labor’s nadir in the polls. Subsequently, a combination of chronic Tory divisions and incompetence and a splurge of public spending by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, has restored Labor’s lead in advance of a likely spring General Election.

— Alan Johnson, member of the editorial board

Thanks to Debbie Williams for her help with this symposium.

The Fraud of “New Labor”

Liz Davies

1. Why, with its enormous parliamentary majority, the absence of economic recession, and with public opinion running to the left of the Cabinet, is the New Labor government in crisis?

SINCE THE QUESTION WAS WRITTEN, THE NEW LABOR GOVERNMENT has fallen into even deeper crisis. For the first time since 1992, the Tories are ahead in the opinion polls and for the first time since 1997, there is a real possibility that the Labor Party could lose the next general election.

This government is famous for its supposed ability to respond to opinion polls and to catch the national mood. Yet the blockade of oil depots by farmers and truck drivers took the government wholly by surprise and its response to it exposed all that is wrong with New Labor. The arrogance of Tony Blair was unmistakable when he boasted that the country would be back to normal within 24 hours — 24 hours later, the blockade continued and petrol stations across the country had run out of fuel. New Labor then reverted to its favorite technique of smearing the messenger: it claimed that the pickets were merely Tories, egged on by the media and the oil companies. The collusion by the media, police, and the oil companies was undoubtedly there, but the government’s message wholly failed to take account of the massive public support that there was for the pickets. The petrol crisis brought home the dependence of many people in Britain and across Europe on their cars, and the inevitable increase in their cost of

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living when petrol prices go up. New Labor prefers to levy indirect taxes on consumption, thereby taxing the poor, while refusing to contemplate raising the income tax and while actually cutting taxes on corporate profits. At the same time, New Labor has become synonymous in the public mind with spin rather than substance, with control-freakery, and with incompetence.

The loss of popular support is a predictable result of the essential fraud at the base of the New Labor project. In 1997, the Labor Party was elected because the electorate wanted something radically different from the Tories. Exit polls showed Labor Party voters wanted improvements in the public services — health, education, public transport — that the Tories had systematically under-funded and privatized over eighteen years. The exit polls also showed those voters wanting greater social equality and advocating increased taxes on higher earners to pay for those public services. As a result, Labor was swept to power with a majority larger than the 1945 Labor government. But the government has delivered the opposite. Among its first acts was the handing of control over interest rates to the unelected Bank of England. Rates of corporation tax were cut. The Tories' program of privatization of public services was accelerated. There was some increased spending on health and education, but accompanied in both sectors with increased privatization and loss of local democratic decision-making. Single-parents and the disabled have protested against changes to the benefits system. There are 100,000 more children and 100,000 more pensioners in poverty than in 1997. The gap between rich and poor has widened.

Discontent with the policies of the New Labor government has been mirrored by the electorate's dissatisfaction with the politics of spin over substance, of representation over reality. The government can never admit it is wrong. Even the Millennium Dome — recipient of billions of pounds of public subsidy and in such financial crisis that it cannot find a buyer — cannot be acknowledged as a disaster. Health spending increases were announced three times, in an effort to make them look like three different initiatives, leading the public to greet any spending announcement with cynicism. We see that gap between the politics of spin and the reality on the ground manifest itself at the ballot box. Labor voters are abstaining in large numbers, or voting for alternatives to the left of Labor. At the same time, the Tory fortunes are beginning to revive as they cash in on the voters' increased cynicism.

2. Are we witnessing a Europe-wide crisis of social democracy?

GLOBALISM CERTAINLY MAKES THE PROSPECT OF LEFT RESISTANCE HARDER, but we should not be overwhelmed by the propaganda. For all global capital's ability to cross boundaries, the nation state remains one of the principal democratic levers in economic decision-making. Across Europe, there is pressure on all national governments to stick to the priorities of capital, but there are also still substantial differences among European countries in the levels of welfare benefits, public services, employment rights etc.

So I consider that there are more political possibilities than the apologists for capital want us to think. They want us to decide that there is no alternative. But the protests in Seattle caught the world's imagination and showed that alternatives prioritizing sustainability, global environmental and economic justice, and the cancellation of Southern debt are both possible and popular. France has seen a number of protests to protect employment rights, and maintain work-

ers' standards of living. The fuel protests, which spread like wildfire across Europe, showed that labor movement protests can cross boundaries just as capital can, and that global capital has its weaknesses.

3. How do you see the future of trade union politics?

THE GAP BETWEEN THE TRADE UNION LEADERSHIP AND ITS MEMBERS IS IMMENSE. The leaders have swallowed New Labor's agenda hook, line and sinker. Faced with awkward questions from its members — such as why is the national minimum wage still a miserly £3.70 (about \$5.60) per hour and why is it not index-linked to average earnings — their only answer is that their support for the government allows them influence to lobby for those demands. In fact, there is no evidence that the trade union leadership has successfully persuaded the government to introduce progressive legislation. The quid pro quo for the supposed influence with the government is that the trade union leadership sells New Labor policies to its members and refuses to support alternatives. I watched John Edmunds, General Secretary of the GMB (one of the largest public service unions in the UK) vote down calls within the Labor Party for the national minimum wage to be index-linked (his union's policy) on the justification that he had negotiated a minor concession and was not prepared to jeopardize it. The trade union movement will only genuinely represent its members if it embraces larger anti-corporate and pro-community agendas, and moves away from the idea of influencing the government behind the scenes. It must prove to be independent of the government, and unrestricted in its ability to promote policies that benefit its members.

4. What should the socialist left say about the European Union?

IT IS IMPORTANT TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE SINGLE CURRENCY and Europe as a political institution. As far as I am aware, nobody on the left now argues that Britain should withdraw from the European Union. But as it currently stands, it is a political and economic institution that only promotes monetarist, neo-liberal economic policies. The criteria for joining the single currency prioritize low inflation over high employment and require countries to keep public spending down. These are not social democratic, let alone socialist, criteria. Most dangerous of all is the lack of democratic accountability over control of the single currency. The economic priorities are set by unelected bankers, not the political institutions of the European Union (which are not even democratic themselves). Joining the single currency for the EU countries remaining outside it would mean handing over economic decisions to the interests of global capital and the European elite. For those countries signed up to the single currency, there are already beginning to be serious questions as to its viability.

So I believe that the left across Europe should oppose both the single currency and the institutions associated with it. However, in doing this, it is of the utmost importance that we draw a clear distinction between our objectives and those of the nationalist right. The confusion of the two in the 1970s was a disaster. In Britain, the public debate on the single currency is posed between two camps: the pro-capitalist Euro modernizers and the pro-capitalist British nationalists/traditionalists. The most important message for the left to get across is that that choice is a bogus choice. We should be mobilizing our resources to promote an independent voice — a workers' voice — in this debate.

5. What is the “third way”?

THE THIRD WAY IS ESSENTIALLY A MASSIVE CON-TRICK. It was principally an exercise in rebranding monetarism to take account of the changed public mood in Britain and in Germany (as well as elsewhere). Both Blair and Schröder had a manifesto to be radically different from the Tories or Christian Democrats. Both in fact were intent on promoting broadly similar policies to their predecessors. In Blair's case, he combined neo-liberal economic policy with mainly authoritarian social policies. Calling those policies “the third way” merely dressed up those policies and suggested that they were different. The phrase is more significant as a political tactic than as an ideological position and reflects one of the deep failings of New Labor — its obsession with presentation. However, what substance there is of the third way — hard-right politics — will continue to pose questions for the left.

6. What are the prospects for the socialist left in the new devolved institutions (Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly, London Assembly and Mayor)?

THE DEVOLVING OF FORMAL CONSTITUTIONAL POWER TO SCOTLAND, Wales and London is one of the achievements of the New Labor government. However, that achievement has been permanently tarnished by New Labor's attempt to control the Party and the political process. In Scotland a long-standing left Labor Member of the Westminster parliament — Dennis Canavan — was prevented from putting his name forward to be selected as a Labor candidate for the Scottish Parliament. He stood as an independent anyway, and won his seat handsomely. In Wales, a brutal leadership contest between Rhodri Morgan (the choice of the Welsh Labor Party) and Alun Michael (Blair's man from London) in which Michael was elected despite the majority of Welsh Labor Party members voting for Morgan resulted in an appalling election result for Labor. The loss of the Rhondda in South Wales — Labor's six safest Parliamentary seats — was just one of a number of calamitous election results throughout Wales. After less than twelve months, Michael was forced to resign and Morgan is now Welsh Labor Party leader.

In London, Blair's insistence on blocking the left-winger Ken Livingstone as Labor candidate for Mayor of London (when the majority of the London Labor Party members and trade unionists had voted for him) led to Frank Dobson (the Labor candidate shoe-horned in by Blair) coming third after Livingstone and the Tories.

In Wales, Scotland and London, Party members and the electorate resented Blair's control-freakery. The beneficiaries were independents (Canavan and Livingstone) and alternative progressive parties — the nationalists (who paint themselves as progressive in opposition to New Labor), the Greens and the Scottish Socialist Party. All those representatives have a clear mandate against the policies of privatization that New Labor stands for. In particular, Livingstone was elected not only because of the injustice meted out to him by New Labor but because of his opposition to privatization of the London underground. New Labor should learn that lesson, but it resolutely refuses to do so. The job of socialists is to work with those independents — and with the few remaining Labor left representatives — to implement the electorate's man-

date against the policies of New Labor.

7. How should the socialist left respond to the crisis of New Labor?

WHAT THE LABOR PARTY LEFT-WING SHOULD DO faced with New Labor's hijack of our Labor Party is a question with which we are all struggling. There are no easy answers. I have been in the Labor Party since I was 16. I served as a Labor councillor, was one of the first public victims of New Labor's control-freakery when I was prevented from standing as a Parliamentary candidate, and was then elected onto Labor's National Executive. For all the faults of the Labor Party, I had no doubt that socialists could achieve far more within the Labor Party than outside it. But New Labor has changed all that. Its control-freakery has been most publicized over its refusal to allow certain individuals to stand for office — despite their being democratically selected by Party members. Less media attention has been paid to its abolition of what democratic decision-making there was in the Labor Party, replacing debates and votes at the Conference with a decision-making process that takes place behind closed doors, in which only a small number of hand-picked individuals can participate, and leaving no opportunity for grassroots Party members to influence Party policy. Economically, the government has presided over a regime of tax breaks for the rich, benefit cuts for the poor, and privatization of public services. Socially, it has flung itself into restricting civil liberties. The government's most shameful act has been the scapegoating of asylum-seekers.

The question for the left inside the Labor Party is not whether or not we support New Labor — we don't. It is whether there is any prospect of New Labor being driven out of the Party and the Party being reclaimed by the old alliance of social democrats and socialists. The truthful answer is that nobody yet knows whether or not that is possible. On the one hand, the gap between the New Labor leadership and the values of grassroots Party members is widening every day. Party members do not, on the whole, support the policies of the government. Those who continue to campaign for the Party at election time (and they are getting fewer and fewer) do so with a heavy heart. On the other hand, the opportunities for Party members to express that discontent and to alter Party policy have been closed down and so the values of Party members influence the government less and less — if at all. It is also the case that the only thing that seems to shake the government is the possibility of electoral defeat.

As far as socialist organizations outside the Labor Party are concerned, I would doubt that any organization would be able to attract the Labor Party left-wing unless it was serious about electoral politics and organization. Nor would it be attractive if any one group within an electoral alliance sought to impose their program on the alliance. In the center-left Grassroots Alliance in the Labor Party, we learnt to work together on the basis of consensus, respect for each other's opinions and diversity of views. I found that stimulating and productive (and we won the constituency section of the National Executive Elections on that basis). That new way of working is not confined to the center and left inside the Labor Party, but many socialists outside the Labor Party are beginning to embrace broad alliances, and the value of consensus combined with diversity. That can only be positive.

Reformism Without Reforms

Lindsey German

1. Why, with its enormous parliamentary majority, the absence of economic recession, and with public opinion running to the left of the Cabinet, is the New Labor government in crisis?

THE FUEL CRISIS HAS CRYSTALLIZED THE WIDESPREAD DISCONTENT with New Labor. This is reflected in Blair's fall in the opinion polls and the sense among quite wide sections of the working class that direct action works and that now they should act in order to win their demands. The issue of pensions is of huge significance since it can generalize to the left. If the demand to restore the link between pensions and earnings was won it would open up the way for us to win on other issues such as jobs or more funding for public transport.

Labor's crisis is entirely of its own making. It is hard to imagine a Labor government with a record landslide majority, and with highly favorable economic circumstances, achieving so little and creating such disaffection among its traditional supporters — but this one has managed it. The very advantages which the government has can work against it if people perceive that it is not using them to its advantage or, more importantly, to benefit those people who voted Labor in 1997 with such high hopes. The low levels of employment, the big majority, and the generally left-leaning opinion in much of society mean that conditions could never be more favorable for real reforms to benefit workers. Instead, life remains the same or worse than under the Tories. Education and housing are being privatized, the National Health Service staggers from crisis to crisis, government ministers pander to right-wing hysteria on issues from pedophilia to asylum seekers. Youth unemployment has been reduced, it is true, but replaced with low-wage flexible McJobs. The boom has greatly rewarded the top 20 percent of income units (and even more so the top 5 percent) while leaving the poorest worse off and the vast majority in the middle indebted, insecure, and fearful for their futures.

The root of disaffection with the government is that Blair's "project" runs in exactly the opposite direction from the wishes of most of those who voted Labor in 1997. Labor's support was strongest among the working class, with professionals and managers still far more likely to vote Tory; these working class Labor voters — including large swathes of white collar workers in "middle England" — have gained virtually nothing from a Labor government. Instead Blair has done everything to appease the wishes of the rich and powerful, from the global capitalists like Rupert Murdoch to the rural landowners. He supports everything which gives completely free rein to capital, repeatedly arguing against workers' rights and benefits that might cut into corporate profits. He was angry with the oil companies over the fuel crisis but these people are precisely those

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whom Blair brought into his government and onto a whole number of quangos [Government-appointed committees] deciding issues like the future of our children's education.

Blair's claim to take the class conflict out of British politics in reality means siding with class warriors who have become increasingly aggressive against workers over the past two decades. His aim to remove the Labor Party from any working class and trade union roots and turn it into a U.S. Democrat-style party demonstrates his commitment to a party of big business. All of this predates the fuel crisis which represents a qualitative shift in British politics and a severe weakening of the Labor government.

2. Are we witnessing a Europe-wide crisis of social democracy?

EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK, THERE IS GROWING OPPOSITION from the left to the Social Democrats' policies. The neo-liberal agenda runs directly contrary to the needs and aspirations of working people, who voted for "left" governments to win some improvement in their lives but are now faced with the same — or even more draconian — policies as those pursued by openly right-wing parties. So in every country we have attacks on pensions and welfare, scapegoating of asylum seekers and refugees, privatization and support for employers against workers. Ideologically, this is justified in terms of globalization and the needs of the market. The crisis of social democracy lies in the contradiction between the two. The problem facing the left social democrats, such as Lafontaine in Germany or Livingstone in Britain, is that they articulate much of this discontent but they accept many of the precepts of the market — i.e. they want to make the market more humane and egalitarian but they have no fundamentally different model.

The failure of left reformism is the result of a failure of politics, rather than of the changed nature of capitalism. After all, workers in France have won a number of concessions due to the high level of strikes and protests. In Germany, Schröder has been unable to push through the bosses' agenda that he wanted because of the resistance of the trade unions in particular. Opposition to the Balkans war grew in countries like Germany and Britain, making it increasingly difficult for the governments to intervene. What is striking is that standing up to the threats of global capital is often successful — witness the movement around Seattle and the nervousness of the capitalists ever since, or the success of groups of strikers in France from Cellatex to Pizza Hut. But governments use the threat of global capital to try to force through their neo-liberal agenda. In the process, they are repeatedly in danger of being caught between a rock and a hard place. They disappoint their traditional supporters who turn away from them; at the same time, big business is nervous that they are too tied to their traditional supporters, so doesn't really trust them. We saw the result with the oil crisis across Europe, with social democratic governments struggling to retain support from both sides. Reformist governments have always been prone to such crises — witness the Wilson and Callaghan Labor governments in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s — but the background of globalization and neo-liberalism makes this crisis particularly acute.

3. How do you see the future of trade union politics?

THE FUTURE IS WHAT WE ARE SEEING in countries like the U.S. and France: more

people joining unions and more people engaging in militant rank-and-file action. The trade unionists of the future are increasingly female, black, and Hispanic. Look at the big strike movement of Hispanic workers in Los Angeles. They are interested in issues such as the environment and are affected by the general anti-capitalist mood that we see everywhere. Although the level of class struggle in Britain is still very low, when strikes do take place they are characterized by enthusiasm and militancy and are usually not defeated. That they end in compromise is due very largely to the role of the trade union leaders who do little to reflect or foster the changing mood among their members and who are tied to supporting the Labor government (while getting very little in return). This in turn means grudgingly having to accept the big business agenda of the government, even though it cuts directly against the interests of union members. The recent disputes like those at Rover, Dudley hospital and hopefully at Ford have, however, been backed in a cautious way by the union leaders, precisely because the nature of globalization threatens the whole future of trade unionism in these workplaces. The future is for more and more bitter disputes in areas under attack such as the post office and a greater willingness among at least a minority of workers to generalize their experiences and to fight.

4. What should the socialist left say about the European Union?

THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT GREATER EUROPEAN INTEGRATION is about increasing capitalist efficiency in production and trade and to do so at the cost of the working class in each member state. Europe has to compete with North America and Asia, and so needs to gain advantages of scale through a single currency, trade across borders, and the integration of political and legal institutions. This has produced an EU committed to greater speed up and attacks on workers, downsizing of workforces and reactionary policies over welfare and immigration. The political institutions of the EU are some of the most undemocratic and corrupt in the western world, as befits such an exploitative organization. The notion that we should put our faith in such institutions is misplaced; the EU is not a bulwark against free market capitalism but a major practitioner of it, whatever political differences there may be between some of its member states and the U.S., for example. Socialists should argue for greater working class links from below across the EU, and for free migration of labor, but against greater integration into the bosses' Europe.

5. What is the “third way”?

THE THIRD WAY IS AN ATTEMPT TO CREATE THE “MARKET WITH A HUMAN FACE.” Blair harks back to 19th century Liberalism — the pro capitalist ideology which the founder of the Labor Party broke with — and believes that the whole existence of the Labor Party has been a mistake. Yet even the reforming Liberal government of the early 20th century introduced the first elements of the welfare state in Britain, especially pensions. Today the market decrees that pensions and benefits should be cut in real terms, that capitalists should be free to exploit without restrictions of health and safety laws, minimum wages and so on. Whereas even 10 or 15 years ago, most Labor politicians would have recoiled in horror at such Tory policies, today they enthusiastically pursue them. The deep and long running crisis of the system means that it is less and less able to

deliver reforms in any meaningful sense. The role of reformist parties has been to accept the dominant pro-market ideology while trying to achieve tiny amounts for the oppressed and disadvantaged. It is this which creates the deep dissatisfaction within traditional working class organizations here and internationally.

6. What are the prospects for the socialist left in devolved institutions?

THE BODIES THEMSELVES VARY IN TERMS OF THEIR POWER, with the Scottish parliament being potentially the most effective. Here Tommy Sheridan, the Scottish Socialist Party MSP (Member of the Scottish Parliament) has made an impact both inside and outside parliament. There are no similar socialists in the Welsh or London assemblies, but the electoral success to the left of Labor is better than at any time since just after the Second World War. The London Socialist Alliance achieved remarkable success firstly as a coalition of different left groups and individuals and secondly in achieving a number of relatively good votes. In the Tottenham parliamentary by-election its candidate Weyman Bennett won 10 percent as many votes as Labor and one third as many votes as the Tories. In North East London Cecilia Prosper gained 7 percent of the vote. The entire left-of-Labor vote, including the Green vote, in the area was over 20 percent. It is important to try to repeat these and other successes nationally at the time of the general election, although it is impossible to say now exactly what the circumstances of that election will be. The Socialist Alliance nationally is attempting to put up a number of candidates to provide an alternative voice to the left of Labor. Despite the unfavorable terrain of electoral politics in Britain for the far left, it is capable of making an impact which can feed into the struggles after an election.

7. How should the socialist left respond to the crisis of New Labor?

SOCIALISTS HAVE BEEN CHALLENGED BY THE WHOLE PHENOMENON of New Labor. Some have accepted its ideas and abandoned any thought of socialism. Many others have been horrified by Labor's recent policies, and, despite what have often been many years of activism, have left the Labor Party. These are the people often attracted by the Socialist Alliances. There are, of course, many good socialists still in the Labor Party, who are almost totally demoralized. Prospects for reform of the Party look slim. There are no real democratic institutions within the Party, with the Conference simply a backdrop for ministerial pronouncements and the National Executive Committee of the Party is totally removed from rank and file control. Blair has repeatedly used the union block vote to prevent democracy, as in the selection of Alun Michael and Frank Dobson as official candidates for Wales and London respectively. Such is the demoralization of left activists inside Labor that around one-third of all local parties did not send delegates to Labor's recent Conference. Those who argue for the left to stay inside Labor are simply fuelling this demoralization and impotence.

There has to be a socialist alternative to Labor. The Socialist Workers Party is trying to build such an alternative on the basis of revolutionary socialist, Marxist ideas and activity on the ground. However, many of the people coming into activity will not be won to such a party today without the impact of much bigger struggles. Therefore, there has to be the maximum involvement by all the left in united campaigns — over asylum seekers rights, pensions, strike

support, anti-capitalist protests. In the process we can hopefully begin to achieve some victories against the capitalist class and the Blair government, which in turn will strengthen the working class movement as a whole and lead to a growth of socialist organization as well.

Socialism Is Democracy

Tony Benn MP

1. Why, with its enormous parliamentary majority, the absence of economic recession, and with public opinion running to the left of the Cabinet, is the New Labor government in crisis?

NEW LABOR IS A NEW POLITICAL PARTY. There is no doubt whatever that the objective of New Labor is to bring about a merger between the Labor Party and the Liberal Party, to marginalize the trade unions, to isolate and defeat socialist ideas, and to enter into a European Federation of a kind that the liberals have always advocated. This has become a bit more explicit in recent years with the invitation to the Liberals to join a Cabinet committee; the commitment to Charles Kennedy, the Liberal Party leader and Michael Heseltine, the ex-Tory Deputy Prime Minister, to go into the single currency; and with Peter Mandelson, the Labor Party cabinet minister, saying the era of representative democracy is coming to an end. We have to understand that this is what the New Labor project is about. The dropping of Clause Four of the Party constitution was a part of this project as is the gradual neutralization of the democratic structures of the annual Conference and the constituency parties.

In 1997 the electors voted for a change because they were fed up with the Tories and wanted a Labor Government. But the British establishment supported New Labor because they didn't want a change and they thought New Labor was the best way of carrying on the Thatcherite philosophy under a strong leader of a united party with a big majority.

The New Labor project has had the effect of giving people the feeling that they are being managed and not represented. There is a crisis of representation in Britain. People feel that the whole thing is run from the top. Millbank Tower, the Labor Party HQ, sends pager messages to every Labor MP. There's a centralization of power and attempts to impose a Mayor of London and a leader of the Welsh Assembly, and, more recently, a leader of the House of Commons. People just don't feel any more that Parliament or the Labor Party really represents them. And that is one reason why New Labor has got serious difficulties in terms of retaining its support, although maybe it will still win the election, I

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don't know. And so the younger people think it more exciting to go to Seattle or Prague than go to the Labor Party Conference or the Palace of Westminster.

2. Are we witnessing a Europe-wide crisis of social democracy?

GLOBALIZATION IS NOT, STRICTLY SPEAKING, NEW. Imperialism was a form of globalization. When I was born [in 1922], twenty per cent of the population of the world were governed from London. That was an imperial globalization. We sent troops out all over the world to occupy and to pressure the people to send us their cheap raw materials and buy our manufactured goods. So nothing is absolutely new.

But what undoubtedly did happen was that from the time of the Russian Revolution to the fall of the Berlin Wall world capitalism got into a real panic. They said, "look, this whole thing is going to be overturned," and they did have to make concessions in order to prevent what they thought would be a world revolution. First of all, the colonial powers had to give up their colonies because they suspected that if they didn't all the former European colonies would go communist. And in Western Europe capital had to make the concession of the welfare state to prevent Western Europe going socialist. Now the Cold War is over, and so-called communism has collapsed, then of course they're taking it all back again.

Global companies — which have grown to be bigger than nation states — are now laying down the law and anyone who wants to be Prime Minister or President, or Chancellor has got to comply with the dictates of world capital or else money can be pulled out producing an economic collapse. Global corporations can decide to withdraw if policies they want are not followed. In effect — and this is why the issue is not one of personalities — parliamentary democratic leaders have to manage the people they're supposed to represent instead of representing the people they're supposed to represent.

And this process is being accompanied by a return to Victorian imperialism. NATO is replacing the United Nations and is an agent of American policy in the Gulf, in the Balkans and in Africa. Some of the spokespeople are quite frank. They think it would be better if Africa were run by companies rather than governments, that Africa should be auctioned off. Globalization is a threat to peoples' rights to self-government.

And in Britain all the parties are huddled together. There isn't a lot of difference, you know, between William Hague, Charles Kennedy and Tony Blair. They're all committed to market forces, to nuclear weapons, and to NATO. And as people feel unrepresented, then politics returns to the way it was before we had a semblance of democracy: the People against the Government. Now some of the people against the government are right-wing like those organizing the fuel blockade but others are just trade unionists, peacemakers, environmentalists. And this is a serious breakdown of what you might call parliamentary democracy, which is the organization of people through political parties and through the ballot box to hold those at the top accountable for what they do, and to develop and carry through policies voted for by a majority of the population. It is a very big change and it's a product of the growth of capital and the way in which labor has been in effect downgraded by unemployment, propaganda, and legislation which has made the trade union movement much weaker than it's been for many years.

3. How do you see the future of trade union politics?

WELL, I THINK THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT has got to save the Labor Party. I've been very disappointed at the way the movement has gone along with the New Labor project although I understood why it was happening: they had seen the Tories in power for so long and wanted them out. But, at the Labor Conference in Brighton, when Rodney Bickerstaff, the leader of UNISON, and John Edmunds, the leader of the GMB, carried their motion on pensions — against the heavy pressure of the Party leadership and the Cabinet — it was a reminder to me of what happened in 1931. Back then, the Labor Prime Minister, Ramsey McDonald, had a similar project. He ditched the Labor Party and joined the Liberals and Tories in a national government. And when McDonald went to see the National Executive of the Party they said "Oh, you do what you like Prime Minister." But when he went to see the Trades Union Congress Ernie Bevin said "Oh no you don't!" It was the trade unions who saved the Party in the 1930s and I think the trade unions are going to have to save the Party now.

We have the lowest level of personal taxation in Europe. We have the lowest pensions in Europe. We have the harshest trade union laws. Trade unions have simply got to take this into their own hands. Many constituency parties have been bullied into a sort of inactivity. A lot of socialists have left the local parties and if you look at this year's Party Conference it was the constituency parties who voted against the restoration of the link between pensions and earnings, which Thatcher removed, while the unions voted for it. So I think the ball is now at the feet of the trade unions. And many of the arguments that the trade unions have put forward are now winning public support. Most people in Britain now want the railway publicly owned, are very critical of the Private Finance Initiative in hospitals and schools, and question the deregulation which created "mad cow disease," BSE, and its human form, CJD. So I'm an optimist. I think the pendulum is going to swing.

4. What should the socialist left say about the European Union?

I WAS BORN A EUROPEAN AND I WILL DIE A EUROPEAN. The idea that if you are against a superstate run by a group of bankers and the Commission then you are "anti-European" is absolute nonsense. I mean, if Britain was run by bankers and appointed people and we were in favor of democracy would we be called "Anglo-sceptics"? The question is what sort of Europe?

The fact is the European Union was set up after the war to save capitalism and NATO was set up to defend capitalism in Western Europe. Now that the Cold War is over, NATO is being extended as an agent, very largely, of American policy. And the EU is becoming a way of preventing development of progressive ideas through democracy by taking bureaucratic and financial control of society.

What are the alternatives? Well, one way would be a "United States of Europe" with a President, a Senate, a House of Representatives. You couldn't argue that wasn't democratic. But it would be so big as to be unmanageable. I can't believe people in Britain would accept legislation from a hung Parliament where the Albanian Greens held the balance of power. You see its just too big, too cumbersome. I favor a Commonwealth of Europe, bringing in all the fifty countries of Europe, with a Council of Ministers and an Assembly, rather like

the mini-United Nations, which would develop conventions to harmonize relations and these would be accepted by national governments in accordance to their own traditions. I think European co-operation of that character would be durable. But if the present superstate is pushed forward it will create — as it is already doing — the most violent nationalist reaction.

People's rights have been taken away by the EU. Everything is determined by the Council of Ministers. I was on it for four years. I was president of the Council of Ministers for Energy. It's the only committee I've ever been on where as the Minister, even as the President of the committee, you weren't allowed to put in a paper because all powers of initiation belong to the European Commission, which is appointed. And it meets in secret. The European parliament, of course, is just an advisory body. It doesn't pass laws. The laws are made by the Council of Ministers. And this "secret parliament," in effect, is controlled by appointed people, the economic policy is determined by bankers and by law you cannot even try to influence it. It is an absolute nightmare. And it will break down. I fear it will break down in nationalism.

When the battle begins in Britain over the Referendum about joining the European Single Currency, we don't want to link ourselves to right-wing nationalists. We have to identify very strongly with the labor movement in the whole of Europe because, after all, the trade unions in Italy and Germany and France are facing the same challenge. And the single currency has never been voted for by a single European nation. Only Denmark has had a Referendum and they turned it down. The German people have not voted for it, or the Italians or the French or Spaniards. They have not been allowed a vote. A monster is being born and we have to come up with democratic alternatives and not let it appear that we are narrow little nationalists like Mr Hague, the Tory Party leader.

5. What is the "third way"?

THE "THIRD WAY" HAS NO IDEOLOGICAL MEANING AT ALL. It was devised as a phrase to give the impression there was an element of socialism in the New Labor policy. But there is no strand of socialism there. It is a repudiation of socialism.

But you can't abolish socialism any more than you can abolish religion. It's a faith and it reflects an aspiration for a fair and decent and peaceful world that has gone on since the beginning of time. The idea that a government can come along and abolish socialism with the help of a Spin Doctor and the Tabloids is rubbish. What is really being attacked is democracy.

I think Capitalism and Communism have one thing in common. They both very deeply distrust democracy. I used to go to Moscow as a Minister and I'd meet the Central Committee of the Communist Party and they had not been elected. I'd meet the Commissars and they had not been elected. Then I'd go to Brussels and I'd meet the European Commission and they had not been elected. I'd meet the Bankers and they had not been elected. In Moscow and in Washington you are allowed to choose the management — you can have Brezhnev or Andropov, or Bush or Gore. But you were not allowed to discuss in Moscow whether you want Communism. And in the West whether you really want Capitalism. So I think what is being systematically obliterated is democracy.

Now I've always regarded socialism as essentially a democratic movement. First, the right to organize in trade unions, then, with the Chartists and the Suffragists, the right to vote. Clause Four was about the right of people to

control economic powers and not just the ballot box. And that is what is under attack.

6. What are the prospects for the socialist left in the new devolved institutions (Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly, London Assembly and Mayor)?

KEN LIVINGSTONE DID A VERY GOOD JOB FOR LONDON in the 1980s as Leader of the Greater London Council. Thatcher had to abolish the GLC to get rid of Ken, he was so popular. Ken was treated scandalously by New Labor. He should have been the Labor Party candidate for Mayor. His eventual victory as an independent against Labor was an important warning: you don't have to be New Labor to win. One of the weapons New Labor has used against the rest of us is "you may not agree with us, but you have to go along if you want to win." Ken proved that wasn't the case.

In Wales there was an attempt to impose Alun Michael as Leader of the Welsh Assembly. That failed and we got Rhodri Morgan. In Scotland, Dennis Cavanan won against New Labor. And Tommy Sheridan, the Socialist Party member of the Scottish Parliament has done an outstanding job. And he is not a sectarian. He is constructive and is willing to work with other people.

7. How should the socialist left respond to the crisis of New Labor?

I NOW GET LETTERS IN EVERY POST FROM PEOPLE SAYING "I've never agreed with a word you said," but then they come out with all the arguments we put forward twenty or thirty years ago: publicly-owned railway, parliamentary control of the executive, peace, the environment. I think that under the surface — and this is not reflected in the media at all — there has been a sea-change of opinion and what we have to do is provide leadership to it.

We have to work with many movements to recreate the Labor Movement. Today a Labor Movement can't be just the constituency parties and the trade unions. It will include the Indian Workers Association, Age Concern, Greenpeace, and so on. A very broad range of people who come together to work for certain agreed objectives. We should be looking for co-operation on an issue-by-issue basis and not on the basis of ideological purity. Sectarian socialism is utterly destructive. We've got to build around issues of peace and environment, justice for students and pensioners, and so on. And if we do that I think we will find there is a ready-made majority.

I was born into the Labor Party. I joined it on my birthday in 1922. And I intend to die in it, but not just yet. But at the same time, if Labor were to fail and all my hopes for the future were to be frustrated then a movement of some kind would develop. But I hope it doesn't happen like that because I think the trade unions and the socialist elements of the Labor Party still represent the core of future progress. But we shall have to see how that develops. It may be that some form of alternative will emerge.

We must offer leadership, not to dominate but to encourage, stimulate, inform, link, and support. Unless this country is changed by its own people it won't be a durable change. If it isn't rooted in peoples hearts and minds, and aspirations, and sense of history it won't last.

“It Will Require the Radical Left to Make Reforms Possible”

Hilary Wainwright

1. Why, with its enormous parliamentary majority, the absence of economic recession, and with public opinion running to the left of the Cabinet, is the New Labor government in crisis?

THE GOVERNMENT'S DIFFICULTIES ARE, AT PRESENT, SERIOUS but not yet so thoroughgoing to amount to a crisis. However, they could well escalate towards crisis. The government's difficulties concern first, its relationship with the public — its popularity has dramatically declined, even to the point where for a moment the Tories have been ahead in the polls. Secondly, it faces difficulties with the party it likes to think is its own: not overt rebellion just a steady desertion, of nearly a third of the membership in three years; with signs of trade union political funds going towards independent campaigns and projects rather than the Labor Party.

The sources of declining popularity and trust lie in high expectations unfulfilled. Tony Blair and New Labor spin doctors consciously tried to lower expectations, making a virtue of promising very little and making a cast iron commitment to remain within the Tories' spending limits. The problem for them was that most people expected a lot. Take education for example: the government promised a reduction of the class sizes in primary schools. This they have achieved but teachers, parents, and communities expected the reconstruction of a crumbling education system. After three years it is only now that they have spent serious money on reconstructing the dilapidated school buildings left by Thatcher's government. And education is more than buildings; people expected the quality of education to rise across the board.

Instead, teacher morale and parent and student choice has been seriously undermined by two damaging processes. On the one hand, there has been a stealthy but steady continuation of the privatization begun under the Tories of what used to be publicly and, therefore, despite many blockages and inefficiencies, democratically controlled. Instead of reforming public provision, it has produced a competition between schools in which the weak are made weaker and the strong stronger. As a result, in education as elsewhere, inequalities have grown. This, under a Labor government. Voters can see this around them in their daily lives.

At the same time as many people experience little if any improvement in education, they are bombarded with constant pronouncements of “moderniza-

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tion.” Change is imposed on teachers and parents, not shaped by them. Yet there is constant talk of consultation and “involvement.” As well as the gulf between expectation and delivery there is, in education as elsewhere, a growing gulf between government and people with the practical expertise on the ground, whether as users or as workers. New Labor treats such people, many of whom are long-standing Labor voters, with contempt. Now the attitude is being reciprocated.

New Labor’s treatment of the people — a peculiar mixture of corporate distance, regarding the public as a passive market, and Stalinist vanguardism, treating the people as sheep in need of leadership — is replicated in its attitude to the Party. New Labor won control of the Party not through an ideological debate, a democratic process that would have given the Party a sense of common purpose. It won control when the Party was in trauma, following the 1992 election. A bit like a married couple facing a traumatic divorce hands things over to the lawyer, the Labor Party handed things over to the technicians who seemed most likely to win. In the build-up to the election, they would do whatever the technicians required: ditch Clause 4 and replace it without a real debate, cut back the power of constituencies, centralize policy-making and strategic control. The result has been a party that lacks political identity and purpose, beyond getting elected. Such an anorexic political party can just manage to keep going with the adrenalin of the election that it has starved for. But when the going gets rough we see the signs of collapse. Individual activists who had previously gone canvassing and recruiting on windy nights see no point in the sacrifice; union branches begin to believe their political funds are better spent on campaigns to put pressure on the government rather than on a party apparatus which has become a slave to the Prime Minister and his inner cabal.

2. Are we witnessing a Europe-wide crisis of social democracy?

EUROPEAN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY IS IN CRISIS because it has not found a way of responding to a global market dominated by transnational companies without abandoning the key tenets of social democracy — redistribution, universal public provision to meet social needs and democratic regulation of and intervention in the market. Hence, although it is in office in many European countries, it faces a crisis of identity which threatens its organization and material existence. The membership and electoral support of social democratic parties are, after all, based on a significant section of the population who both believe in and have an interest in these social democratic commitments. Just as in the 1950s Conservatism became a paler shade of social democracy, social democracy at the turn of the century has become neo-liberalism with a human face. It did not have to be like this. Social democratic reforms are feasible but only with a transformation of social democracy’s understanding of the state.

This transformation has two aspects. First, a radical move beyond the nation state as the only and even the prime agent of redistribution, public provision, and market regulation towards political co-operation on an international scale. Second, a recognition of the weakness of parliamentary democracy in the face of transnational capital and consequently the importance of strengthening democracy through the complementary development of more direct and popular forms.

Why have the transnational corporations been able to force the dismantling of international social and environmental regulations and to block the

development of new ones? Because the state has been losing credibility as a tool for social justice. Social democratic politicians elected to deploy the state to thwart the excesses of the market have lost confidence and “gone native.” The erosion of the political credibility of a social democratic state has come from many angles. Sometimes it has been a self-fulfilling prophecy: right-wing governments depriving services of desperately-needed money, causing such deterioration that private business seems to many to offer the only feasible alternative. At other times it has been benevolent but patronizing forms of administration which assume the state knows best and lose touch with people’s changing needs and anxieties.

The final collapse of the totalitarian states of the Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe also reinforced an underlying doubt about the benevolence of the state and the democratic and social feasibility of state intervention in the market. This was particularly true where there was little public awareness of the alternative, democratic, and responsive forms of public intervention that have been developing under the influence of the radical social movements of the 1970s. These experiences — ranging from transformations of public provision achieved by the women’s liberation movement (women’s centers, well-woman clinics, community nurseries, for example) to local forms of social and co-operative ownership and economic development — existed only on the margins or where they took center-stage (Ken Livingstone’s Greater London Council in the 1980s, for example) they were nipped in the bud by the neo-liberal right.

Social democratic reforms can be achieved in the face of corporate power, but only if democratic public intervention in and against the market has moral authority and people have the confidence to demand it and carry it out. The hold of representative democracy on the imagination and motivations of the people is too weak to rebuild this belief in public institutions on its own.

I would argue that more direct, “participative” forms of democracy are necessary both to rebuild and revive the legitimacy of a social and democratic state and also to hold it to account. The particular importance of participatory democracy lies in its transformation of the executive apparatus of the state. The idea that the power to vote for representative assemblies, and individual leaders is a sufficient condition for demos (rule by the people) assumes that the executive apparatus by which the wishes of elected assemblies and presidents are implemented is able to operate as a neutral technical instrument. It is presumed that regulatory laws and, at best, open information and vigilant committees of the elected assembly can ensure that this apparatus is not influenced by social and economic interests other than the representatives of the people. We know that this is grossly over-optimistic.

To differing degrees, state apparatuses tend to get captured by vested interests outside the democratic representative process. Making the executive institutions subject to a transparent process of popular participation in which state officers negotiate and share the power to plan and to execute with popular assemblies and the delegates they elect, counters this take-over. It does not substitute direct democracy for representative democracy — the elected representatives still have the final say. Rather participatory democracy provides an extra-parliamentary complement to the periodic power of the franchise which is otherwise under constant threat from the extra-parliamentary power of unaccountable economic and social interests. The direct involvement of the people in

the practicalities of government enhances — in some cases, reclaims — the power of the suffrage.

The era of representative democracy, on its own, and in the form of nation states, is passing and, with it, old style social democracy. What is needed now for social democratic values to be realized is an alternative modernization to that advocated by those politicians who work with the grain of corporate globalization. Instead of handing over parts of the state to private business — under the camouflage of focus groups and plebiscites — representative assemblies need to share power with participatory forms of democracy. Ironically then it will require the radical left to make reforms possible.

3. How do you see the future of trade union politics?

THE CRISIS OF A SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE STATE has implications for trade unionism. After all, in Europe, the nature of trade unionism has significantly depended on the social and political reforms of social democratic parties. Moreover, its traditional, economic — i.e. predominantly workplace focused — approach has suffered a severe blow from neo-liberal politics, most notably in Britain. It has also been disoriented by the global reorganization of production and the impact of information technology. Trade union strength can only recover if it develops strategies which take on the social and political needs of working or would-be working people; if it develops grass roots international connections; and if it promotes policies which show positively how the new technologies can be developed for the benefit of the majority of people.

Trade unions, although generally on the defensive, have made many innovations across the world which exemplify these new and necessary changes in practical ways. Take the issue of organizing beyond the workplace, around the wider community and social needs which trade unions in Europe used to assume was the responsibility of political parties: there are many experiences, for example, in the U.S., in some public sector branches in Britain, among self-employed women in India from which to learn. Similarly as far as international organizing is concerned: networks of women organizing around homework and other forms of casual work have created ingenious networks across North and South which challenge the exploitation which occurs in hidden links in the production chain. Other, more established parts of the trade unions could learn from the creative alliance of committed researchers and determined grass roots organizers, North and South.

The impact of the anti-capitalist demonstrations in Seattle and Prague, however contradictory, has been to show that the institutions of the global market are not invincible and to create space in which new forms of trade unionism, open to international alliances and an environmental and social agenda might grow.

4. What should the socialist left say about the European Union?

I DON'T HAVE SPACE TO DEAL WITH THE EUROPEAN ISSUE. My general view is that new forms of green/left political organization must develop — and are indeed developing — European-wide networks. Europe-wide policies must be integral to our programs, these need to be aimed towards developing a democratic and egalitarian Europe as a necessary part of countering both U.S. power and with it the power of transnational corporations.

6 & 7. What are the prospects for the socialist left in the new devolved institutions and how should the socialist left respond to the crisis of New Labor?

PARADOXICALLY, THE PROSPECTS FOR CHANGE IN THE LABOR PARTY now depend on an electoral challenge from the left. The internal power structure of the Party was sewn up by New Labor when the membership were either in post electoral defeat trauma or post-electoral success euphoria. The only thing that shakes this power structure is the successful electoral challenge of the left.

Wherever in Britain there is a more or less proportional electoral system most left activists, old and new, will gravitate to parties to the left of Labor. At present the devolved (and hence limited in power) democratic bodies of Scotland and Wales are elected on the basis of proportional electoral systems. If democratic assemblies are ever established in the regions of England they will almost definitely be proportional. After the next election, proportional representation might well be introduced to local government. In my opinion, a sustained political challenge to New Labor depends on such reforms of the electoral system. Westminster itself is unlikely to fall to democracy but the radical left/Greens could use local and regional electoral opportunities to establish a base.

As to the question of what model of organization the socialist left should adopt, I don't think there is any one organization in a position to determine this. If lasting organizations are to develop — the plural is important because Britain's political institutions are no longer unified — there has to be a period of steady and wide reaching debate and experiment.

The history of the Scottish Socialist Party provides several lessons: this involved a Leninist organization (Scottish Militant) fundamentally questioning the norms of democratic centralism, a socialist, green, and left nationalist network and forum of debate (Scottish Socialist Movement) and the development from this combination of an alliance — the Scottish Socialist Alliance — committed to sustained campaigning (for example, a highly successful campaign against water privatization) and to democratic, pluralist debate. Their later electoral intervention, followed by their transformation into a party was grounded in the trust and reputation built through working together in these ways. A similarly determined but organic approach is needed in England, which could eventually draw on trade union support, at a local and regional level. There are some signs of this, including a welcome laying down of the weapons of sectarianism and the creation of the Network of Socialist Alliances. But there is some way to go.

“The Working-Class Left Should Unite”

Martin Thomas and Janine Booth

1. Why, with its enormous parliamentary majority, the absence of economic recession, and with public opinion running to the left of the Cabinet, is the New Labor government in crisis?

THE “BLAIR PROJECT” WAS AND IS TO DEMOLISH THE OLD LABOR PARTY, with its catholic federal structure and its base in the trade unions, and on the same site to erect a “New Labor” more similar to the U.S. Democratic Party or to the Liberal Party before 1900.

The old Labor Party, so the Blair faction thought, had been proved unsafe as a bourgeois party of government by the troubles of the 1974-9 Labor government and by the rank-and-file reform movement which shook it in 1979-82. Responsible bourgeois statespeople could not be satisfied merely with fending off that rank-and-file movement. They had to guarantee themselves against a repetition.

Blair constructed a “party within a party” on top of the old Labor Party — his own neo-liberal faction, recruited, funded, and inspired from sources almost wholly outside the working-class movement. He changed the Labor Party constitution so as to make it almost impossible for the constituency membership to restrain the leadership, and very difficult for the trade unions to do so. He used the demoralization and bewilderment of the trade union leaders, punch-drunk after 18 years of Tory battering, to pull them behind him in return for the smallest sops.

All that he did successfully. The “project” still remains fraught. The Blair faction cannot jump from the back of the working-class horse to the back of the capitalist horse in a single leap. For a while it has to ride with one foot resting on the back of each horse. The Labor Party accounts for 1998 and 1999 show contributions from big business and from the trade unions at roughly the same level (excluding corporate money for “trusts” and “think-tanks” linked to the New Labor leadership but separate from the Party.)

Recent press reports suggest that big-business support for Blair is ebbing. New Labor has in any case felt the need to make urgent pleas to the unions for more money than ever before in order to fight the coming general election. This year's Labor Party Conference showed the unions beginning — only just beginning — to get restive. Blair still runs the risk of falling in the middle — having Labor's traditional trade-union and working-class support move away from him, but still ranking only as a secondary and minor political option for big-business. He has not found it possible to put through the once-mooted proposals for state funding of political parties which would have given him a safety-net.

His fundamental weakness is the thinness of his own faction. Thatcher had

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Thatcherites — large numbers of them — but it has always been hard to find enthusiastic Blairites, except among those professionally obliged to be such for career reasons. That thinness — the fact that New Labor is run by a gang whose conception of politics is almost exclusively one of a relationship between themselves and the media, seeing the mass of the population only as bemused TV-watchers and newspaper-readers — also lies behind the disabling arrogance, crassness, brittleness, and “control freakery” of the government.

Relatively favorable economic conditions, and the Tories’ internecine conflicts over whether to stick to the older-generation populism of the shadow Home Secretary, Milady Widdecombe, or adopt the updated version of shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer, Citoyen Portillo, have helped Blair as have Tory divisions over Europe. Public opinion being left-wing — and thus angered by Blair’s meanness on social benefits and mince-it-fine and sell-it-off approach to public services — is more bane than boon to him. So, probably, is his big parliamentary majority. He would have preferred to be “forced” to make a coalition with the Liberal-Democrats.

2. Are we witnessing a Europe-wide crisis of social democracy?

NONE OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES OF CONTINENTAL EUROPE had the same openness of structure and organic closeness of links to the trade unions that old Labor had, so none of them has suffered a crisis similar to Labor’s in 1979-82. None of the bourgeois-conservative parties of continental Europe have pushed through such a drastic social reconstruction — with bruises delivered to many sections of capital as well as to the working class — as the Tories imposed on Britain after 1979. None of them have quite the acuteness of internal conflicts over Europe than the Tories have. None of the trade union movements of continental Europe have been battered as severely as Britain’s was in the miners’ defeat of 1985 and its aftermath.

Thus, in the countries of continental Europe, the preconditions exist neither for the “Blair project” nor, consequently, for its crisis. Continental social democracies have had some favorable winds in the last decade, notably the collapse of Stalinism, which has made them the only, or at least predominant, mainstream left alternative in countries where Communist Parties previously had mass working-class support. They do not right now have a crisis in the dictionary sense of “point in the progress of a disease when a change takes place which is decisive of recovery or death.”

They do, however, have a progressing disease. It is not so much that “the power of global capital,” over there, renders them, over here, unable to make reforms, as that they have consciously made themselves part of the mechanics of “the power of global capital.” They have been active agents in recalibrating capitalist-state economic policies so that they aim at attracting footloose international capital rather than at the bourgeois-consensus goal of the period from 1945 to the late 1970s, building an integrated national industrial base.

The winds of capitalist competition blow harder and colder in the new regime, and yes, reforms are more difficult. But they are not impossible. Whether the balance of the still-huge state budgets goes to welfare spending or arms spending, or to futile prestige projects, handouts to farmers and hauliers, or whatever, depends on class struggle. But it is more important than ever that our struggle be made international.

3. How do you see the future of trade union politics?

THE FRENCH TRADE UNIONS, IN 1995 AND SINCE, have shown that successful strike action is still possible in today's advanced capitalism. Strike figures are low in Britain because union leaders — and a whole generation of union activists — had their morale broken by the Tories' 18 years. Additional obstacles to struggle have been erected by anti-strike laws, union reorganization, and the structures of "partnership" pushed by the New Labor government as their way for the union leaders to get a role (and some funds).

There is no magic new trick to rebuild union militancy. We have to construct a new generation of union activists — and reorganize the best of the older generation — around the axis of transforming workplace union organization from a service which processes individual problems and grievances into an agency of collective self-assertion. This work needs application and patience from socialists, not just sporadic visits with leaflets and newspapers during strikes. Regular production of socialist workplace bulletins, which make workplace issues into collective class issues by the very fact of publicizing and generalizing them, is a key task for us.

There will be large and sudden explosions of struggle. But we do not know when. And even if they come soon, what we can make of those explosions will depend on the painstaking work we have done in the meantime.

As for politics — though anger is deep and wide, it leads to disparate conclusions. Many workers are now profoundly alienated from politics. If "politics" means some of their union dues being given to Labor Cabinet ministers who are privatizing their jobs, then often they would rather the union stayed out of politics.

For the unions simply to disaffiliate from the Labor Party, or wind up their political funds, would be a blow to Blair, but also a step backwards for the working class. We should fight for the unions to use their remaining clout in New Labor's structures to insist on union policies — which at present they do not — and if necessary force matters to a break that way. We should argue for the unions' political funds to be spent as they should be — for the political representation of workers. Unions should withdraw sponsorship from class-traitor MPs, and members should control the funds. Endorsement should be available to candidates who will be decent workers' representatives, whether Labor or not.

4. What should the socialist left say about the European Union?

THE ARGUMENT THAT AN INTEGRATED EUROPEAN UNION could shackle free-market capitalism provokes the question: why is the present not-so-integrated European Union pushing privatization and deregulation? Neo-liberal policies are generated not by "too little state" but by too much working-class defeat in struggle.

However, blaming the European Union for cuts and attacks is a diversion. Blair, like Major before him, does not need Europe to "force" him to push policies against the working class. If Blair does not like European Union policies, he opts out — for example, excluding transport workers from the Working Time Regulations that limit the working week to 48 hours.

The debate on the euro and the European Union is falsely posed: in or out? Socialists should pose a different question: a workers' Europe or a bosses' Europe? Capital will link up internationally, one way or another, whatever we do. The question is whether we can link workers internationally.

We should aim for a Europe-wide fight to level up to the best the workers have won across the European countries — the strongest union rights, the shortest working week, the longest parental leave. We should promote international workers' solidarity: no more union placards with a union jack background demanding "save British jobs!" And we should argue for democratic reform of the European Union — sovereign powers for the European Parliament, for example.

5. What is the "third way"?

THE "THIRD WAY" IS ONLY THE CAPITALIST WAY with a touch of rebranding.

6. What are the prospects for the socialist left in the new devolved institutions (Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly, London Assembly and Mayor)?

THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT, THE WELSH ASSEMBLY AND the Greater London Assembly were elected with forms of proportional representation, which made it easier for the left to stand. They are by no means perfect democracy, but the experience does seem to have convinced much of the left to drop its bone-headed, anti-democratic opposition to any electoral reform.

Ken Livingstone was elected Mayor of London because voters were so outraged by New Labor's attempt to block him standing and because they overwhelmingly oppose New Labor's plan to privatize the London Underground. That is good. But Livingstone is no socialist: he has already appointed Tories and business leaders to his administration.

Labor's candidates for the Greater London Assembly were a bunch of hand-picked millionaires, privatizers, and lords. The London Socialist Alliance had to stand, to give working-class people a chance to vote for candidates who would represent them in some way. The left challenges in these elections have been a positive experience, particularly in the unprecedented level of unity.

7. How should the socialist left respond to the crisis of New Labor?

WE HAVE A LABOR MOVEMENT: organizations built and shaped over centuries of struggles and sell-outs. We have to transform that labor movement into a force that can change the world. It is a big job. But we will never build more than sects if we just start from scratch and try to set up a brand new labor movement to replace the one we have.

Blair is a long way towards his goal of making the Labor Party into a pure-and-simple bosses' party. But he is not yet there; and even if fighting Blair within the Labor Party is doomed, it is still preferable to lose having fought. History strongly suggests that if we need a new workers' party, it cannot be built without a struggle in the old one.

There are still flutters of life in the Labor Party, though I do not think socialists should forgo the possibility of taking our ideas into the electoral arena for the sake of nurturing those flutters. More important, there are the great sleeping giants — the trade unions. Blair is driving the trade unions out of politics. The path of bringing the trade unions back into politics passes through fighting for them to assert themselves politically within the New Labor structures, and that might indeed lay the basis for a refoundation of the labor movement and a new workers' party.

While Labor still has any connection with the workers' movement, and while only Labor or Tory can be elected to government, we want Labor to win. But we cannot give them a blank check, suggest to angry workers and youth that they do nothing more drastic than burrow away for the long term in often sluggish trade union branches, or indicate to working-class voters that the paper-thin difference between Labor and Tory policies is the greatest democratic choice they will get.

The working-class left should unite to contest selected seats. I would like to see that electoral unity extended to unity across a range of activity, complemented by serious debate, and developed into full party unity. Most of the existing socialist groups can and should unite. The precondition is agreement on a democratic version of disciplined and coherent organization, where minorities have access to the public press, no activist is obliged to pretend to hold beliefs different to their real ones, and there are full rights (not just time-limited licences) for tendency and faction. I do not think the major "Green" organizations could or should be brought into this socialist unity. Their record in government in France and Germany shows they do not share our project of rebuilding working class politics and organization. But many "red-green" individuals could be attracted.

Let us not delude ourselves, however. Some activists hopefully describe the people who vote for the Socialist Alliance and other candidates to the left of New Labor as "breaking with reformism". But quite a few are actually asserting their reformism. They want a Labor Government that makes reforms, and are voting to protest against one that refuses to. Even the best united party of the existing socialist-activist left would not be "the alternative" straight off. It would need a long-term strategy for transforming the mass labor movement.

The axis for political reconstruction is not revolution vs. reform. Nor is it selling "socialism" to the masses like a new brand of washing powder. We must explain what we mean by socialism and distinguish it from Stalinism and social democracy. But our central axis is rousing and inspiring the working class to act as a class in its own interests, to insist on political representatives loyal and committed to the class, and to aim for a workers' government.

Lukács Revisited

Michael J. Thompson

THE LEGACY OF GEORG LUKÁCS IS THE RESULT OF HIS PHILOSOPHICAL and political complexity. He has been at once a symbol of intellectual originality and an example of doctrinal conformity. He was a thinker who deepened the philosophical dimensions of Marxism, and yet has been one of the most neglected thinkers of the 20th century. Today, we generally consider his greatest contribution to be not in the realm of political theory, or in philosophy more generally, but in the realm of cultural criticism. His controversial and influential book *History and Class Consciousness* is remembered most not for its radical reformulation of Marxist theory but for the concept of reification, which has given rise to a critical theory of consumerism and its effects on culture under capitalism. Even more, Lukács's legacy has been hard to trace since his thought was so variegated, complex, and, at times, contradictory. His Leninist and Stalinist phases are replete with powerful, critical ideas even as they are masked in what sounds to modern readers like the language of Communist Party lingo.

At the time of its publication, *History and Class Consciousness* gave rise to a fierce debate over the core issues of Marxist philosophy and the revolutionary method of political and social change. But, more importantly, it went back to the Marxist theory of commodity fetishism to construct a Marxian theory of alienation via Hegel's category of alienation (*Entfremdung*). This, as is well known, was done before the discovery of Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, which laid out Marx's theory of alienation. Lukács then applied this to the method of revolution which he witnessed taking place in the early 20th century. Class consciousness could not, as the orthodox Marxists maintained, be a mere function of one's economic or material relation to capital. One of the major theses of the book was its bold assertion that class consciousness was not causally related to class location. Instead, the extent to which the reification of the working class was entrenched — i.e., the extent to which the working class saw its position as a "natural" one in society or saw its position, however unfortunate, as acceptable in the overall structure of capitalist society — determined the extent of class consciousness it possessed. For its part, "class consciousness" was a perfect, Hegelian, historical moment, an understanding which, if the working class were able to grasp it properly, would lead it toward revolutionary activity and the transformation of society.

Such a diversion from the Marxism of the Second International was bound to come into conflict from the established Marxist-Leninist position which had taken hold among Communists at the time. The result was what has come to be known as the "Lukács Debate," and it was from this that Lukács's *Chvostismus und Dialektik* (*Tailism and the Dialectic*) was written. Newly discovered, and gathering dust in the archives of the CPSU in Moscow, this defense of *History*

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and Class Consciousness shows that Lukács continued to defend his ideas as late as 1925 or 1926, when the present manuscript was written. It is also a document which develops some of the insights which Lukács espoused to a higher degree in *History and Class Consciousness*, stressing the necessity for thinking dialectically and resisting the hollow economic determinism which orthodox Marxism had made commonplace in the early 20th century.

Tailism and the Dialectic is addressed to two major critics of Lukács' seminal text: Lazslo Rudas, a former associate of Lukács during the Hungarian revolution of 1919, and Abram Deborin, a leading Soviet philosopher who was, years after the Lukács Debate, condemned by Stalin for his Hegelianism. Rudas and Deborin addressed their attacks at Lukács's notion of subjectivity in the revolutionary process. For them, Lukács was smuggling neo-Kantian elements into Marxism. While it was clear to them that it was the material foundations of society, of the production process, which brought about the reality of class consciousness and the revolution itself, Lukács was offering a more subjectivistic conception of the theory of revolution. "Tailism," as Lukács uses the word, or "tail-ending," refers to this interpretation of history and social reality. Deborin and Rudas are "tailists" insofar as they accept that the historical process will mechanistically produce social change. Marx was the secular prophet who had unearthed the laws of history and society, and any diversion from recognizing those laws as deterministic were clearly bourgeois attempts at contradicting Marxism.

THE NOTION OF SCIENCE WAS THEREFORE PULLED INTO THE SPOTLIGHT. For Lukács, any interpretation of the social world which utilized the methodology of the natural sciences was itself neo-Kantian. Lukács's position stressed the sociological character of analyzing the dynamics of society as well as knowledge of it. The radical idea implicit here is that politics itself is not a matter of historical inevitability, but an act of conscious, informed will. Indeed, this, for Lukács, was what was problematic with the entire doctrine of orthodox Marxism as it came down through the Second International. But, even more, the implication was that the Marxian laws of history — as they were interpreted by orthodox Marxism — were not to be read literally. Instead, the justification for revolution was not to be found in an historical mechanism, but in the implied ethics of those making the conscious choice to follow their own interests in overthrowing the system of capitalism.

This was more than a departure from orthodox Marxism; it was also a more complex reading of Marx's sociology. From Hegel, Lukács was able to resurrect the radical insight that human consciousness was essentially dialectical. This he saw as implicit in Marx's sociology, but its application to the revolutionary process could not be underplayed. If workers were not cognizant of their class position and its implication for the historical process, how could the revolution be guaranteed? Lukács knew that it could not be. Hegel's concept of dialectic was employed by Lukács to show that the essential relationship for the revolutionary process was not a dialectic of nature but a dialectic between the conscious understanding of one's class position and the objective economic and social conditions which determine that particular class position.

This necessarily led Lukács to a defense of his notion of "imputed class consciousness," itself a theoretical defense of Bolshevism. As mentioned above,

for Lukács, class consciousness is not, and cannot, be produced mechanistically from the objective situations the proletariat finds itself in. On the contrary, there exists a gap between the *objective* context of the working class and the *subjective recognition* of the situations produced by this context. This gap can only be bridged through the work of a vanguard political party. For Lukács, this was the Communist Party, which, for him at that time, was not the bureaucratic exemplar of dogmatic conformism it was soon to become, but the conscious collective will (*Gesamtwille*) to actual freedom.

But more importantly, Rudas attacked Lukács's interpretation of Marxism. Dialectical materialism, after all, was the radical notion that the material world determined one's consciousness. Imputed class consciousness was therefore heretical to the fundamental principles of Marxism as interpreted by both Rudas and Deborin, namely, that objectivity in the historical process was primary and that it was, as Marx had "clearly" argued, one's social context that determined one's consciousness and not the other way around.

What was not evident to Rudas and Deborin, as well as to many others who were disciples of the Marxism of the Second International, was that this narrow reading of Marx necessarily bled the Marxian conception of praxis of any real meaning. As Lukács argued in *History and Class Consciousness*, praxis is not merely activity informed by a politically correct theory, it is the nature of the relation between subject and object in the historical process. Not only does the objective sphere of economic, political and social institutions act on subjective consciousness, but subjective consciousness also acts, and can alter, that objective sphere. It is up to human beings to mold the future of social liberation.

Even more, the issue of the relation between ethics and politics is raised. Although Lukács did not spell this out explicitly in this phase of his work, there is no question that there is a reliance on the individual's ethical choice, once he or she has shattered reification and finally sees the true content of the objective moment, to choose the revolution. Politics is then not a matter of necessity but of choice, and its symmetry with ethics should be emphasized, for this remains one of the most potentially rich areas in Marxist philosophy.

Tailism and the Dialectic is not merely a defense of Lukács's ideas. It is also a statement of intellectual creativity and dignity in the face of conformism and doctrinal rigidity. In content, it is also an elaboration of the seminal ideas of Lukács's pre-Stalinist phase, and it probes the deep and profound implications of Hegelian-Marxism. The relevance of this text must be seen in more than an historical or biographical light. The issues Lukács raises in his text are still relevant for the contemporary left. Indeed, problems today are no longer issues of party organization and the precise nature of revolution. But it would be silly to say that the matter of exactly how to think about society and its various dynamics is a coherent and simple matter from a left political perspective. With the entrenchment of relativism in many modes of thought and the simplistic anti-scientism which continues to prevail in many sectors of today's left, Lukács's ideas can provide a critical edge to the questions of how Marxism can still relate to society and a critical account of capitalism. Rethinking Lukács's contribution, in this regard, is not only interesting, but crucial.

Book Reviews

A Left for Real?

SOCIAL DECAY AND TRANSFORMATION: A VIEW FROM THE LEFT by Samuel Farber. Lanham, MD, and Oxford: Lexington Books, 2000. 176 pp., \$55 cloth.

Reviewed by David Finkel

SAMUEL FARBER'S MESSAGE TO THE LEFT, if you sum it up in three words, is "Be For Real." This means a left that takes on the issues of concern to the working population, not one that concentrates on discourse about discourse; a left that confronts hard social problems like crime, drugs and violence instead of evading them under the cover of what Farber calls "vulgar cultural relativism"; a left that thinks through and rigorously debates questions of political strategy; a left that is serious about ideas and theories of social change, not one that dismisses these as discredited "grand narratives."

What's at stake, Farber argues in *Social Decay and Transformation*, is nothing less than the relevance of the left in a period of right-wing cultural assault:

[F]aced with a deteriorating social reality and the right wing's efforts to shift the blame from systemic capitalist causes to the victims among the racial minorities and the poor, important sections of the left often react by denying or minimizing the seriousness of the problems, changing the subject, or sometimes even romantically converting problems into virtues. Unfortunately, these denials of reality by the left provide greater credibility to the right and to its analysis of the causes and solutions of social and moral decay (138-139).

In an earlier work, *Before Stalinism. The Rise and Fall of Soviet Democracy* (Verso, 1990), Farber undertook a study of the problems of sustaining institutions of revolutionary legality and the left's historic principles — particularly the defense of social justice and civil liberties — in a turbulent post-revolutionary context. In the present book, he turns attention to the problem of the present-day U.S. left beleaguered by a very different crisis, not of revolutionary power but of impotence. Farber believes it to be a problem which is partly self-imposed.

On the face of it, the topic is relevant. We have passed through a presiden-

DAVID FINKEL is an editor of *Against the Current*, a socialist journal which is planning a symposium to appear in 2001 on the issues raised in the book reviewed here.

tial election in which the bourgeois candidates systematically evaded such issues as the assembly-line death penalty, a prison population of two million exploding from the incarceration of non-violent drug users, the polarization of wealth and poverty, the non-stop assault on labor's right to organize, the denial of elementary due process in deportations, to say nothing of global issues from sweatshops to catastrophic climate change, and on and on.

Meanwhile, the liberal wing of the Democratic Party, far from seeking to force any of these issues onto the agenda, found its sole remaining function in bashing the populist-left candidate, Ralph Nader, who did run on these issues. Indeed, we can see in the Nader/Green party campaign, with all its limitations, and most importantly in the nearly three million votes cast for Nader in the face of all the liberal fearmongering, the potential for building precisely the kind of left-for-real that Farber passionately advocates.

Social Decay and Transformation deserves serious attention from those activists and engaged intellectuals who are interested in constructing that kind of left. One non-trivial obstacle is the \$55 pricetag for this concise (somewhat too concise, as I'll argue below) hardcover volume. Despite this particular reviewer's near-pathological cyberphobia, I'd suggest that here's a book that ought to be posted on a website where readers can download chapters and remit modest payments on the honor system.

How well does the book succeed in making its case? In the interest of full disclosure, this reviewer is a friend of Sam Farber, a fellow editor on another socialist journal, and generally shares Farber's political orientation and biases; a different reviewer more closely attuned to the "postmodernist" sectors of the left would surely locate points for stimulating controversy that I've overlooked.

From this perspective, my first reading of the book left me wishing it were longer; the second time, I have a more concrete sense of what's not there. While Farber's eight chapters make important bricks for constructing a realistic-militant left vision, what seems to me missing is some of the mortar, with a result that may be a bit less than the sum of its impressive parts.

To summarize briefly: *Social Decay and the Left* (Chapter 1) introduces the problem of social decay as the neglected underside of the development of modernity. Noting that Marx, among other thinkers, saw "the seeds of socialism" within capitalism's contradictions, Farber asks: "But what about the seeds of decay and barbarism within these very capitalist contradictions?" (4) Further, he argues, there are currents "which advocate and celebrate decay and social retrogression" (6), a tendency that he clearly feels has penetrated the contemporary intellectual left.

The second and third chapters, on "Aspects of Social Decay," examine the questions of "civility and civic participation" and "civility and manners." It is hard to do justice to the nuances of the discussion, but in essence Farber seeks here to disentangle the importance and necessity of human interaction and interdependence from the self-serving handwringing of the likes of Rudy Giuliani and Bill Clinton. For example: "Manners have always been closely tied to the development of class society and have therefore always appeared to be a specific behavioral form of class society. However, if we delve a little deeper . . . there are several sides to this question including manners as a necessary lubricant of human relations, particularly among strangers . . . and manners as ultimately rooted in rules of hygiene that are bound to develop with the advancement of

science and technology” along with the development of the centralized nation-state, the regulation of violence, abolition of public defecation, etc. (45-46). Thus “the decline of civility as manners is a real issue even though it may not be what people on the right and center of the political spectrum imagine,” if only because “a Hobbesian society of atomized individuals fighting each other...would surely have a very negative effect on the potential for solidarity among workers and their potential allies” (53).

The fourth chapter examines the complicated realities of the temperance (anti-alcohol) movement, and of alcoholism — certainly a question with important implications for today’s left in relation to the catastrophic “war on drugs.” Temperance represented at one and the same time an effort by the system to discipline the working class (even while the industrial factory system itself had produced the phenomenon of uncontrolled drunkenness), and impulses arising within the working class for self-preservation and even emancipation.

This leads into the fifth chapter, “A Case Study of the Black Panthers,” in which Farber surveys the now-extensive autobiographical literature of surviving Panther cadres. It is a story that is both inspiring in “the courage and combativity with which [the Panthers] confronted the racist and capitalist power structure,” and deeply depressing in the speed and degree of the party’s deterioration (75). While massive and violent state repression was obviously a critical factor, Farber concentrates on the social and ideological “lumpenization” of the party in accelerating the Panthers’ demise. He contrasts the party’s tendency to glorify (and to find false revolutionary promise in) the criminal lifestyle with the evolution of Malcolm X, who in becoming a revolutionary leader “was clearly leaving behind him the worldview and lifestyle of the lumpen” (88).

Further, the vacuum left by the defeat of a deeply community-rooted African American revolutionary force, in the context of the rising level of drug addiction, Black-on-Black violence and other manifestations of real, not imaginary, social decay, created the space for the revival of Louis Farrakhan’s Nation of Islam. Farrakhan, with all his reactionary nonsense, provides false answers to questions that nonetheless demand to be addressed, as did the Guardian Angels in their fifteen or so months of fame.

Two chapters that are likely to be the most controversial are “Resistance Without Political Ideas: A Closer Look at James C. Scott” and “The Perils of Political ‘Romanticism’: A Closer Look at Robin D.G. Kelley.” In the latter case, at least, the focus seems somewhat narrow, concentrating almost exclusively on Kelley’s essays in *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics and the Black Working Class* rather than on the acclaimed study *Hammer and Hoe* on Black Communist Alabama sharecroppers. (This is one of several areas where I wish Farber’s discussion was more extensive.)

To state the argument in highly compressed terms: in Scott’s enormous study *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, Farber sees a valuable chronicle of a millennium of oppressed people’s resistance, but one flawed by Scott’s denial of the relevance of ideology, coerced consensus or (Gramscian) hegemony. That is to say, for Scott “the vast majority of people have been and continue to be not citizens, but subjects” (quoted by Farber, 100) who shape their struggles not on programs for freedom, but primarily on the understanding that they are likely to remain permanently on the bottom. Among other things, then, Farber contends that Scott ignores the influence of ruling groups’

ideas, not simply raw power, over the oppressed. Hence for Scott the anthropologist there is no problem of "false consciousness," nor a consideration of what Farber calls "the impact of systemic historical change on resistance itself as well as on the ideas of the oppressed" (104), including the effects of such phenomena as industrialization, nationalism, universal suffrage, mass political parties and the whole array of things arising with modernity.

Farber's point here is clear: Ideas do matter. When it comes to the work of Robin D.G. Kelley, Farber raises a related objection: strategy and conscious purpose matter, too. While in *Race Rebels*, "Kelley demonstrates a keen sense of the class stratification and class conflicts within the African American community" and of its "cultural texture and specificity," Farber finds that "an insufficient sense of analytical discrimination, proportion and resistance considerably flattens Kelley's treatment of resistance. This makes it appear as if every action of the oppressed is as important as every other action" (114).

Farber finds in Kelley the "implied equivalence" of a Black worker attending a CIO organizing meeting or skipping work for a rendezvous with one's lover (115). I suspect this is a rather one-sided reading of Kelley's work as a whole. Nonetheless, what Farber wants to insist upon seems valid in its own right: While we should respect and even celebrate all acts of resistance that affirm the essential humanity of the oppressed, we cannot responsibly confuse the lowest levels of resistance with the highest.

Let me offer a couple of examples. Jewish humor in Eastern Europe was certainly in part a folk response to oppressive and deteriorating conditions of life (poverty, pogroms, pervasive discrimination), yet this kind of resistance could not be placed on the same level as creating a working class party like the Bund or joining other opposition movements. Similarly, while we recognize the progressive and absolutely necessary role of the LA riots following the acquittal of the police who brutalized Rodney King, we also understand how much more might have been accomplished by a strike of Black workers and/or a mass action to shut down City Hall. In this vein, Farber also takes exception to Kelley's "idealizing Malcolm X's days as a burglar in what is virtually a paean to nonalienated labor [in that] 'he chose the time, place, and frequency of his capers' [and] 'theft implied a refusal to accept the sanctity of private property'" (120).

Finally, in chapter 8, Farber looks at the attempts of the Russian Revolution to promote a "Cultural Revolution as Enlightenment." In the Bolshevik view, he argues, "Revolution was about self-transformation including a self-transformation oriented to the construction of a rational society built by increasingly civilized groups and individuals" (135), as opposed to the glorification of the proletariat as a collapsing capitalism had left it.

In conclusion, Farber states, even "as the untrammelled workings of the capitalist marketplace have played a major and decisive role in creating a socially and morally declining society, the right-wing has been able to have its cake and eat it too by turning around and blaming the decline on the victims . . ." And unless the left can reverse its own tendency toward "greater emphasis on individual and group cultural self-expression than on the political persuasion and organization of the majority of the population," it will "allow our right-wing opponents to define the political and social agenda by default" (138, 139-40).

IT'S A SOBERING WARNING AGAINST SELF-INDULGENT CULTURAL EXCESS. Yet as sug-

gested above, there are some elements missing that weaken the argument. For one thing, some critical terms are left undefined: One of these is “the left,” and another is “postmodernism.”

What is “the left”? There is, for example, a small but active U.S. trade union left engaged at a variety of levels in organizing drives, in rank and file movements, in research and education, in cross-border solidarity activism and the like. This sector of “the left” may be highly diffuse and lacking in political articulation, but it could hardly be claimed (nor is there any reason to think that Farber believes) that its weaknesses come from subordinating real social problems to cultural self-expression. Nor could such a charge be levelled against the growing anti-sweatshop movement on campuses or the global justice movement as manifested in Seattle and Washington, D.C., with the possible exception of the very small minority-of-the-minority who engaged in property destruction for its own sake without regard for the interests or desires of the mass movement.

The problem of definition becomes greater when one considers that for the broad public, “the left” means anything from Al Gore leftward. In this context, the arguments of Richard Rorty — that progressives should essentially abandon unpopular causes from sexual liberation to affirmative action in order to advance a liberal economic agenda — would be seen as part of “the left.” Farber, for whom Rorty is not part of “the left” he is addressing, dismisses this argument with one mention, but I would have preferred a much more developed discussion on this point.

One gathers from the context, more than any clear reference, that by “the left” Farber means primarily an intellectual sector sometimes known as the “cultural studies” left, often associated with that other ill-defined concept “postmodernism.” It is quite clear that Farber views the influence of postmodernism on the left as a pernicious retreat from any theory of democratic rationality or the possibility of revolutionary transformation, even (at an extreme) a denial of any possibility of discerning objective reality. Yet Farber does not confront or cite the basic texts of this current, although he does footnote the canonical refutations of postmodernism by Alex Callinicos, Terry Eagleton, Ellen Meiksins Wood and John Bellamy Foster (142n).

Without at least a brief clarifying discussion, the reader is left wondering exactly what connects the thought of a social historian like Robin Kelley to “postmodernism.” Such a discussion would have lengthened the text but provided crucial missing connective tissue. Elsewhere, in fact, Farber has written suggestively on what he means by “the left,” citing in particular a definition offered by the great Polish socialist oppositionist Jan Josef Lipski that “being on the left” entails “an attitude that emphasizes the possibility and the necessity of reconciling human liberty with human equality, while being on the right is understood as an attitude that may mean sacrificing the postulate of human freedom in favor of various kinds of social collectives and structures, or forgoing the possibility of equality in the name of *laissez-faire*” (quoted in *Before Stalinism*, 180).

That’s not a bad place to begin rebuilding a left that will be for real.

The State and the Ruling Classes: A Marxist View

THE STATE IN MODERN SOCIETY by Martin Oppenheimer. Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2000. 230 pp., \$45 cloth.

Reviewed by Samuel Farber

MARTIN OPPENHEIMER IS A VETERAN SOCIALIST SOCIOLOGIST AND ACTIVIST who has written several good books on the civil rights movement, labor, and radical sociology. He has for a long time been a reassuring presence for those of us who support a radical and militant opposition to capitalism based on democratic political practices and principles. His work is worth noting on its own terms as well as in the larger framework of maintaining a broad political and intellectual tradition independent of the various versions of social democracy and Stalinism.

In this most recent work, Martin Oppenheimer has turned his attention to one of the more difficult problems in the Marxist political and intellectual traditions: the relationship between the state and ruling classes in modern society. Thus, it is not obvious who exactly are those people who are said to constitute the ruling class, and it is even less obvious what exactly the ruling class does when it rules. Similarly, it is not clear what Marxists mean when they say that government in capitalist society acts as the executive committee of the ruling class.

Karl Marx had to confront these complicated issues in his own lifetime, particularly when explaining the rise of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte in France where he had to deal with the difficult problem of the relations between social classes and political leaders. While the bourgeoisie was clearly the predominant economic class in France in 1851, it was equally clear that the bourgeoisie was not ruling the country politically. Louis Napoleon was not a direct agent of the bourgeoisie, but neither was he a free agent, suspended in midair. Although he supported bourgeois interests, it was he who politically dictated to the bourgeoisie rather than the other way around. The bourgeoisie had exchanged the troubles and dangers of its own political rule for the social and economic security provided by a strong government.

For Marx, the bourgeois classes had become more conservative in the face of a growing and increasingly militant working class and along with the petty bourgeoisie had become politically more fearful and less confident, and consequently less able to provide their own political leadership. While the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie were decaying politically, neither the peasantry nor the working class were in a position to take state power away from the bourgeoisie. This led to a political vacuum, and Louis Napoleon stepped in. Marx em-

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phasized the importance of this social and political deadlock in his explanation of what he called “Bonapartism.” For Marx, Bonapartism became possible not only when no single class could exercise hegemony over the others but also as a result of the very composition of certain classes. Thus, although Marx stated that Louis Napoleon “represented” the peasantry, he also pointed out that this “representation” was by its very nature despotic and authoritarian, because the mid-nineteenth-century French peasantry was too atomized and lacked the cohesion and organization necessary to exercise power on its own behalf.

OPPENHEIMER HAS A VERY COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH to the relationships between the modern state and ruling classes; he writes clearly in a language that is quite accessible to university students and to the educated lay public. He analyzes four types of states: the modern liberal capitalist state, various forms of “third world” authoritarian states, the fascist or Nazi state, and the Soviet or Stalinist state. In the process, Oppenheimer puts to good use Marx’s concept of Bonapartism, stipulating in a crisp, synthetic summary that in modern, post-feudal society, Bonapartist dictatorship is likely to emerge if the bourgeoisie is not yet strong enough to rule. He argues that in the third world, if the bourgeoisie is not allowed by foreign capital to rule, the outcome is a dictatorship that suppresses all domestic classes while acting as a corrupt partner to international capital. If, in a developed capitalist society, the bourgeoisie is no longer capable of ruling, the result can be another type of dictatorship: fascism. If the bourgeoisie is not capable of ruling, but revolutionary movements succeed in preventing or supplanting dictatorships (including foreign occupation), and in turn these movements are not yet or no longer capable of ruling in some representative or democratic form, the consequence is a dictatorship of the party that claims to represent the revolution, and the development of that party-state into a “new class” (p. 27).

Oppenheimer’s chapters follow this suggestive typology and examine in a comparative manner a large number of modern state types in the context of class relationships. From my perspective, the most useful are the chapters on corporate capital and state policy (chapter 4), the fascist movement and the fascist state (chapter 5), and the state and Communism (chapter 6). Chapter 4 is an excellent synthesis and summary of one of the most fruitful contributions of leftist sociology and political science in the second half of the twentieth century. I am referring to power structure research, which can be traced back to the writings of C. Wright Mills and Floyd Hunter in the fifties (with some earlier predecessors such as the Lynds’ Middletown studies in the thirties), and was greatly enriched and superseded by the flourishing of Marxism in American universities, and then in universities throughout the world in the sixties and seventies. During these two decades, Marxist social scientists confronted their “elite theory” predecessors (e.g., Mills and Hunter) and, of course, the status-quo “pluralist” analysts whose liberalism and social democratic politics often veered into an apologia for the system, with many of them eventually becoming prominent neoconservatives (Seymour Martin Lipset, Nathan Glazer, etc.). As was to be expected, Marxist social scientists also ended up confronting each other, as in the debates between the positions maintained by major figures such as Ralph Miliband and Nicos Poulantzas. What is remarkable is that Oppenheimer covers these various conflicting views not only with scrupulous

fairness, but also without falling into the jargon-ridden language that both social scientists and Marxists tend to adopt with only too much ease.

Chapter 5 is a thorough and useful exploration of the literature on fascism and Nazism. Oppenheimer describes and analyzes various theories of the relationship between capitalism and Nazism, and he reviews the literature on the issue of which strata and classes supported Hitler's rise to power. However, while Oppenheimer acknowledges the superiority of Trotsky's approach to that of the Communists, he ignores the richness of the exiled leader's analysis, especially in its emphasis on the nature of petty-bourgeois politics in the context of severe capitalist crisis. Oppenheimer's survey could have also benefited from greater attention to the significance of the "red fascist" wing of the Nazi party and its subsequent purge in the "night of the long knives" in 1934. This grouping was useful to the social demagoguery of the Nazis while in opposition, but it became an intolerable burden once Hitler had come to power and was forced to play down considerably the anti-capitalist elements of Nazi rhetoric. Finally, in light of the current influence of postmodernism and related intellectual currents, it is chilling to read Oppenheimer's characterization of fascist ideology: "fascism...constitutes a revolt against the Enlightenment and the project of modernity, against intellectualism, rationality, and the progress that has resulted in the breakdown of traditional communities and the patriarchal family, in alienation, isolation, and the collapse of traditional values" (p. 128).

Chapter 6 on the state and Communism also constitutes an intelligent and useful survey of the various theories of the Communist social system. Oppenheimer correctly points out how those theories that were influenced by the cold war political climate tended to view the Soviet bloc as immutable and unchanging. He explores Trotsky's theory of the Soviet state as well as the subsequent "new class" theories which developed both within and outside the Trotskyist tradition. Oppenheimer does not include Hillel Ticktin's "elite" theory of the Soviet state as it was developed in the socialist journal *Critique*. This is unfortunate, not because of the "elite" aspect of this theory, but because of Ticktin's emphasis on the chaotic and unplanned nature of Soviet-style "planning," an emphasis that makes a contribution to an understanding of the eventual implosion and internal collapse of the Communist system in the late eighties. However, for a variety of reasons, revolutionary Marxist theories (Trotskyist or otherwise) of the Soviet system remained relatively undeveloped in that they failed to provide a full picture of the internal dynamics and contradictions of the system. It is as if Marx had died after writing *The Communist Manifesto* and had never written *Capital*. Where are the revolutionary Marxist equivalents of, say, the Hungarian economist Janos Kornai's analysis of the severe contradictions of what he called "shortage economies," including the Communist economy's built-in inability to maintain "hard budgets" and avoid massive waste of resources at the level of the enterprise and of whole industrial sectors?

In addition to providing a comprehensive survey of the theoretical materials pertinent to the issues at hand, Oppenheimer presents a great deal of historical materials to support his discussion. This is a useful and stimulating book.

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

Nader and the Right-Wing

To the Editors:

IN "A GREEN PERSPECTIVE ON RALPH NADER AND INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ACTION" (*New Politics* #29), Howie Hawkins writes in a footnote that "The most recent allegation of [Roger] Milliken funding for Nader work on trade was Ryan Lizza, "Silent Partner," *The New Republic*, January 10, 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."

I am not aware of any such cite, and if I have been cited as a source for this claim, it is bad reporting. I have never made such a claim. I have, however, been critical of the close working relationship between the Naderites and right-wing economic nationalists such as the Milliken textile interests, Pat Choate, the U.S. Business & Industrial Council, and Phyllis Schlafly — relationships that are easy to document.

Milliken is a major funder of the conspiracist right-wing John Birch Society, a leading critic of environmentalism, labor unions, the feminist movement, and gay rights. I first learned of the Nader/Milliken alliance from Maude Barlow, a leading Canadian activist, after she expressed concern that she had been picked up for a meeting with Nader by the Milliken lobbyist and limousine.

When Lizza called me about the story, he asked me if there was a financial relationship between Nader and Milliken, and I said I didn't know. He told me he had already asked the Nader people about it and they had refused to discuss it. It was only after *The New Republic* article went to press that the Nader people suddenly were willing to say, for the first time in almost two years of questions from progressives, that there was no financial relationship. Nader supporters use the issue of no financial relationship to obscure the fact of a close working relationship.

I confronted Nader about this in August 2000 at the American Sociological Association convention in Washington, D.C. I reviewed these and other facts about his coalitions with the hard right. I pointed out that at one meeting co-sponsored by Naderites that I attended, copies of the Birch Society magazine were being distributed as resource material. I asked him to publicly distance himself from the "racist, sexist, homophobic, antisemitic, xenophobic, and anti-immigrant" policies of the right-wing populists around Buchanan.

Nader refused to do so and instead launched into a rambling complaint that I obviously didn't know he had been an early supporter of the civil rights movement. The audience of 300 was shocked by his response. It was insufficient. It remains so.

Nader refuses to take a principled leadership stand by distancing himself from the racist xenophobia of the Buchananites and the nationalist union-busting of Buchanan's corporate allies. By doing so, Nader assists those racist White nationalists who are actively organizing around the claim that there is no real

difference between Nader and Buchanan. These issues are discussed in detail at: http://www.publiceye.org/Sucker_Punch/Clueless.html.

CHIP BERLET, Senior Analyst, Political Research Associates

Howie Hawkins Responds

I TAKE CHIP BERLET AT HIS WORD when he says he has never claimed that Roger Milliken has funded Nader projects. The allegation that Berlet was a source for such claims appeared on a couple of socialist email discussion lists in April 2000. As I pointed out in the footnote, citing a post to those lists (Walter Contreras Sheasby, "Critical Support for Nader, Without Left Paranoia and Disinformation," April 28, 2000), Berlet had said he had no evidence of any such funding.

The important political question that Berlet raises is about how progressives should relate to right-wing economic nationalists in the fight against corporate globalization. The problem for progressives when they work on single issues in temporary alliances with right-wing populists like Buchanan is that it can yield perceptions that jeopardize far more important long-term alliances with those who are the natural bases for the left and who are regularly scapegoated by the right: blacks, Jews, gays, feminists, environmentalists, labor, socialists, and others.

I agree with Berlet that Nader should be more forthright in distancing himself from the reactionary policies of the Buchaninites. I did not witness the meeting Berlet recounts, but it sounds like the kind of response I have heard Nader give on similar occasions. He presents his own record and positions without criticizing the right-wing populists' positions. That is not adequate. Nader's positions are consistently progressive on the "wedge issues" that the right uses to mobilize resentment and scapegoating. But the corporate media largely fails to report Nader's positions. Nader cannot assume that progressive allies know his positions and understand that cooperation with Buchanan on a single issue does not imply toleration of Buchanan's views on other issues.

Nader certainly has no history of the scapegoating that characterizes right-wing populism. In his 1996 campaign, while he took progressive stands on issues like abortion, immigration, gay rights, and affirmative action when asked about them, his failure to initiate and highlight statements on these issues was perceived by many (and propagated by Democrats) as pandering to prejudices. In his 2000 campaign, Nader took the criticisms of this approach to heart. As the speeches, press releases, and position papers posted on his 2000 campaign web site (www.VoteNader.org) testify, Nader was outspoken on these issues, to the point where he is now being criticized by some progressives from the other direction.

For example, Micah Sifry, writing for Working Asset's website (www.WorkingForChange.com, 11/28/00), says "it's worth questioning whether Nader was too 'left' or too 'Green' a candidate to reach most voters." Sifry suggests that Nader should have run with "an independent-populist play rooted in the 'radical middle,'" like Perot and Ventura, instead of as a Green with strong progressive positions on "the death penalty, the military budget, health care, gay rights, labor organizing, racial profiling, reparations for slavery, hemp, Palestinian rights — you name it." Sifry's strategy would have cost Nader his Green base without winning him many Perot/Ventura voters because Nader's central anti-corporate, pro-democracy message is clearly on the left, not in some "radi-

cal middle” that supposedly transcends left and right. It was the Democrats’ ability in a tight election to generate fear of George W., not fear of a “Red” Ralph, that enabled Gore to take many Nader votes in the last weeks of the campaign.

What should the left do when it finds itself on the same side of an issue with right-wingers? Should Nader have refused to work with Buchanan in opposition to NAFTA, WTO, and other corporate trade pacts? Or during the campaign to open up the presidential debates? Should he have refused to work with Phyllis Schlafly in opposition to Channel One’s commercial marketing to captive audiences of public school children? Should progressive anti-war activists refuse to share podiums with Libertarian and isolationist Republican opponents of a foreign war? Should leftists refuse to cooperate with local conservatives who also oppose a municipal corporate welfare deal for some corporate developer?

I do not believe cooperation with conservatives on single issues should be ruled out in all cases. The left should not just talk to itself and refuse to engage others who disagree on some points. But there is a big difference between trying to build a “neither- left-nor-right” populism that permanently sells out oppressed groups in order to build a supposedly broader base in the “mainstream,” and making a temporary alliance on a single issue where one does not compromise one’s progressive values.

Not every possible alliance should be made. In the case of the anti-globalization movement, the right-wing populists not only bring little weight to the fight, they confuse the issue and misdirect the struggle. While they bring some votes in Congress, that happens without the left anyway. Their presence in Seattle last year was miniscule compared to the progressive opponents of the WTO. Most importantly, their racist nationalism and paranoid conspiracy fantasies just bring division and confusion to the anti-globalization movement. So I agree with Berlet that Nader, and progressives generally, should break ties with economic nationalists in the anti-globalization movement. The left should just concentrate on building an internationalist opposition to corporate globalization.

The Alienation of C. Wright Mills

To the Editors:

IN HIS REVIEW OF *C. WRIGHT MILLS: LETTERS AND AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITINGS* (“An Iconoclastic Radical,” *New Politics* #29), Dan Geary notes that “no serious biography of Mills has been published.” It is surprising that anyone who purports to know anything about Mills would not know that there have been two very fine, serious biographies of Mills, one by Rick Tilman entitled *C. Wright Mills: A Native Radical and His Intellectual Roots* (Penn State Press, 1984), and another by Irving Louis Horowitz entitled *C. Wright Mills: An American Utopian* (New York: Free Press, 1983). The latter is an especially fine and probing biography which makes many of the points made by Geary in his essay. Horowitz’s work is also vitally important for puncturing the hagiography about Mills that developed on the American left, especially after his death. Geary’s review seems more a part of that hagiography than a serious appraisal of Mills’s contribution to American sociology and social criticism.

In regard to Mills’s alienation with the establishment sociological commu-

nity: Mills's abrasive personality certainly had something to do with that alienation. Horowitz's biography makes clear that Mills did little to try to get along with anyone, preferring instead an attitude of haughty arrogance toward everyone whom he associated with. This, of course, led him to be disliked by virtually everyone with whom he came into contact. But his alienation from that community was more than a result of his "attitude problem." Rather, it was the nature of his sociological work which was rather shallow empirically. Most of his major works were subjected to severe criticism because they offered little empirical substantiation for his major theses. In *The Power Elite*, he inflected his own view of the totalistic nature of the American social system into his analysis, with the result that he could neither appreciate the conflicts of interest among the elite, nor the power of veto groups in American democracy which kept the power elite in check. In *White Collar*, he disavowed any serious empirical analysis of the lifeworlds of new middle class managers in favor of a view which, for the most part, was simply a statement of his own dislike for conventional, middle-class values. That book was savaged in reviews by leading intellectuals — most notably by Dwight MacDonald and David Riesman — with the result that Mills's already monumental feelings of alienation were transformed into feelings of abject despair. These feelings moved him even further to produce work which had little bearing on the complex realities of social life which he tried to understand. In *Listen, Yankee*, he failed, like many leftist intellectuals of the time, to understand the totalitarian nature of the new Castro regime and, instead, he set that regime up as an alternative to the American system which alienated him to the core. This lionization of Castro further distanced him from both liberal and conservative intellectuals. For the most part, Mills failed as an empirical sociologist and thus as a theorist as well, since his theoretical corpus was built on such weak timbers.

This is not to say that Mills had nothing to contribute to American sociology. *The Sociological Imagination* is a classic work which clearly articulated a vision of what it meant to be a sociologist. Some of his theoretical articles, such as "Situated Activities and Vocabularies of Motive," are enduring and pertinent contributions. For the most part, he did well as a sociologist when he avoided political topics which tended to bring out the worst in him. His life is a lesson which demonstrates how personal alienation and the powerful influence of ideology can corrupt the attempt to offer serious, complex, and balanced interpretations of social life.

THOMAS CUSHMAN, Associate Professor of Sociology, Wellesley College

Dan Geary Responds

DID MILLS HAVE AN "ATTITUDE PROBLEM" and, if so, what difference does it make? Cushman points out that many sociologists found Mills to be an intolerably arrogant figure. Should the fact that a thinker had a disagreeable personality cause us to discount the significance of his work? If so, we'd have to downgrade the contributions of many important social theorists. Mills's iconoclastic personality continues to be fascinating, but it is better for us to ask why Mills chose to adopt this maverick posture than to wonder whether we would have liked to have had him as a colleague. We can ponder the connections between history and biography in Mills's case without holding him up as a model of human behavior.

No serious biography of Mills has been written. The best work on Mills to

date is by Richard Gillam, in scattered articles and in his 1971 Stanford dissertation. Neither of the books that Cushman mentions makes full use of the rich Mills archives or effectively historicizes Mills in his intellectual and political context. Tilman's work is a fine study of the influence of some American social theorists on Mills, but hardly qualifies as a comprehensive biography. Horowitz's biography is a good place to look for anecdotes and a synopsis of Mills's major works and their reception, but it lacks a deeper analysis of Mills's thought. It is also far from a balanced treatment of him. Rather, it conveys the author's own confused transition from Mills idolizer to Mills detractor.

Hagiographic accounts of Mills obstruct a serious appraisal of his significance. In my review, I treated Mills not as a superhuman figure standing apart from his times, but as an important representative of certain shifts in left-wing thought. I criticized Mills on a number of points. His iconoclastic posture was macho and led him to be too disdainful of political organization. Like many radicals of his era, Mills turned a blind eye to matters of race and gender and he incorrectly perceived American society as hegemonic and static. Nevertheless, there is a great deal to admire in Mills. His ability to maintain a steadfast yet adaptable radicalism and to write works that combined intellectual sophistication with broad appeal seem particularly praiseworthy.

Mills was not a great technical sociologist. But, he should be judged as the major public intellectual that he was. It is odd that Cushman praises *The Sociological Imagination*, Mills's critique of the academic sociology of his time, while dismissing Mills's other works for failing to meet the standards of academic sociology. The methodological standard to which Cushman is holding Mills is obscure. One of Mills's major targets in *The Sociological Imagination* was "abstracted empiricism," or the type of sociology that fails to address any substantive issues because of its exclusive concern for proper method. It is to Mills's credit that he did tackle the important issues of his time and his major sociological studies — *The New Men of Power*, *White Collar*, and *The Power Elite* — were, in fact, based on extensive research.

Cushman overplays the extent to which Mills's works were criticized by his contemporaries. David Riesman did not "savage" *White Collar*, but wrote a balanced critique that pointed to certain "admirable" and "brilliant" aspects of the piece (Mills actually thanked Riesman for the review, and this letter is included in *C. Wright Mills: Letters and Autobiographical Writings*). Did *White Collar* reflect Mills's own prejudice against the middle class? All sociological works reflect to some extent the political and philosophical biases of their authors. Recent work by Howard Brick shows that even Talcott Parsons's highly abstract and methodologically meticulous sociology owed something to personal circumstance and political context. *White Collar* was not simply a work of opinion, but one that backed up its author's beliefs with impressive research and powerful analysis.

Cushman's major criticism of Mills is that political ideology perverted his sociology. But Mills never pretended to be an impartial observer. He correctly believed that it is not possible to write about the important questions that face American society without taking a position. His political commitments did not detract from his analysis. Rather, they helped him to identify the major issues of his day and to infuse his work with a broad social significance. Mills did not have all of the answers, but he was one of the most incisive and prescient social commentators of his generation.