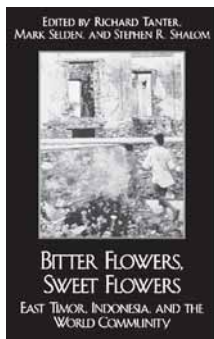


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BITTER FLOWERS, SWEET FLOWERS

East Timor, Indonesia, and the
World Community

Edited by Richard Tanter, Mark Selden, and
Stephen R. Shalom

"For anyone who would hope to understand the struggle of the people of East Timor over the past twenty-five years—or indeed, the past half century—*Bitter Flowers, Sweet Flowers* is an indispensable collection. It offers essential historical background and vivid eyewitness accounts of the independence ballot and the violence that preceded and followed. The contributors display a refreshing combination of fine scholarship and a deep commitment to justice. It should prove a valuable guide to the difficulties that still lay ahead."

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Symposium: The Nader Campaign And the Future of Independent Politics

On April 14, 2001 *New Politics* sponsored a panel at the Socialist Scholars Conference at the Cooper Union in New York City entitled "The Nader Campaign and the Future of Independent Politics" with Thomas Harrison, Ellen Willis, Jesse Lemisch and Howie Hawkins. The panel was composed of individuals who supported Ralph Nader's presidential campaign, though with varying degrees of criticism of how the campaign dealt with issues of race, gender, and consumption. (See, for example, the Lemisch-Landy petition, which gave strong but critical support to the 2000 Nader campaign, on the *New Politics* website www.wpunj.edu/~newpol). The panel was followed by wide-ranging discussion from the floor with participation from Reginald Wilson, Alan Sokal, Stanley Aronowitz, and others. What follows are the four presentations (edited by the speakers), along with significant portions of the subsequent discussion. *New Politics* has long been interested in promoting ways to escape from the self-reinforcing two-party trap that has succeeded, year after year and decade after decade, in moving American politics to the right. By offering an opportunity to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the strongest progressive third party presidential campaign in many decades, we saw this session as a contribution to making that escape possible.

Joanne Landy
New Politics Editorial Board

Thomas Harrison teaches history at the Brearley School in Manhattan and is a member of the editorial board of *New Politics*. He has written for *New Politics*, *The Nation*, *Z Magazine*, *Balkan War Report*, *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, *Sanity and Peace & Democracy* on such subjects as American third party politics, U.S. foreign policy, the wars in the former Yugoslavia, nuclear disarmament, the Gulf War, the New Left of the 1960s, and democratic political theory. He contributed to the anthology, *Why Bosnia? Writings on the Balkan War* and co-authored the introduction to *Ban the Bomb: Prospects for Nuclear Disarmament and World Peace After Hiroshima and Nagasaki*. He is former co-director with Joanne Landy of the Campaign for Peace and Democracy.

Jesse Lemisch (utopia1@attglobal.net) is Professor Emeritus of History at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New

York. The talk builds on some of the points and criticisms made in Lemisch, "A Movement Begins: The Washington Protests against IMF/World Bank, *New Politics*, Sum 2000 (www.wpunj.edu/~newpol/). His other relevant writings include: "Angry White Men on the Left," *New Politics*, Winter 1997, "Cornucopia isn't Consumerism" (with Naomi Weisstein), *Against the Current*, Jan/Feb 1992; "Pop Front Culture: I Dreamed I saw MTV Last Night," *The Nation*, Oct 18, 1986; "The Politics of Left Culture," *The Nation*, Dec 20, 1986. Lemisch is also the author of *Jack Tar vs John Bull*. He is grateful for the help of Joanne Landy and Naomi Weisstein.

Ellen Willis directs the Cultural Reporting and Criticism program in the Department of Journalism at New York University. Her essays on politics and culture have appeared in a variety of publications including *The Nation*, *Dissent*, *The New York Times* and *The Village Voice*. She has published three books of essays: *Beginning To See The Light*, *No More Nice Girls*, and most recently *Don't Think, Smile! Notes on a Decade of Denial*. She is a fellow of the Nation Institute.

Howie Hawkins is a Green Party activist in Syracuse NY and worked as a Nader 2000 Field Coordinator in upstate New York. He has participated in independent political efforts since 1967 and the U.S. Green movement since its beginning in 1984. A member of the Coordinating Committee of The Greens/Green Party USA, he was the Green candidate for mayor of Syracuse in 1997 and for Congress from Syracuse in 2000. A carpenter by trade, he currently works as a truck loader and cop organizer. His articles have appeared in many movement publications, including *Against the Current*, *New Politics*, and *Z Magazine*.

Joanne Landy was an active supporter of Ralph Nader's 1996 and 2000 presidential campaigns. In 1996, she organized a major forum at the Ethical Culture Society in New York City with Nader and representatives of several independent political action groups. In 2000 she was co-organizer of the statement *442 Academics, Intellectuals, Artists and Writers for Nader*, which gave enthusiastic but critical support to the Nader campaign. Landy has written on a wide range of domestic and international topics in *The New York Times*, *The Progressive*, *New Politics*, *Peace & Democracy*, and other publications.

The Democrats: No Way to Fight the Right

Thomas Harrison

IN THE AFTERMATH OF THIS STRANGE ELECTION, Nader voters like me, and many of you, are taking a beating. Liberal columnists like Tony Lewis and Eric Alterman are carrying on a relentless, obsessive vendetta against Nader himself. There's a very nasty outburst against us by Todd Gitlin and Sean Wilentz in the latest *Dissent* along with a wonderful reply by Ellen Willis. We're blamed for Gore's defeat and every bad thing that's happened since. With the news of each fresh atrocity from the Bush White House, Gore supporters say, essentially: "See what you did? Now are you satisfied?" Nader's — in my opinion, sloppy and misleading — remarks during the campaign belittling the differences between Democrats and Republicans are endlessly dredged up to prove his fanatical blindness, arrogance, sectarianism and a host of other sins. And now, the tax cut, arsenic in drinking water, the Alaska pipeline, global warming, carbon dioxide, endangered species, all these are supposed to prove that it was sheer madness not to vote for Gore. "Now that you can see what was at stake," these people say, "you must realize how reckless, self-indulgent, and self-righteous it was to vote for Nader."

Actually, I think that what we're seeing in Washington proves the exact opposite. When you look at the Democratic *response* to these atrocities, when you remember how Gore and other members of his party handled the contested election last fall, and when you think about some of the other big issues, issues that don't happen to be controversial right now because there really *is* no fundamental disagreement about them between the two parties, then I think it ought to be clear that voting for Nader was the acme of common sense and realism.

There *are* big differences between the two parties and Nader was foolish, I think, to deny or minimize them. Had Gore won the White House, he'd be proposing different policies on a number of things, certainly on environmental issues. He would probably not be demanding another huge tax cut for the rich. His Cabinet would not have included fundamentalist loonies like John Ashcroft.

This is scary, dangerous stuff Bush is doing, but look at the Democratic response. Where is Gore, the "environmentalist"? Virtually silent. What about Congress? Again, silence, passivity, deference or indifference. The Democrats act as though they've been overwhelmingly repudiated by the electorate. But they *won* the popular vote. What's keeping them from raising absolute hell about what Bush is doing? Why didn't they filibuster to block Ashcroft's appointment? Why aren't they calling for the impeachment of those five Supreme Court justices who brazenly stole the election for Bush? Why didn't even one Democratic Senator join the

Congressional Black Caucus in its protest against registering the electoral votes in Congress a little while ago? Where was Paul Wellstone? I think if even Paul Wellstone lacks the backbone to do anything about one of the most scandalous acts of political larceny in our nation's history, then that tells you the Democrats are really washed up as an opposition.

Remember how Gore refused to make a stink about the scrub lists and the harassment of black voters in Florida? I gather he refused on the basis that this would be "playing the race card." If Gore is incapable of sticking up for the civil rights of African Americans, even when he might win the election by doing so, what does this tell us? In the first place, that the strong loyalty shown by blacks to the Democratic Party is sadly misplaced. And in general that it's really suicidal to look to the Democrats even to defend us against the Right, let alone for any progressive change.

Liberalism has been reduced these days to a purely defensive posture: unconditional allegiance to the Democratic Party to defend what remains of the gains of the 60s or the 30s, to defend abortion rights, to avoid losing ground. Nader called it "low expectation liberalism." Liberals are in the historically unprecedented position, for liberals, of defending the status quo — that is, of being conservatives in the literal meaning of that word. Their slogan is basically "stand pat!" They condemn the Right for being . . . radicals! They hope for nothing, they aspire to nothing — to nothing new that is, for example a redistribution of wealth, the reallocation of resources from the military to education, health care, repairing the infrastructure and other social needs, a democratic, non-militaristic foreign policy. You hardly ever hear any talk about these things today.

But the Democrats will not even do that much — that is, they will not even "stand pat." Surely the last 20 years or so demonstrate that they will cave in over and over again to the Right, as long as the Left has no independent political presence, no electoral voice of its own, pulling them in the opposite direction. The Democratic Party has moved left only when it is threatened by mass upheaval — like the industrial union movement in the 30s, the civil rights, anti-war and women's movements in the 60s and early 70s, or by third parties like the Populists in the 1890s and the Socialist Party in the early part of this century. The problem is that labor, minorities, women, gays are imprisoned within the Democratic Party and can therefore be taken for granted by Democratic politicians. They exert no pressure from the left.

THE NADER CAMPAIGN WAS AN OPPORTUNITY to make a breakthrough, to *begin* to create a force that can pull American politics to the left. For most of the organized progressive forces, however, it was a missed opportunity. Worse than that, it was a deliberately *spoiled* opportunity. The

big, progressive groups, feminists, environmentalists, civil rights organizations, and the unions not only stuck to their lesser evil commitment to the Democrats, they went all out to destroy the Nader campaign itself.

Nader got 2.9 million votes. How many might he have gotten had it not been for the frenzied demolition job launched by the Sierra Club, NARAL, the League of Conservation Voters on the eve of the election? In the summer polls, he was close to 10 percent. That's significant. One out of ten voters, instead of the one out of 40 that he ended up with. In fact, perhaps twice this number or more were attracted to the campaign's message, especially young people, many too young to vote. I had an opportunity to see this for myself as a high school teacher.

What if Nader had been in the debates? Imagine how he might have turned them upside down, forced Gore and Bush to talk about things that have been taboo in mainstream American political discourse for most of this century: Plutocracy, oligarchy, how the rich rule this country, workers' rights. Nader had an exciting, immensely popular message, a message with the power to inspire and educate many millions of people, not just 2.9 million — but it reached only a small portion of the electorate.

But Nader himself also helped to spoil his chances, I think. Blacks, feminists and gays are among the most combative and progressive constituencies and should naturally be in the forefront of a third party movement — but Nader seemed almost willfully to keep them at arm's length. Until the end of his campaign, he rarely spoke about racism, hardly ever mentioned homophobia and consistently went out of his way to avoid using the word abortion. I went to the big rally at Madison Square Garden and I didn't hear him use that word once. Whatever blind spots or retrograde attitudes Nader might have on these matters — and I can't speak to that because I don't know — this was a *strategic* mistake of major proportions because these constituencies were badly needed by the campaign. If Nader's silences and evasions on race, gender, reproductive rights, homophobia and so on were part of some political calculation that this would broaden his appeal by avoiding touchy subjects and focusing exclusively on anti-corporate themes, then this was not only stupid, because it actually narrowed his appeal, but unprincipled.

And all this provided a field day for people like Jesse Jackson, Gloria Steinem and Barney Frank, by giving them free ammunition in their efforts to smear and destroy the Nader campaign at all costs, which they would have done even if Nader had been perfect on these issues, because of their a priori commitment to the Democratic Party. It will take a lot of hard political work to detach black, feminist and gay activists from their self-destructive dependence on the Democrats, and even if Nader *had* been perfect, we probably wouldn't have seen the NAACP, NOW and other such organizations supporting his campaign last fall — but at least many more of their constituents might have been won over this time, and thus started the ball rolling.

And now, actually since the election, Nader has been almost as invisible as Gore, which is a terrible shame and a waste. He should have been in the thick of things in Florida, and with the dereliction of the Democrats as glaring as it is right now, it's crucial for him to make himself heard as loudly as possible. It would be natural for him to feel crushed and bitter after the way he's been treated, but it does make you wonder if there's any future for a continuing *Nader*-led third party effort.

With all its faults though the Nader campaign did provide people with the chance to declare their independence from Democratic Party lesser evilism, or at least to seriously consider doing so. We'll never know how many millions really wanted to vote for Nader but got cold feet in the end. And it provided a glimpse of the *potential* for bringing social movements together around a common, anti-corporate, pro-democracy program and an electoral vehicle.

It *didn't* come together this time, which doesn't mean it never can. And anyway, what's the alternative, short of giving up that is? But giving up is precisely what Gitlin, Wilentz, Jackson, Steinem, Frank, Sweeney and co. advocate — that's what it means to support the Democrats no matter what they do on the ground that at least they're not Republicans. They know the Democrats will never bring about real change, and they've made their peace with that. "Low expectation liberalism" is really "no expectation liberalism."

NADER VOTERS COURAGEOUSLY RESISTED THIS COUNSEL OF DESPAIR. They rejected the trap of rightward-moving lesser evilism — but I have to say, not always consistently. There was and is still a lot of reluctance to "hurt the Democrats," and a belief, sometimes encouraged by Nader himself, that building a third party is actually a way of reforming the Democratic Party.

I think the Democratic Party is not and never has been reformable. It's as much a servant of corporate power as the Republicans, but with a different style and a more liberal approach. I realize some will hear this as "there's no difference between the two parties," which I earlier criticized. But all I'm saying is what should be obvious: whatever the parties do differ on, there are *more* and *greater* areas of agreement. Consider, for example: foreign policy, trade, nuclear weapons, unconditional support for Israel and the oil despots of the Middle East, constructive engagement with China, a \$300 billion plus military budget, poverty-level minimum wage, punishment and executions as the answer to crime, rather than a real war on poverty, keeping health care in the hands of private enterprise, ending welfare. These are all things the parties continue to agree about. And even where there's *verbal* disagreement, it's important to remember that talk is cheap. On the environment, for example, it's true that Gore at least believes in global warming — but so what? Clinton signed the Kyoto agreement, promising that the U.S. would cut carbon

dioxide emissions by seven percent from 1990 levels by 2012 — but they've already risen by 10 percent. The point is that when the corporations say no, Gore and Clinton almost always back down.

We need a party that offers progressive alternatives on all these matters. But to build it, we have to win over most of those who currently vote for the Democrats, and we can't do this without sometimes electing Republicans. There's no other way. That's why "strategic voting" — you remember, that was the idea of only voting for Nader in states that were safe Gore states — was, I think, a mistake. Our message needed to be: "vote for Nader, period, because this is the first step toward a progressive party that can win some day" — not "electing Gore is our top priority, and we'd also like to get a lot of votes for Nader, but only if it doesn't hurt the Democrats." That's saying that we don't really think of ourselves as an alternative, as a rival to the Democrats, but only as a pressure group, or a protest vehicle. I think that a third party movement that takes itself seriously as a contender for political power has to say: "we're in this for the long run, we're going to go for every office within our resources now, and more at the next election, and we're running against both Republicans and Democrats; we want people to have a clear choice."

SO WHAT ABOUT THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE? Obviously, it's no good sitting back and waiting another four years until the next presidential election, hoping that Nader will run again. And frankly, I'm not even sure that Nader himself isn't more of a liability than an asset. No, what we've got to do is build on whatever momentum still exists from last year's campaign, keep working on a third party movement. But a *movement* must be much more than recruiting people one at a time to the Green Party. I wonder if the Greens by themselves can ever grow big enough to provide the needed critical mass. In any case, there's got to be campaigning for third party politics in the unions, the women's movement, the environmentalist movement, the black and Latino communities. That's where the big divisions are — the environmentalist organizations have 20 million members, for example! Only when we've pushed some of these existing groups — and the labor movement is especially key — towards political independence, will a mass party of the Left come into being.

Nader vs. the Big Rock Candy Mountain

Jesse Lemisch

I SUPPORTED RALPH NADER FOR PRESIDENT IN 2000. Nonetheless, I think that in some ways Nader and the Greens offer a bad model for the future of independent politics, and I've been struck by a kind of loyalty oath among Nader supporters that has stood in the way of serious debate and analysis. This is a brief preliminary contribution to critical rethinking of *one* aspect of the campaign, aiming to improve our continuing efforts to develop independent politics.

Here is my criticism, first in summary: Nader and the Greens abstemiously turned their backs on people's reasonable and deeply human longings for abundance, joy, cornucopia, variety and mobility, substituting instead a puritanical asceticism that romanticizes hardship, scarcity, localism and underdevelopment — a traditionalism that blinds us to the possibility of utopia. I see in this complex, vestiges of an Old Left/New Left puritanism, a continuing quest for a kind of a faux working-class authenticity and a reaffirmation of the Protestant Ethic. Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* continues to have much to tell us about puritanical asceticism.

A lot of this austere and abstinent complex has been seen as just a quirk of Nader's character, but it's more pervasive than that. Many of us who gave general support to Nader nonetheless saw and spoke — as Landy and I did in our pro-Nader petition — of serious problems in his views on abortion, race and gender. Some friendly critics spoke of Nader's "tin ear" or "blind spot" in these areas. But these are *not* just blind spots or imperfections in an otherwise good program, but rather add up to a coherent and systemic component of Nader's thought, rooted in a Gitlinesque horror of identity politics. Nader's contempt for what he called "gonadal politics" is as deep as Todd Gitlin's contempt for identity politics, and despite the political gap between them, there is an interesting congruence on this.

Similarly, a romance of parsimoniousness and asceticism is not just a quirkiness of individual Greens but rather permeates Green thought. (In this paper I often speak simultaneously about Nader and about different kinds of Greens. Obviously, there are differences. But to deny the fundamental consensus among them on asceticism is to throw out all reasonable generalization. The central point is not whether there is explicit and total agreement, but whether these beliefs are ever questioned. My experience and reading indicate that these values are hegemonic and are publicly unquestioned among Greens.) Such blinders leave the left incapable of tangling with many difficult questions that independent politics *should* face: What, after all, is the matter with food in abun-

dance, and wonderful material goods? Might globalization, under popular control, be a good thing, or is it intrinsically and inevitably bad? Might large-scale agriculture, under different conditions, be a good thing? How can it be that in 2000 Nader still believed in the family farm as what he anachronistically called “the cultural backbone of America”? Why do we hear so much about such archaic notions as “self-reliance”? Are TV, Viagra, Prozac and tourism necessarily, as Nader thinks, bad things? What about cars? Even if we were to deal successfully with pollution, I just don’t think that Greens would accept, much less delight in, the utopian potential of the easy mobility given to us by cars.

The supposed inherent evil of cars offers an example of the prejudices that prevent Greens from planning realistically for utopia. In the sixties, Amsterdam anarchists (“Provos”) developed the notion of the “white bicycle” — bicycles that were to be used, without charge, left in the streets, and picked up by other cyclists as needed. With today’s more advanced technology, including computers, plastic swipe cards, and Global Positioning Systems, fleets of publicly owned pollution-free “white cars” could be easily available to users, providing the marvels of door-to-door city-to-city travel pretty much on one’s preferred schedule without toting one’s stuff from one mode of transportation to another, and with severely cut congestion. Shouldn’t we give such solutions some experimental attention — both for themselves, and as a suggestion of how to achieve the fruits of modernity in socially better ways?

After I had completed this, I did a Google search on the Internet under “Provo + White Bicycle.” I found that the Provos’ White Bicycles left historical tracks — even the British rock group Tomorrow’s 1967 “My White Bicycle.” For a brief time (and unsuccessfully) in Amsterdam in the 1980’s, White Bicycles did indeed evolve into White Cars (“Witkar”) different from but also with some similarities to what I have proposed above. I am happy to have my ideas reinforced, but troubled that I find no evidence for U.S. Green attempts in this direction. I believe that the explanation for this is that Green asceticism expressed in simplistic anti-car views prevents planning for such utopian forms.

Do demographic and other data support Green notions of scarcity, or does the Green mystique of scarcity *precede* investigation of the realities? Are Green ideas of “sustainability” sometimes rooted in apparent givens that turn out in fact to be political choices? For instance, would population decrease with increased education for women and increased social and cultural rewards for female roles other than motherhood? Empirical study after empirical study seems to support this conclusion, which points the way to a radical feminist alternative to Green strategies for cutting back demands for food and fuel. These latter seemingly given demands would decline with a declining birth rate.

So it’s not clear whether the real limits of what the earth can produce *cause* the ascetic complex, or whether the ideology comes first, a

priori, focusing attention on the limits rather than the possibilities. What ever became of the notion of planning — figuring out how to accomplish social goals, especially with newer technologies? Are there problems with my “white car” proposal? If so, could we, rather than simply opposing cars, figure out how to experiment with and overcome these problems? Could we imagine developing actual expertise and — dare I say? — our own *experts*, rather than leaving these matters to the experts who work for the bad guys, as we inevitably will if we simply abandon the field, out of hostility to planning and to expertise. These ideas should not be misread as technocracy, Sovietism or elitism. American leftists put nails in their own coffin and lag far behind European leftists when they fail to recognize the possibility of socially responsible planning. Similarly, our failure to propose modes of development different from those offered by IMF-WTO and the rest leaves the Third World underdeveloped, lacking things they want that we don’t think they should want or have. Who will want to join with us if we eschew modernity and instead advocate a romance of backwardness, Spartan living and underdevelopment? Nader and the Greens, as I will show, will not get us to the Big Rock Candy Mountain that so many have longed for.

WOULD THE CAMPAIGN HAVE BEEN A BETTER ONE, as many feel, if we had seen more of Winona LaDuke, Nader’s Native American vice-presidential candidate? Did a woman’s presence on the ticket somehow compensate for Nader’s 1996 condemnation of “gonadal politics” and for his continuing reticence on abortion and for what even LaDuke delicately acknowledges to be his unfamiliarity with women’s issues? LaDuke says: “Ralph didn’t say much about women’s issues because he’s a 67-year-old Lebanese bachelor and his familiarity with some of the experiences that I have had is nonexistent. He speaks from his own experience.” (Jennifer Baumgardner, “Kitchen Table Candidate,” *Ms*, April/May 2001, p. 53.)

LaDuke dodges questions about abortion, ranking choice fairly low as only one of a “spectrum of issues.” Instead she presents an essentialist and traditionalist picture of women’s role. Reflecting the content of the interview, *Ms* gives its cover to LaDuke, portrayed as mom with child, and seems utterly to miss the antiquated *Ladies Home Journal* flavor of the cover and the title given to the article.

LaDuke never really answers the interviewer’s question: “What do you say to the criticism that you talk about motherhood rather than feminism?” Her ranking of feminism below motherhood is related to her endorsement of a traditionalism that places women in a subordinate role. Consider LaDuke’s satisfaction with women’s roles among her people: “In the context of most native women, you cannot separate the woman from her community. We have always had roles that women have and roles men have. My assessment of my community, and I can’t speak for all native communities, is that *we got the confusion about roles all worked*

out a long time ago" (emphasis added).

This is an astounding statement, implying that LaDuke can somehow manage to be both a feminist and be content with traditional gender roles. Interviewer Baumgardner comments approvingly about LaDuke, "In everything she did, she saw her goal as restoring native tradition, culture, language, and reclaiming land . . ." What I get from this is traditionalism, essentialism and the subordination of women. Is this just LaDuke, or does it fit with Nader? Let me connect this to Nader's traditionalism and then return to the issue of asceticism.

A year ago today during a Nader talk at the Washington protests against the IMF and World Bank, I first heard Nader's oft-used anecdote about the desirability of mud huts for Egyptian peasants. (He continues to use this anecdote in 2001.) Nader is a fan of Hassan Fathy, the Aga Khan Award-winning Egyptian architect who built the village of New Gournia from bricks of mud and straw. It was Fathy's hope, according to the *New York Times*, to build a village where peasants "would follow the way of life that I would like them to." Fathy rejected "the idea of running water" partly because it was too expensive, but also because, as the *Times* reported, he found it "unsuited to village customs." Instead, he installed neighborhood wells. Although, the *Times* reports, Fathy "rhapsodized about the result," the *peasants* have rejected it: they "see no charm in communal wells and prefer running water."

The themes of Nader and women, asceticism, and the romance of underdevelopment come together in Fathy's reaction to the peasants' rejection of his plan: "It is hard to imagine a village in Egypt without its black-robed women, . . . erect as queens, each with her water jar carried nonchalantly on her head, and it will be a pity to lose the sight." How picturesque! This, finally, is what Nader is endorsing. With Nader's admiration of this archaic design, and LaDuke's dedication to preserving traditional ways, including sex roles, we have a complex that is traditionalist and rejects modernity — combined with a mystification of underdevelopment and the subjugation of women.

This romanticization of hard, peasant life should remind us of Nader's mind-boggling revival of the Jeffersonian romance of the yeoman farmer. (The VoteNader website carried as Reason #14 to Vote for Nader: "Ralph Nader protects family farms, 'the cultural backbone of America.'") Critics of agribusiness have alerted us to the environmental horrors of today's large-scale agriculture. Partly in reaction to such horrors, but also for culturally conservative reasons, Nader seeks to revert to a historical "reliance on the family farm as the main production unit," and to construct a system of "Independent, entrepreneurial food producers with close proximity to the land." He also seeks a decentralized market infrastructure, to foster "a fast growing trend of consumers buying food locally from farmers markets, farm stands . . ."

Think of it: declaring our independence from the delights of world-

wide all-season distribution of food. What an advance, rejecting one of the glories of modernity! Beneficiaries that we Americans are, we have no idea of the utopian significance of abundance to so many others. I recall the day in Moscow in November 1978 when the city was abuzz, a near riot, because it had been heard that actual, big fat tomatoes from Rumania were being sold in the streets. To Muscovites, tomatoes meant a form of utopia. Today, fast refrigerated transportation brings to the streets of New York flowers and fruits from all over the world. In the face of this dream come true, why romanticize localism, and little farm stands?

The availability for sale in the streets of New York City of fine, luscious tomatoes from Israel and the Netherlands gives the lie to the romantic notion that vegetables must be of local origin to be good. These tomatoes prefigure a socialist system of rapid world-wide food distribution, rooted in joy rather than profit, that we might devise and seek to make real if we could free our brains of archaic localist prejudices. If the history of sugar is wrapped up with the history of imperialism and racism, does that make sweets less of a delight to eat? Repeatedly, it seems, Greens condemn as intrinsically bad things whose badness is rooted only in their place in the existing capitalist market structure. The intrinsic virtues of the same things — whether globalization or tomatoes — would emerge if they were placed under popular control. Getting over notions of “self-reliance” would enable us to envision a world in which each area, tied into a socialist global economic system, produces those transportable things that it is good at or that are supported by climate.

And, to return to Fathy and to Nader and the romance of small farms: this is an urbanite’s fantasy that provides ideological support for continuing a cruel and hard way of life. Small-scale agriculture is among the worst kinds of labor and conditions of life. Only those still blinded two centuries later by the romance of the Jeffersonian yeoman farmer ideal would fail to see these horrors.

AGAINST SUCH ASCETIC NOTIONS, I have argued elsewhere (together with Naomi Weisstein) in favor of cornucopia — which the U.S. left disliked even before the Greens came on the scene. We noted Hans Magnus Enzensberger’s insightful idea that “deep social needs” that come through in “depraved form” in the media convey a kind of utopianism: “Goods and shop windows, traffic and advertisements,” may perpetrate a swindle, but “a swindle within the present social structure . . . is the harbinger of something else . . . Consumption as spectacle contains the promise that want will disappear . . . The need — it is a utopian one — is there . . . Consumption as spectacle is — in parody form — the anticipation of a utopian situation.”

Seeing the utopian content in consumption, Weisstein and I argued against “the puritanism . . . that cuts much of the left off from the authentic longings of most of humanity.” We concluded: “At a time when

something that called itself socialism is in ruins in part because it provided neither bread nor roses, more than ever we need to revive and reconsider the joy surrounding both material and spiritual cornucopia . . . this means moving beyond a socialism of scarcity, efficiency, and utilitarianism to a socialism of abundance and joy, a socialism that makes real the pursuit of happiness . . . ”

A new book adds strength to such views, by showing the persistence of myths of what to Greens would be seen as obscene plenty and overconsumption. That book is Herman Pleij's *Dreaming of Cockaigne: Medieval Fantasies of the Perfect Life* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2001). The medieval myth of Cockaigne was nicely represented in the New York Public Library's recent exhibit "Utopia: The Search for the Ideal Society in the Western World" (www.nypl.org/utopia) where the Land of Cockaigne is described as "a medieval peasant's dream, offering relief from backbreaking labor and the daily struggle for meager food." In fact, as Pleij writes, it was more than that: "Dreaming of Cockaigne was a means of alleviating the everyday worries of peasants and the lower middle classes . . . rebelliousness . . . manifests itself in the form of aggressive and highly imaginative hyperbole, which pits itself against the often intolerable scarcity and misery of everyday life by defying it with a superabundance so exaggerated as to be provoking."

Here's something of what it's like in the Land of Cockaigne, as presented in myth, poetry, oral tradition and art: people are arrested for working; the more you sleep, the more you earn; there are four Easters and four Christmases a year; shops supply goods for nothing, and everyone finds beautiful clothes on their doorstep; there is singing and dancing to flutes and trumpets; sex is easily available, "with ever-willing partners" ("Nothing sinful about it, no one feels shame"); owls lay fur coats; horses are born with saddles. And the food: mountains of grated cheese sit on a sea of Greek wine; grilled fish, roast geese, buttered larks and other birds fall from the sky like rain, directly into people's mouths, together with "custards, pancakes, pies and tarts"; roast pigs offer themselves for carving; trees bear ripe fruit all year long, and artichokes are always ripe for picking; fish leap out of the river and offer themselves for food; houses are made of sugar and cakes and meat and fish, and streets are paved with pastry. (Indeed, the word cockaigne probably means "land of cakes," as well as "abundance").

Cockaigne and the Protestant Ethic are directly at odds. One familiar with the life and work of Benjamin Franklin, and with the fact that Max Weber saw him as the personification of the spirit of capitalism, can't help but recall some of the virtues which young Franklin attempted to practice: "Temperance. Eat not to dulness. Drink not to elevation. Chastity. Rarely use venery but for health or offspring . . . "

The focus in Cockaigne on "vast quantities of food," Pleij writes, "illustrates how, in the middle ages, fears of hunger were dispelled by con-

juring up images of food in mind-boggling quantity and variety.” With Cockaigne, we have gone far beyond such prosaic modern left goals as “adequate food.”

THE MOST FAMOUS REPRESENTATION OF “The Land of Cockaigne” is the 1567 painting by Pieter Breughel (The Elder). (It was also represented visually in Niccolo Nelli’s 1564 etching “Description of the Great Land of Cockaigne where he who Sleeps the Most Earns the Most” — www.nypl.org/utopia, q.v. also for mention of 18th century feast days in Naples involving erection of a “Cuccagna arch made of meats, cheese, bread, fruits, and vegetables . . .”) But Breughel’s vision seems a hostile one. When an engraving version was published, it was accompanied by a poem by Hieronymous Cock attacking “loafers and gluttons.” The painting shows a slothful and overfed clerk, peasant and soldier lying about, the unused tools of their trade carelessly strewn around them. A half-eaten egg runs between them, and a goose reclines on a silver platter, waiting to be eaten. A traveler eats his way through a mountain of pudding; we see a fence made out of sausages.

Human dreams of cornucopia have endured throughout history, in culture after culture, and in popular memory and tradition. Mythic lands of abundance long pre-date Cockaigne, and there are other such lands with other names: for the Germans, Schlarrefenland, the land of milk and honey; for the Dutch Luikkerland (“lazy luscious land”); and various Topsy-Turvy worlds. And, at the beginning, some saw America through the lens of Cockaigne, or as Eden.

In mid-twentieth century America, I grew up with Burl Ives’s recording of “Big Rock Candy Mountain.” And many of us have recently seen the Coen Brothers’ magnificent movie, *O Brother Where Art Thou?* which begins with the original song:

A burly bum . . . sang a song
Of the land of milk and honey . . .
Where there ain’t no snow
Where the sleet don’t fall
And the winds don’t blow . . .
Where you sleep all day,
Where they hung the jerk
That invented work . . .
There’s a lake of stew
And ginger ale too . . .
There’s a lake of gin
We can both jump in . . .
We can sleep all day
And the bars all have free lunches . . .
And there ain’t no cops . . .
And the hens lay soft-boiled eggs

Oh the buzzin' of the bees
In the cigarette trees
Near the soda water fountain
At the lemonade springs
Where the bluebird sings
On the big rock candy mountain

Nader and the Greens won't get us to the Big Rock Candy Mountain. Longings for abundance are so deep in human history that I don't think the left is going anywhere so long as it has a semi-religious commitment to parsimoniousness. People want bread — and roses too. Let's build this into our left vision.*

*In *Work Without End: Abandoning Shorter Hours for the Right to Work* (1988) and elsewhere Benjamin Kline Hunnicutt has explored the vanishing from labor's agenda since the New Deal of demands for a shorter work week. A century-plus struggle, beginning in the 1830s, came to an end with the achievement of the 40-hour week. The left's general acquiescence in this (with honorable exceptions) seems another mark of its unquestioning acceptance of the Protestant ethic.

The Democrats: and Left Masochism

Ellen Willis

I WANT TO FIRST STIPULATE THAT I TOTALLY AGREE with what's been said about Nader's puritanism and his failure to engage with social issues in any way. I do think this is a systemic problem of the left, or rather two related problems: the strong strain of moral and cultural conservatism on the left, and the debilitating division between class politics and cultural politics that is perpetrated from both sides of that gap — as if it were possible to have an effective left that didn't understand and deal with the relationship between culture and economics. But I want to speak about several other issues that I think transcend the issue of Nader himself and the campaign, and address the larger significance and future significance of this campaign.

The three things I want to talk about are first, the flattening out of political debate in this country; second, the issue of the Democratic Party which I do think is really important to address because the left's relationship with the Democrats, which I called in my recent *Dissent* article “masochistic,” is crucial to whether people can see their way toward another kind of politics. The third issue is the question of third party movements themselves, whether they make sense as a strategy for radical politics and whether anything about the Nader campaign should make us think in new ways about this question, which has been debated on the

left for a long time.

It should be obvious that what's permissible in terms of debate, not only during elections but in general in the mainstream media, has been kept within narrower and narrower bounds, particularly on the issues of corporate hegemony, global capitalism, plutocracy, economic policy overall. That is, on social issues like race and feminism and the environment, there is at least an argument going on. On economics, there's a near-total blackout of any real dissent beyond the alternative and the left press. There's more or less total consensus on the proposition that no change beyond the most trivial tinkering is possible or desirable, that any political position to the left of the New Democrats is a throwback to a bygone era, at best irrelevant and at worst pernicious. This argument is promoted by many liberals and even by people who call themselves leftists. Left alternatives are not supported by the American people, so the argument goes, and therefore to even bring them up is anti-democratic. In this context, Nader's huge significance in 2000 was that he was a national figure with visibility and a reputation, whose dissent, or at least so his supporters thought, could not be totally ignored and brushed aside.

Ironically, it turned out that the deterioration of the possibilities for political debate are even worse than we thought, and despite the fact that Nader is who he is, the media nonetheless did a fairly good job of ignoring and marginalizing him, with the shameful collaboration of all of the liberal establishment groups that other speakers have mentioned. And of course the networks were totally complicit in the scandal of the Democrats and Republicans getting together to decide they were going to control the presidential debates and exclude any candidates who were not Republicans or Democrats.

Beyond the observation other speakers have made that the Democrats as a liberal party are tied into the system and always have been tied into the system, the Democratic Party beginning in the 90's specifically, even more than in the past, has been operating according to a seemingly peculiar political contradiction. The Democrats' main constituencies are labor, blacks, women, gays, environmentalists. Without these constituencies and their organizations, the Democrats would never win an election and would have very little money as well. Yet it's become more and more blatant that these constituencies get almost nothing in return for being the backbone of the Party, such as it is.

The Democratic establishment doesn't seem to feel any obligation to its liberal wing even in the time-honored terms of coalition politics — you give them *something*, you have a vice presidential candidate who's slightly to the left of your presidential candidate, rather than, as in the case of Joe Lieberman, to the right. Just the fact that it's impossible to imagine Gore being elected and appointing a liberal equivalent of John Ashcroft, or nominating a Supreme Court equivalent of Scalia, tells the

story. Republicans, whose agenda is basically corporate, pander rather cynically to the Christian coalition, which delivers votes and also delivers a certain kind of moralism about the work ethic and discipline that's useful to the corporatists. The Democratic leaders refuse to "pander," even in token fashion, to their liberal constituencies. Yet those constituencies continue to support Democrats because the Republicans have become a party run by lunatics. The Democratic Party, however horrible it is, is the party of the non-lunatics.

This situation gives rise to a major double bind: when the Democrats get into power, they compromise with the Right and betray their left supporters; on the other hand, when they're out of power, they completely collapse and surrender to the Right. What you're doing when you're voting for Democrats, and I feel like I've done this myself many times, is voting for a party that you know is going to spit on you because if it's out of power it will be so supine that things will be even worse.

Why this dynamic among Democrats? It's not simply a matter of pragmatism. Democrats argue that the American public is in the middle, they simply have to go to the right to get elected, and so on and so forth. But the real reason, I believe, is that the Democratic power elite on some level feels delegitimized by its working-class, black and female constituencies. What it wants are the "legitimate" votes of suburban, white, middle-class, affluent males. Even liberal voters and organizations tend on some tacit level to accept the idea that they are not the "real" Americans the Democrats must pursue. Furthermore, liberalism itself is about compromise. In the past, liberals have been in the position of compromising with the bad cops of the left, watering down radicalism and substituting liberal reform proposals; now the people to negotiate with are on the right, yet liberals still have the same tropisms about civility and compromise and statesmanship. As a result, while they may succeed in watering down and slowing down the right-wing agenda, they cannot stop, let alone reverse, the rightward drift.

It's important to understand these dynamics on the working, down-to-earth level of party politics, rather than simply on the macro level of the Democrats' ultimate loyalty to corporatism. They help to explain how the Party actually works, and why more liberal voters and organizations don't rebel against the status quo. The Nader campaign challenged this unadmitted dynamic and I believe this is one reason why the anger at Nader has been so vitriolic. By the very fact of being the most serious left third-party candidate in a long time, Nader exposed a set of political tropisms that liberals and supporters of Democrats simply don't want to think about.

THE THIRD ISSUE I PROMISED TO RAISE IS THIRD PARTIES. Now, my basic assumption is that real change, whether inside or outside the government, whether you're talking about moving the Democrats to the left or

about a third party, can only come from the pressure of mass social movements. Yet during the Nader campaign I also began to see that the whole Kabuki dance of current mainstream politics between the center right and the far right forces us to consider third party politics in a new light. The lack of contention between the two major parties is having the frightening effect of delegitimizing politics as such to great numbers of people and is validating the idea that nothing can change. I've come to believe more than I have in the past that it's important to intervene in the electoral arena. And once you've accepted that proposition, the next logical step is that electoral reform is crucial — changing the winner-take-all system to one that's more hospitable to multiple parties, so that a dissident party can at least intervene in the debate, whether it can win or not, and not simply be dismissed as a spoiler. In other words, the left has to start agitating for such measures as proportional representation and runoff elections, as well as fighting the various kinds of disenfranchisement that take place routinely, not just in Florida 2000. In the present situation, one person one vote has become a radical demand.

Blame the Democrats, Not the Greens

Howie Hawkins

THE 2000 NADER CAMPAIGN POSITIONED THE GREEN PARTY as the principal electoral opposition to the two corporate parties in the U.S. Ralph Nader's vote was far ahead of all the other third party candidates combined. With nearly 3 million votes, 150,000 volunteers, and hundreds of new local Green organizations formed out of the campaign, the Green Party has the potential to build a viable alternative to the established politics of corporate bipartisanship.

Perhaps the best evidence of the Green Party's new position as an opposition that can no longer be ignored is the constant blame-Nader chorus from Democrats, professional liberal lobbyists, and corporate media pundits that continues unabated six months after the election. Nader has become a metaphor in U.S. political commentary for "spoiling" elections. Democrats constantly invoke Nader to say there is no alternative to the Democrats for progressives. The blame-Nader, Greens-are-spoilers refrain will only get more intense as Greens run candidates against both corporate parties in future elections. The Greens will have to turn the spoiler charge around. They will have to show how it is the Democrats who spoil U.S. elections by creating the illusion of choice when what they really do is put a progressive façade on the same basic corporate agenda that they share with the Republicans.

As liberals call for unity inside the Democratic Party to defeat the

Republican Right, it is important for Greens to keep explaining how conservative the Democrats are in practice. Progressive unity inside the Democratic Party means being junior partners in a coalition with the dominant corporate Democrats, whose bipartisanship in office means that unity inside the Democratic Party is unity with the Republicans in practice. The Bush policies that the Nader-blamers now invoke make this very point.

Arsenic in Drinking Water — The professional liberals blame Nader for Bush's decision to postpone for further study the new standards on arsenic in drinking water that were ordered by Clinton. Where were these liberals while the Clinton/Gore administration resisted the new standards for eight years? Where were the liberals last October when the Senate Democrats blocked stricter standards? It was only in the last month of his administration that Clinton signed the order on arsenic, an order which did not require compliance until 2004.

Greenhouse Gases and Global Warming — The professional liberals also blame Nader for Bush's decision to abandon the Kyoto Accords on greenhouse gas reductions. Again, where were these liberals while Clinton/Gore did nothing for eight years to bring the U.S. into compliance? Indeed, after increases in auto fuel efficiency standards were enacted by the Reagan and elder Bush administrations, Clinton/Gore broke their 1992 campaign promise to raise them further. They never proposed an increase in fuel efficiency standards while gas-guzzling SUVs proliferated and overall car fuel efficiency declined. Then, at the end of their administration, Clinton/Gore officials sabotaged the global climate talks in The Hague to implement the Kyoto Accords by demanding that U.S. carbon dioxide reductions be cut to the extent that U.S. forests and farms are carbon sinks.

Dioxin Study — Another blame-Nader issue has been the Bush administration's decision to not release an EPA study showing dioxin to be even more dangerous than previously believed. Yet the Clinton/Gore administration had twice suppressed earlier versions of this study that reached the same conclusion.

National Arctic Wildlife Refuge — Liberals blame Nader for Bush's intention to drill oil in this "North American Serengeti," but fail to note that in the last months of his administration Clinton rebuffed environmentalists' demand that it be designated a National Monument, which would have made it harder for the Bush administration to get the oil drilling approved by Congress.

Ergonomic Standards — Labor Democrats make a big deal of Bush

rescinding ergonomic standards to deal with carpal tunnel syndrome. But the Clinton/Gore administration delayed the implementation of these standards, which were drafted and ready to go in 1995. Meanwhile, they opposed labor on trade policy at every turn. At OSHA, they had the fewest workplace inspections and the most reductions and dismissals of violation fines of any administration since OSHA was formed. Clinton did nothing with the draft ergonomic standards until the very last day of his administration when on the night of January 19, while he pardoned Marc Rich but not Leonard Peltier, he signed the order on ergonomic standards. Then the Democrats in Congress rolled over to let Bush's rescinding of the order go forward.

Abortion Funding — Liberal feminists blame Nader for Bush's order to ban U.S. government money to organizations that perform abortions overseas. But Clinton, like every president since it was first issued by the previous Democratic President, Jimmy Carter, issued an order banning U.S. funds for abortions overseas. Bush expanded this order to include the organizations that perform abortions, not just the abortions themselves. The Democrats' support for funding restrictions made it easier for Bush to take them a step further. Back at home, the Democrats have made no challenge to the Hyde Amendment, which bars federal funding of abortions domestically. NOW mobilized 750,000 for the March for Women's Lives in 1992 against the last Bush administration. But they demobilized during the Clinton administration, giving the Democrats a free ride for eight years while abortion services were increasingly restricted in dozens of states by new laws requiring parental consent, waiting periods, and bans on late term abortions. While harassment lawsuits and violence against abortion providers, including seven murders, forced many abortion providers to close, Clinton's Justice Department did little to defend abortion clinics. He waited seven-and-a-half years to approve RU486. He cut the incomes of poor women and their children by signing the welfare repeal. He never proposed federal aid adequate to the needs for women's reproductive health and freedom. By the end of the Clinton administration, abortion services were available in only 15 percent of U.S. counties. Nader supported repeal of the Hyde Amendment, adequate funding for reproductive freedom, a guaranteed income above poverty, and enforcement of the law to protect abortion clinics. But when Nader became seen as a threat to Gore's election, the liberal women's organizations re-surfaced to spend millions on a campaign of scare ads declaring Nader a threat to abortion rights because "a vote for Nader is a vote for Bush."

Tax Cuts — Liberals were also blaming Nader for Bush's tax cuts . . . until the Democrats in Congress declared victory on a non-binding budget resolution that called for a tax cut for the rich of \$1.35 trillion in-

stead of Bush's initial bargaining position of \$1.6 trillion. As long as that Democratic "victory" holds, it will preclude for at least another decade any substantial federal investment in health care, education, infrastructure modernization, renewable energy, or other obvious needs. Of course, the Democratic platform did not propose such initiatives, either. Their alternative was the even more conservative fiscal policy of paying down the national debt, even when the economy is in a recession.

Bankruptcy Bill — Perhaps the biggest stretch for the Nader blamers is to blame him for the bankruptcy bill Bush signed that forces broke working people to pay off bank and credit card debts at usurious rates. To make this stretch, the liberals have to ignore Nader's long-time consumer advocacy for bank customers and his opposition to the wave of financial mergers and the deregulation legislation approved under the Clinton/Gore administration. And there is the telling fact that Democratic Senators voted 36 to 13 for the bankruptcy bill, including the New York liberals, Chuck Schumer and Hillary Clinton.

THE SAME BASIC ANALYSIS HOLDS for Star Wars, cabinet appointments, voting rights violations, and the other problems for which liberal Democrats try to blame Nader. The professional liberals who lead the labor, civil rights, environmental, and women's organizations provided political cover for the Democrats during the Clinton administration as it carried out the same corporate agenda that the Republicans support. The liberal lobbies kept their membership bases demobilized during the Clinton administration. It was only in the Fall, when Nader's support held in the 4 to 6 percent range in the polls, that the ranks were mobilized against Nader, not the Right.

The professional liberals demonstrated that they have more interest in their own career advancement through maintaining friendly ties to the Democratic administration than in advancing the issues of concern to their members. Now they are remobilizing against the Republicans in order to bring the Democrats back in. The challenge for the Greens is to go underneath the liberal leadership to the base of these organizations and win the ranks over to independent politics. The Greens will need to join the base in issue-oriented campaigns that build relationships, trust, and the sense that the Greens are fighting on their side. On that foundation, Greens can make the case that more will be gained on these issues from an independent challenge to both corporate parties than from another round of generic corporate government wrapped in the Democratic instead of the Republican brand label.

The Greens will not win over progressive Democratic voters by talking as if what they are trying to do is move the Democrats to the left. That will just encourage those progressives to stay where they are. When Nader said during the campaign that his votes would spill over the ticket,

to helping Congressional Democrats win back the House, he was giving credibility to the idea that the Democrats are worth electing. When Nader said that the Green challenge would have a positive collateral impact on the Democratic Party, he was giving progressive Democratic voters another thread on which to hang their vain hopes of reforming the Democratic Party. When the race got close, these kinds of statements gave implicit permission to wavering supporters to go back to Gore in a close election.

To Nader's credit, his campaign did not support the strategic voting scheme that became known as the "Ivins Rule" after Molly Ivins wrote that progressives should vote for Gore in swing states and for Nader in states where the vote was not close. The strategy of the Nader campaign was to win every possible vote in order to reach its goal of 5 percent and consequent public funding. Many of these votes were in swing states like Oregon, Washington, Wisconsin, and Michigan. Unfortunately, several prominent supporters like Ivins, Steve Cobble, and Michael Moore promoted the Ivins Rule. Steve Cobble, the former Political Director of the Rainbow Coalition who served as Senior Advisor to the Nader Campaign, wrote a paper explaining how a vote for Nader would not affect the Gore-Bush race in most states because the winner in these states was already clear and the electoral votes would be distributed on a winner-take-all bases. This paper was circulated by the campaign with the intention of helping Greens persuade vacillating supporters in states where the result was a foregone conclusion. But it was used by such Democratic groups as Greens for Gore to support Gore voting in swing states. After speaking at many of the Nader super-rallies, filmmaker Michael Moore declined to campaign with Nader in several swing states in the last two weeks of the campaign. Instead, he went to Florida to urge progressives there to vote for Gore. He claims in the May 4, 2001 edition of "Mike's Message," his periodic political commentary email, that the Nader campaign abandoned its strategic voting strategy in mid-October. But Nader's Campaign Manager, Theresa Amato, says that the strategy was always to win as many votes as possible in every state. The debate in the campaign at this time was whether more total votes could be won in the last weeks by focusing on decided states like Texas and New York or by shoring up support in swing states. The campaign decided on the latter approach, but the decision was not about Gore and not a rejection of strategic voting. It was simply about getting the most votes possible to reach the 5 percent goal.

In the end, however, the Nader campaign's message about the Democratic Party was irresolute. Nader and his spokespeople often answered the spoiler charge by saying that the Greens want every vote they can get for the Green ticket and, like other parties, they want to beat all their opponents, not help one opponent beat another opponent. But they also often talked about how a "side effect" of the campaign would be to

strengthen the hand of progressive Democrats. Worse, some supporters openly called for a Gore vote in swing states and also votes for “progressive” Democrats against Greens. Moore, for example, posted a special “Mike’s Message” for New Yorkers the day before the election urging a vote in the U.S. Senate race for Hillary Clinton rather than the Green candidate, Mark Dunau.

IN THE FUTURE, THE GREENS NEED TO BE CLEAR that what they are doing is not about improving the Democratic Party. They need to oppose the “inside/outside” strategy of supporting liberal Democrats and running Greens only against conservative Democrats. Nader had the right message during the campaign when he often answered spoiler charges with “you can’t spoil a system that is already rotten.” But rather than developing this analysis, his post-election statements remain mixed. After taking heat from the blame-Nader crowd for early post-election statements saying that Greens should not worry about the fate of progressive politicians who choose to stay Democrats when the Greens run against them, Nader seems to have returned to the muddled inside/outside approach in an attempt to blunt the spoiler charge. “You’ve spoken before about Greens having to run against Democrats, even progressives like Wellstone,” Nader was asked in a *Los Angeles Times* interview on May 6, 2001. Nader replied: “I doubt Greens will be running against these kinds of Democrats. They’re more likely to run against conservative Democrats, or someone who just gives lip service to liberal causes. We may have helped cost the Democrats a couple of House seats, but Maria Cantwell [D-Washington] wouldn’t be in the Senate without Green support. And we really went after Senator Spencer Abraham in Michigan, who lost to a Democrat, Debbie Stabenow.” Rather than blunt the spoiler charge, defensive answers like this give it credence by accepting its premises. It does the Greens no good to claim any credit for these Democratic victories. In one of their first votes, both Cantwell and Stabenow supported corporate plunder by voting for the bankruptcy bill. Should the Greens claim credit for this? Such statements undermine the case for an independent Green Party. If the Democrats really are worth supporting in some cases, why not all cases? Why not just run progressives in more Democratic primaries?

Greens should do nothing to support progressives running as Democrats. Corporate money and interests dominate the Democratic Party. A few additional progressive Democrats in Congress, state legislatures, and city councils will not change the core policies of the Democratic Party. Indeed, the corporate powers need a few progressives to put a liberal veneer on their Democratic Party. Progressive Democrats are used that way by the powers that be. They only serve to make the Democrats look better than they really are. They obscure the reality of phony choices that spoil U.S. elections.

The Greens will be more effective if they challenge all progressives to leave the Democratic Party. The Greens should hold progressives to the Nader standard. Nader has had many opportunities to cash in, from lucrative offers by corporations to endorse products to the late-campaign overtures from the Gore campaign to endorse Gore in return for funding of Naderite organizations. Nader has always understood that his credibility would be irreparably harmed by any such sell out. The Greens should hold progressive Democrats to the same standard. How can they be serious about their progressive values given the company they keep in the Democratic Party with all that corporate money and all those sold-out politicians? How can they be in a party that stands diametrically opposed to them on the basic policies, from the war-level military spending and interventions to defend global corporate interests, to the neoliberal trade, financial, and public spending policies that redistribute wealth, income, and power toward the elite? Genuinely progressive Democrats, such as perhaps a Cynthia McKinney or a Jesse Jackson Jr., should be challenged to stop letting themselves be used by the corporate powers to varnish the image of the Democratic Party.

Despite the constant blame-Nader media barrage, many progressives have left the Democrats for the Greens since the election. Post-election polls show that more people claim to have voted for Nader than actually did. In a late November Zogby poll, 6 percent claimed to have voted for Nader, twice as much as his actual vote. In a December poll, the figure had climbed to 10 percent. Green Party activists report that many new people are coming in who sheepishly confess to having voted for Gore to stop Bush, but now want to forget the Democrats and build the Green alternative. The failure of the Democrats to fight the suppression of the black vote in Florida — not the Gore campaign, not the Clinton Justice Department, not one Democratic Senator in response to the Congressional Black Caucus call for a Senate challenge of the vote count — seems to have been the last straw for many of these ex-Democrats. The Greens have good reason to be hopeful that they can win progressive activists and voters away from the Democrats and build the Greens as a real alternative. Several criticisms of the Nader campaign and the Greens were raised at the Socialist Scholars Conference panel that I would like to discuss in a future article.

Below are some of the audience comments from the lively discussion that followed the presentations, along with responses from the panelists. These remarks have been edited to eliminate the repetition and awkward syntax that often occur when people speak spontaneously, but the meaning has not been altered. For a free electronic copy of the unedited transcript, write us at newpol@igc.org. For a hard copy, please send \$3.00 to New Politics, P.O. Box 98, Brooklyn, NY 11231. Note that not all comments were transcribed.

Alan Sokal: I agree with just about everything everybody said about the spinelessness and basically right-wing nature of the Democrats, and I also agree with most of the criticisms that Jesse made of Nader, but I was disappointed that there was almost no discussion of the hard-headed, tactical decisions that any progressive politics has to make and about how are we going to get there from here. We are a small movement: liberals, however bad they are, are a lot bigger than we are in numbers, we do have a winner-take-all electoral system, and while I'm totally in favor of proportional representation, preference voting and so on, I don't see how a legislature dominated by Democrats and Republicans is going to vote those things in. So we have a chicken-and-egg problem . . . we have a lot of trade-offs we're going to have to make between short-term and long-term goals.

I totally agree that sometimes we have to spoil it for the Democrats in order to wake them up to the fact that they can't always betray us. On the other hand, sometimes we have to give the carrot as well as the stick. So I think we need to have more thought about under what conditions are we going to use the carrot, and which carrot; under what conditions are we going to use the stick, and which stick; under what conditions are we going to run third-party candidates; under what conditions are we going to try to run a left-wing candidate in the Democratic primary. No one talked about that possibility and it's not necessarily a foregone conclusion that that wouldn't work, maybe we could do both simultaneously if we had two good candidates. I don't see why it has to be third-party politics, or left politics within the Democratic Party. If we had a strong progressive party, (which we don't) maybe we could do both simultaneously.

Reginald Wilson: It's too bad you didn't have a person of color on the panel, because that's a failing of Nader's campaign, and it's a failing on the panel. I am a life-long socialist, but I didn't vote for Nader. Nader has been absent when vigorous discussions have been going on about African-Americans, and he's been in that position long before the Green Party came along. People have known that for a long time. His response to minorities and people of color has been silence for a long time. I wonder

if the panel is aware of that, and says that as strongly as it needs to be said . . . People of color are approaching 25 percent of the population, and you can't act as though they don't exist. Nader also didn't speak about issues that have been mentioned by the panelists: gay rights, women and so forth, so I won't speak to that. But let me talk about why African-Americans, in overwhelming numbers, did not vote for Ralph Nader. One, he did not talk to them, and two, let me quote somebody who wrote a letter to Manning Marable, who supported Nader. He said at the end of his letter: "Nader doesn't have a snowball's chance in hell of being elected." That was real. You can talk about your sophisticated social politics and other things, but African-Americans live on the ground. Bad as the Democrats are, they have delivered the Voting Rights Act, the Civil Rights Act, every major piece of legislation that has come down the pike. They know there's a difference between the Democrats and the Republicans. And when it came down to a vote, nearly 90 percent of African-Americans voted for Democrats, lousy as they are. That's what's real, in terms of vote, not the pie in the sky, the socialism that others talk about. And that's something the left's got to deal with. The left does not deal in the minority community, it does not get at the grassroots level and try to organize blacks. This [statement] "276 Academics, Intellectuals, Artists and Writers" is an example of that. That's not where African-Americans are. If you're going to be an effective force for African-Americans and other minorities, you're going to have to get your hands dirty, and organize in their communities.

Ellen Willis: I want to speak to what Alan Sokal said. I agree that it would be wrong to make a fetish of third party politics as being *the* way that you're going to accomplish things. The point first is to have a movement, a movement based on people organizing not even on specific issues, but organizing for a radical alternative to the present system: a lot of different levels, a real left movement, a genuine radical movement. When it comes to individual situations, you can decide what the best tactics are. A movement is never in the abstract, it's always funneled into specific fights and specific times; many of them are not going to be electoral fights at all, they're going to be fights in one or another institution.

But often elections are a place where certain kinds of issues are fought out. In the present situation the Democratic Party is so inconducive to any form of real conflict or real debate that it's much more unlikely than it was in the past that the left is going to accomplish anything by pressuring the Democratic Party from within. However, I think in some circumstances it could nonetheless be useful.

Joanne Landy: I want to comment briefly on what Reggie Wilson said. It's indisputable that the weakest and most vulnerable people in our

society suffer most from Republican rule. But they are also the people who suffer most from the perpetuation of the two-party system that's beholden to the corporations. So this argument really has to be taken the next step: how are we going to get out of this situation? We'll never get out of it if, in (understandable and legitimate) terror of the Right we give in to people who are fomenting the Right.

Howie Hawkins: There are valid criticisms that can be made of Ralph Nader and Winona LaDuke on gender, race and cultural issues — in particular Nader. Nader is often correct in his position: he'll issue a statement — but he's not facile and comfortable in speaking about it. And that's a weakness in him as a candidate. But in terms of Nader not being there on race issues, I would say he's the kind of person that deals with "Can something happen?" "Can I contribute?" Let me give two examples. Redlining: he's been one of the most responsible in this country for documenting discrimination by banks and interest companies against communities of color, and has put resources, organization, time, effort and energy into getting documentation of that, and then laws that make it illegal. The other issue is generic drugs for AIDS in Africa . . . He played an instrumental role in raising that issue and exposing Gore going and fronting for pharmaceutical companies to prevent the South African government from producing generic AIDS drugs. That's just two issues. And then you have to turn it around, and ask where were Bill Clinton and Al Gore on the question of D.C. statehood, which basically says a majority black city does not have representation in the national legislature. They were absent. Nader was speaking out. I'm just trying to provide some balance.

Thomas Harrison: On what Alan said about democratic primaries: I think it's not just a question of keeping it simple, but of being clear and consistent. If you're building a third party, running candidates in Democratic primaries is inconsistent, in every way. By doing it you're suggesting that the Democratic Party may still be a vehicle for progressive change, if we elect enough good people. But for a third party to build, and to convince people that it's necessary to support it, it has to convince them that that's not true for the Democratic Party, that there is no alternative but to build an independent alternative, a third party. Plus what happens when someone wins a primary? How many times have we seen good people win elections and get co-opted into this very powerful and hence very seductive establishment? This is all the more likely because as Democrats they're not accountable to us, no matter what they say or think, or no matter what their intentions are. They're not accountable to us organizationally because they're not part of an organization that we control; they're part of another organization that's ultimately beholden to corporations, whether they themselves like corporations or not.

Stanley Aronowitz: . . . The fact of the matter is the Green Party does exist as a valid party in the State of New York, and did before the Nader campaign, and that's a very important achievement. It's important to know what that achievement, which means that we can now have a conversation in this city and in this state about the tactical questions of politics. The Labor Party tried, I belonged to the Labor Party, and then there was the Working Families Party, which was basically a shill for the Democratic Party in my opinion. But the Green Party got on the ballot. The issue is what do we do now, and whether the Green Party can be a really popular party of the various groups in protest against the contemporary politics of both political parties. I think it's possible to build the Green Party on that basis. If it builds itself on a narrow basis, it's going to go nowhere.

I want to revert, however, to Jesse's point. If this is a party of possibilities, and not a party of limits, then it will attract tens of thousands of people in this city, tens of thousands of people who never would be attracted by parsimony. If we can speak about the optimism of a new urban space, if we can speak about education, if we can speak about housing not in only the protest/resistance mode, but in the mode of possibilities, then people will begin to catch on that this is a genuine alternative. If we can go into Harlem, and walk the streets of Harlem as a political party, it will begin to make a difference, and people will not say, "We're getting betrayed by the Democrats, but there are a few crumbs on the table." It is possible, and I think people need to have that kind of confidence and if they do, then there'll be a real politics in New York, and there'll be a politics in California, and there'll be a politics mostly on the local level, because at this point the national election is four years away. . . .

Gabe Gabrielsky: I was congressional candidate in the New Jersey second congressional district for a Green Party. I'm also a member and a shop steward of HERE Local 54 in Atlantic City and an organizer for the New Jersey Green Party Labor Caucus. All the Nader trashing that's been going on here from the left is refreshing because it's Nader-trashing from the left. There's nothing I would disagree with, but there's something I would add. One of my biggest criticisms of Nader is that he is not a member of the Green Party. This is a tremendous impediment to organizing for the Greens, because there were people who were sympathetic to Nader, sympathetic to the campaign, and active in the campaign who have chosen not to join the Green Party. Why? "Well Ralph hasn't joined, why should I?" . . .

Joshua Block: What is wrong with being strategic? Choosing Nader as a presidential candidate, a flawed candidate but an available one and a strategic choice, a good one, but why is there so much backlash against strategic voting? Why would the campaign spend so much effort in swing

states like Florida and Oregon when perhaps it would have been easier to pick up more votes in upstate New York, and might have gotten closer to the 5 percent. I voted for Nader in New York but I would not have voted for him in Florida. Being a lefty is not enough for me. I want to be a smarty too, so I'm a strategic voter and proud of it . . .

Howie Hawkins: On the question of strategic voting: The Nader campaign inner circle had a debate on whether to go to states like Texas and New York to try to mobilize the overall vote, or to go to some of the swing states, to shore up support they already had there. In retrospect that was probably a mistake. Its effect on Gore was not the calculation, the calculation was what will get us the most total votes. I argued against that. We in New York and Texas were saying, "We've got a lot of voters that potentially you could get here if you'd get here more." On the whole, though, Nader spent more time in California than any other state, which was not in play as a swing state. . . .

The problem with strategic voting, that is, vote for a lesser evil Democrat, is that the Democrats are on the other side. If you look at their record, when push comes to shove, on key issues, Democrats like Wellstone and the Florida vote, when the Black caucus asked Democrats to step forward, they punt. They're not with us. On the question of movement and party, I think there are two levels to that. One is, you need to have movements, people involved, forming their own organizations, self-organizing, raising demands. That's what keeps the politicians honest. Look at the German Greens. They were radical when the movements were there in the 80s. As the movements receded, they started making compromises and ended up looking like the Social Democrats they started out to oppose. At another level, in this country, given the unique nature of parties as the extension of the electoral machinery of the state, to determine who gets on the ballot, and primaries instead of conventions, and enrollment where anybody can enroll in a party no matter what their politics rather than membership parties like in every other country, we've got to have another level besides the enrollment and what the state makes you do, we've got to have a membership organization . . .

Jesse Lemisch: On strategic voting, I wrote an article that appeared on *www.TomPaine.com* a week before the election saying that strategic voting would sink the Nader campaign . . . I think Molly Ivins did a really good job of subverting the Nader vote by telling everybody that if you were going to really endanger the Gore vote, you shouldn't vote for Nader. I don't think that was wise at all. On Howie's point about redlining, I hear again and again from people who want to defend Nader's record both in regard to gender and race: he undertook certain positions that had good implications for the people you were talking about, parallel arguments about his utter inability to utter the word abortion. He didn't

talk about racism, he didn't have it in him to talk about racism, he didn't have it in him to talk about sexism, as I said before I think he's got a "thing," a kind of a [Todd] Gitlin-esque "thing" about identity politics. We're not going to build a left as long as we have that kind of thing . . .

. . . the word "planning" fell into disrepute because of the Soviet Union. We don't have any ideas and we don't value or hire or work with people who design alternatives. Certainly our policies on globalization are terribly deficient, where we just say that the IMF and the WTO are *bad* but we don't offer any alternatives for improving the quality of life of peoples living in the Third World. So let me again assert that part of building a Left — and I think that these discussions around the Greens are very important — but part of building the Left in a practical sense is also to be utopian and to think of what it is that we offer, how we would design a better world.

Thomas Harrison: A last word or two about strategic voting: I don't think it is being a smarty to vote for Gore, whether it's in Florida or anywhere else — if it's the wrong thing to do it's wrong in any state of the union. And voting for Democrats, even good Democrats, is a kind of addiction for many progressives. In the immortal words of Nancy Reagan: "Just say no!" Just stop doing it. I sort of am for making a fetish on this question, I really think that is something you should train yourself never to do — and it'll be really good for you.

This symposium is the beginning, not the end, of a discussion of the prospects for independent politics in the United States. In upcoming issues of New Politics we will include more in-depth evaluation and debate about the Nader campaign, the Green Party and other independent progressive political parties, as well as about initiatives for electoral reforms such as proportional representation. We will also look at the implications for the United States of the evolution of new progressive political parties in other countries, such as Germany, where the Greens have championed the rights of immigrants, but nonetheless have worked hard to cut state-financed pensions of retired people. To help spark the discussion of independent politics in the U.S., we welcome responses — letters or articles — to the above symposium.

Feminism Today: **An Interview with Gwendolyn Mink**

GWENDOLYN MINK is author of *Hostile Environment* (2000), *Welfare's End* (1998), *The Wages of Motherhood* (1995), and *Old Labor and New Immigrants in American Political Development* (1986). She is also the editor of *Whose Welfare?* (1999) and co-editor of *The Readers' Companion to U.S. Women's History* (1998), and has written commentaries for the *New York Times*, *Newsday*, and the *San Jose Mercury News*. A Professor of Politics at the University of California at Santa Cruz for many years, in July 2001 she will join the faculty at Smith College. From 1995 to 1997, she co-chaired the Women's Committee of 100, a feminist mobilization against punitive welfare reform; currently, she is working on the Women's Committee's project to change welfare policy. Since 1999, she has been a member of the board of the Institute for Public Accuracy and a member of the coordinating committee of Scholars, Artists, and Writers for Social Justice. In January 2001, *Women's Enews* named her one of "21 Women Shaping the 21st Century." She was interviewed by Steve Shalom and Joanne Landy for *NEW POLITICS*.

New Politics: *During the Clinton years, many mainstream feminists had access to the White House. In return, these feminists believed they had to temper their criticisms of administration policy. Looking back over these eight years, would you say that women gained or lost from this arrangement?*

Gwendolyn Mink: Measured against the early and eager swipes the Bush (II) Administration has taken against women and women's rights, the Clinton Administration could be said to have been downright friendly to women and to the aims of organized feminism. From the closing of the White House Office on Women's Issues; to the ban on funding for international reproductive health services that counsel about, lobby for, or perform abortions; to the appointments of John Ashcroft and Tommy Thompson to his cabinet; to his \$1.6 trillion tax cut — George Bush's policies are so over-the-top in their harms to women that it's hard not to romanticize the Clinton years. But life under Bill Clinton actually was a very mixed experience for women, and a very challenging one for organized feminism.

A handful of policies promulgated under Clinton's watch certainly advanced the liberty, safety, health, and economic interests of women. First, Clinton reversed the abortion gag rule on federally-supported domestic reproductive health services; this and collateral pro-choice appointments and prosecutions slowed the erosion of the right to abortion. Second, he signed the Violence Against Women Act into law. Third, he

signed the Family and Medical Leave Act into law. Fourth, he supported increases in research spending on women's health issues and diseases. Fifth, although somewhat belatedly, he helped win an increase in the minimum wage (two-thirds of minimum wage workers are women). All of these issues were high on the agendas of feminists in Congress, as well as of organized feminism.

These were positive developments, without a doubt. But they did not benefit all women who came within their purview. For example, although reversal of the abortion gag rule recovered an important element of the abortion right, the right itself remained inaccessible to many women. Without Medicaid funding, for example, low-income women cannot be assured access to abortion — cannot be assured that they actually can exercise their right. Likewise, the Family and Medical Leave Act established the important principle that labor market workers who take finite leaves from employment to care for family members should not lose their jobs; but because it provides only for unpaid leave, it does not address the situation of millions of women whose families depend both on their income and on their care for survival.

So there were big gaps in women's gains during the Clinton years, gaps that intensified inequalities among women. The clear losers were poor women, particularly women of color. Clinton himself telegraphed this outcome during his 1992 campaign, first when he verbally slapped Sister Souljah for speaking her mind and then when he pledged to end welfare. While Clinton offered policy victories to some women, he drew boundaries within womanhood, prizing some women while disdaining others. The ultimate act of disdain, of course, was welfare reform — which not only stripped poor mothers of economic security but also impaired their constitutional guarantees.

That Clinton retained the support of most mainstream feminists even as his administration joined with Republicans to create a welfare police state for poor women says more about contradictions within feminism than it does about any price feminist leaders had to pay in exchange for access to the White House. (I actually don't think feminists enjoyed great access; or if we did, we enjoyed access without influence.) Many national leaders of feminist women's groups were audibly opposed to punitive welfare reform. Few groups were actually on the front lines of opposition; but some, like the National Organization for Women and the NOW-Legal Defense and Education Fund, were active and vocal. On the whole, middle class solipsism among both feminist elites and feminist rank and file stalled any broad-based feminist mobilization in defense of poor mothers. Bill Clinton didn't invent boundaries within womanhood when he drew them with public policy. Those boundaries exist, in society and within feminism.

As George Bush has so brutally shown, "gains and losses," as you put it, last only as long as do the political majorities that support them. So

rather than dwell on a presidential scorecard, I think we should focus on recovering a political majority that is committed to equality in all its iterations. Key to a democratic political majority is a feminism that advances the equality interests of all women. Such a feminism must put the claims and rights of women whose political and economic security are most at risk at the top of its agenda. In this it must be guided by what diversely situated women say about their lives, rather than insisting on singular goals based on the experiences of the most privileged, or most numerous, or most organized.

NP: *What about sexual harassment? Are women better protected today from sexual harassment than they were, say, in 1992?*

GM: The law is stronger today in some important respects as a result of Supreme Court decisions about employer liability in hostile environment cases. Ironically, those decisions were handed down during the summer of 1998, when many defenders of strong sexual harassment law were protesting the application of sexual harassment law to Bill Clinton. The topsy-turvy politics surrounding the Clinton-Jones-Lewinsky situation has weakened sexual harassment protections politically. If the law is weak and riddled with loopholes, women have no recourse against sexualized discrimination. So of course favorable Supreme Court decisions have been a big help. But even improvements in the law have not settled thorny questions, such as when sexual harassment is legally recognizable.

These sorts of questions will be decided in court, but their disposition will depend on the political climate. For one thing, the willingness of women to endure the risks and abuse of bringing hard cases to public light depends on the political climate. The social, economic, and emotional costs of “telling” are incredibly high. For another thing, whether cases even make it to court will depend on the stance of political institutions such as the EEOC. Remember the EEOC under Clarence Thomas.

As the Supreme Court becomes even more conservative and as the EEOC comes under conservative leadership, the time may come when other political institutions — the Congress — will be called upon to intervene. That’s what happened in 1991, when the Civil Rights Act was amended to correct the rollbacks on civil rights law that had been accomplished under Reagan-Bush. At that time, liberals and feminists sought to strengthen Title VII remedies for women, as well. They were ridiculed by Republicans for creating a feminist pork-barrel for women with supposedly trumped up sexual harassment claims who would bring vengeful and ruinous lawsuits against all-American businesses. Were it not for Anita Hill, the improvements in Title VII remedies for women probably would not have become law. They are the linchpin of the improved protections for sexual harassment targets, because now plain-

tiffs can hold employers responsible for damages: sexual harassment is now expensive. If this kind of legislative intervention to defend or improve sexual harassment law becomes necessary again in the near future, I'm afraid that its advocates will not have the political currency to win. Defenders of Bill Clinton engaged in far too much distortion of existing sexual harassment law and in far too much dissing of the victim. It's going to be used against us.

NP: *Feminists were divided on the Nader campaign, some arguing that it was important to break with the Democrats who gave us welfare reform and the other retrograde policies you outlined, and most others claiming that the protection of women's progress required supporting Gore. How would you judge these various positions?*

GM: The first thing I would say is that I don't think that feminists were all that divided between Nader and Gore. The support that Nader did receive from some feminists was residual, in the sense that folks who couldn't bring themselves to affirm the Clinton-Gore Administration's shameful policies toward poor women and people of color had nowhere else to go. Even then, there was a lot of vote-pairing across states, following the principle of "vote for Nader if you can; vote for Gore if you have to." But to get to the gist of your question, which I take to be the relative merits of supporting Nader vs. supporting Gore: I'll take a pass. I don't want to "judge" these positions; I simply don't think it's productive politically. I don't think acrimony on the left arising from this election is productive — especially when both of the candidates supported by progressives were deeply flawed on social justice issues. Better to spend the three years we have before the next presidential election figuring out how we can work together to democratize the electoral process and to broaden and sustain social movements for economic, social, and environmental justice. We need to do both these things to end the Republican stranglehold on the two parties and on the two-party system.

NP: *The issues that animated the women's movement in the 1960's and 70's included the socially-coerced deference of women to men, the unequal division of labor in housework and childrearing, the lack of respect for the domestic work that women do, unfair pay differentials, and, more broadly, the unequal power of women and men. In what ways do you think the women's movement has changed everyday relations between women and men in marriage, dating, raising children, the workplace, etc? In what ways do you think they have remained unchanged? Have the changes differed by race and class?*

GM: A lot has changed in daily relations between men and women, thanks to the many ways in which the women's movement has illuminated inti-

mate and personal inequalities and their connections to public inequality. It took a long time and relentless struggle, but feminists have been especially successful in raising consciousness about sexualized and domestic violence and in fighting for remedies that give women a better shot at vindicating their injuries. Intimate abuse persists, to be sure, but women now have a few legal tools and social supports available to us. Other changes, such as winning rights in the workplace, have made a difference in many women's lives by giving women tools to fight discrimination and subordination. But these changes have not equalized power between men and women; nor have they de-gendered the household and caring work historically associated with women and with our inequality.

So the feminist transformation remains ongoing. The wage gap persists, for example, pushing women into economic dependency on men. Quality, affordable childcare is still not guaranteed to labor market workers, confronting family caregivers — usually women — with untenable conflicts between caring and earning. I could go on and on.

Equally important, though, are inequalities of power and resources among women. The feminist transformation can't just be about fighting inequality between the sexes. To focus only on subordination and hierarchy between women and men risks generalizing so much that we miss the deepest and most suffocating practices of gender inequality. For example, when we focus only on the wage gap between women and men, we miss the stunning effects of race in the allocation and distribution of women's income. In 1999, the median weekly earnings for white women who worked in the labor market fulltime were \$483. For African American women, it was \$409. For Latinas, it was \$348. That means African American women earned 15 cents less on the white woman's dollar, while Latinas earned 28 cents less. The wage gap between white women and Latinas is greater than the overall gender wage gap! Also, if you compare white women's income to Black men's (\$488) and Latinos' (\$406), you'll see that race effectively erases the gender wage gap. This doesn't mean that the gender wage gap, driven largely by white men's earnings, isn't important. But it does mean that a feminist politics of wage equity needs to attend to the fact that the wage gap for women of color has as much to do with their racial status as it does with the fact that they are women.

Making recognition of these sorts of inequalities among women foundational to feminist analysis will force us to always ask "which women?" when we advance claims "for women." It will force us to interrogate the impact of claims "for women" on differently situated women — such as women of color who are parenting alone whose prospects in the labor market often do not entail earning living wages, let alone wages that support the purchase of surrogate care for children.

NP: *What issues do you believe that the women's movement needs to address and emphasize if it is to reclaim its vigor and its vision? And are there any issues that you think are dead-ends or mistakes for it to be taking up?*

GM: For years, a big segment of the women's movement has universalized women's inequality — presumably to accentuate commonalities that can bring women together in a mass movement. While I think that emphasizing what we have in common is important, it is simply not the case that all women are affected by the gender system in the same way. When forces that dominate a movement — either in numbers or in privilege — universalize rather than contextualize, they not only marginalize women who experience gender differently, but they also prescribe routes to equality that can be just as demeaning and subordinating as the inequality under which they currently live.

Reproductive rights politics, for example, has tended to define unwanted childbearing as the key reproductive aspect of women's inequality. Hence the singular focus on abortion and abortion rights. But what about women whose childbearing and children are disdained and devalued by the race and class systems? Such women might well appreciate the right to control their fertility; yet just as important is the right to enjoy it. A reproductive rights politics that fights equally for policies that ensure healthy, safe, and secure conception, bearing, and raising of children, on the one hand, as well as for abortion rights and access, on the other hand, would take us far toward putting feminism to work for all women. A reproductive rights politics that begins by recognizing *that* would activate the dynamic conversations and solidarities that make feminism vigorous.

A new feminist politics of work may be beginning to emerge, one that insists that all work women do is socially and economically valuable. Widespread support, at least within organized feminism, for a refundable child credit is one indication that at long last, we may be disrupting the dominant feminist assumption that the only solution to women's inequality in the family is participation in the labor market. There's a lot of work to be done, though, to translate respect for *all work* women do to respect for work *all women* do. It's going to require lots of conversation with the base of the women's movement — all those feminist voters who supported welfare reform in 1996 — and lots of trust-building with welfare rights groups and other poor people's advocates.

I guess my main point is that as a women's movement and as individual feminists, we need to pay much more attention to each others' inequalities, rather than constituting a politics that revolves solely around our own. "The personal is political" isn't supposed to be a license for solipsism. It's supposed to change politics by bringing intimate and inter-

personal power and subordination into public debate and by making challenges to existing intimate and interpersonal relations part of political work. If we insist on a politics that responds to the multiple, simultaneous, and different inequalities that structure women's personal and public lives depending on their social location, cultural standing, and economic resources, we can forge a politics of solidarity that will not only serve the justice interests of all women but also will make the women's movement feel like it belongs to more of us.

For this reason — to answer your question about dead ends — I think it would be a real mistake to rev up a new Equal Rights Amendment campaign, as some in the women's movement would like to do. Women's inequality is far too complicated for a blanket constitutional promise to serve us all equally at this time. While I wish we had won the ERA in 1972 and hope that someday the Constitution will make women's equality official, I think we have come too far and have too far to go to revert to the politics of universals. We have come too far in the sense that 14th Amendment jurisprudence since 1972 has opened a place for sex equality in the Constitution — if within limits. We have too far to go in that the Court has made it quite clear that it will only recognize intentional discrimination as constitutionally problematic. That leaves out most contemporary inequality practices which are measurably discriminatory in their effects, even if the policies and policymakers have not announced an intention to discriminate. Moreover, we have too far to go in that the hardest legal sex equality issues are the ones involving inequality visited upon some women but not all women — where subordination occurs not because of a woman's sex but because her sex is raced, or classed, or governed by heterosexual normativity.

NP: *What dangers lie in the fight for, or the winning of, an Equal Rights Amendment today?*

GM: A constitutional prohibition on sex discrimination, which is what the ERA intends, will not reach intersecting inequalities — not automatically and not without major changes in the outlook of the courts. So an ERA that is singular in its focus on generic sex discrimination runs the risk of widening and deepening inequalities among women — between those whose inequality more readily fits prevailing notions of sex discrimination and those whose experience of sex is complicated and defined by their experiences of race, class, and sexuality.

NP: *To go back for a minute to reproductive issues, are you saying that abortion rights are most important for middle class women, while the right to “healthy, safe and secure conception, bearing and raising of children” is more important for poor women in a society that disdains poor women and their children?*

GM: The Court has said that a woman's right to terminate a pregnancy is a fundamental right before fetal viability and cannot be restricted by "undue burdens." (*Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, 1992, modifying but upholding *Roe v. Wade*). But just as Clarence Earl Gideon was deprived of his fundamental right when he was tried without counsel because he could not afford to pay for one, a woman is deprived of her fundamental right if she must complete a pregnancy because she cannot afford to pay for an abortion. When rights are not equally available in practice, rights are reduced to privileges for people with resources. So, securing the abortion right and securing poor women's equality both require that abortion services be provided to all who seek them.

My complaint is not that the right to abortion is a middle class right, but rather that the mainstream women's movement's focus on abortion as the sum total of reproductive rights — and as the synecdoche for feminism — excludes equally critical reproductive rights, such as the right to choose children. Middle class white women's revolt against compulsory reproduction, like their revolt against compulsory domesticity, is a crucial struggle along the way to gender equality. It's not the only reproductive struggle, though. Poor women, especially women of color, who often bear children under clouds of suspicion and disdain and whose bodies often have been sites of compulsory fertility control also have struggled for the right to bear and raise their own children.

NP: *Everyone to the left of Attila the Hun pays lip service to the idea that we have to be concerned about issues of race, class, and gender. To what extent do you think the left has ignored gender in fact and to what extent do you think the women's movement has short-changed issues of race and class?*

GM: Who is "the left" here? And does the women's movement not overlap with it? If you mean the male/marxist left, well, yeah, gender hasn't fared too well in its politics. Nor have race/class fared well in the politics of the dominant women's movement. It's less a problem of not noticing race, or class, or gender, than of not doing the hard work of figuring out how each interacts with the others. I think that most people who care about democracy and equality recognize that race, class, and gender are crucial modes of subordination. But some on "the left," including feminists, view some modes of subordination as residual or secondary to the one they most care about or are analytically committed to. Or they see race, class, and gender as additive but not mutually constitutive. This can marginalize allies and constituents whose lived experiences testify to the simultaneity of all three. It also can marginalize issues or problems that arise at the conjuncture of all three, such as the welfare police state. Or it can produce prescriptions from the vantage point of only one inequality, which

invariably suffocate people who live in the belly of all three.

NP: *In your previous writings you have argued that one of the causes for the failure of the mainstream women's movement to protest Clinton's welfare reform was the ambivalence of many feminists about poor women staying home to raise children. This argument prompts us to ask two questions.*

First, was it the broader tendency to soft-pedal criticisms of the Clinton Administration that at least partly explains the failure of women's organizations to mobilize protest against "welfare reform"?

GM: I really don't have a definitive answer to this question. My impression, as I indicated earlier, is that while many feminist women's organizations merely whispered their opposition to the welfare reform bill, some actually did take a loud and visible stand. Where all organizations failed, including the outspoken opponents, was in mobilizing their constituencies to oppose punitive welfare reform. We had an elite-base chasm, where many women at the base — members of NOW or contributors to NOW-LDEF, for example — supported the idea of pushing welfare mothers into the labor market and agreed with Clinton and the Republicans that something should be done to stop "illegitimacy." These views were not inconsistent with their white, middle class version of feminism -- a version that calibrated independence in terms of labor market attachment and that equated equality with fertility control, not with the right to have and care for children. To some degree, the national women's organizations that did oppose the punitive welfare bill were out of step with their constituencies. This is a bit of a problem for democratic politics within a movement. The only way around it is for the leadership to sustain dialogue with its base to try to disrupt the racism and solipsism that lured some feminists into the war against poor women. The welfare law comes up for re-authorization next year. I'm hoping that this dialogue has taken place, and that feminism in the broadest sense will mobilize at least to reform TANF, if not to win welfare justice.

It's essential that feminists beyond the beltway rise to this challenge. The leaders of organized feminism can do a lot. But they cannot counter the voices of millions of feminist voters who signal their congressmembers what will or won't sell from Westchester to Santa Monica. So long as most white congressmembers — including feminist congresswomen — think that abortion rights are the be-all and end-all of the women's movement, welfare justice will remain out of reach.

NP: *Our second related question is this. You have powerfully criticized mainstream women's organizations for devaluing poor women's at-home care-giving. Some argue that women, including poor women, as well as society, derive substantial benefit from women having work experiences*

outside the home. Taking into account the need to make “participation in the labor market equitable and rewarding for women, especially mothers,” [“Feminists, Welfare Reform, and Welfare Justice,” Social Justice, vol. 25, no. 1, Spring 1998] do you think the argument for work outside the home has merit?

GM: The issue isn't whether women benefit from work outside the home. Some women do benefit — when they are paid a fair and living wage, receive medical and other benefits, can find reliable childcare, don't have to put up with sexual harassment or other forms of discrimination, and enjoy their co-workers and/or the work they do. Nor is the issue whether work outside the home is “good for” women. For those women who benefit from it, it must be. The issue, to my mind, is whether feminism is just another opportunity for some women to tell other women how to lead their lives. If we believe in women's equality, then we should promote policies to ensure that all women have the rights and resources not only to be fairly rewarded in the labor market but also to decide how to balance market work and family needs. Poor women who are compelled into the labor market because middle class women (and men) think it's good for them are not equal; they are pawns in the white, middle class feminist struggle against domesticity. In addition, policies based on the idea that any job is better than caring for dependent family members not only vitiates vocational choice (usually, but not only, of women) but also negates the value of the family work women have performed for centuries. Until we value the very work for which women historically have been declared unequal, no woman will have achieved equality. And until we value the work that poor women, especially women of color, do for their own families, racialized inequalities among women will continue to sandbag gender justice.

NP: *Some would argue that one of the crucial aspects of racial and economic oppression is that it denies women the opportunity for rewarding work outside the domestic sphere. It's not clear from what you've said so far whether you think that practically all women would benefit from work outside the home, if that work were decent, harassment-free, and provided benefits, childcare, etc. At times you seem to suggest that you don't believe this. Today, of course, the labor market doesn't offer poor women productive and fairly remunerated work, but that problem could be addressed by focusing on changing, through regulation and social policy, the nature of the jobs that are offered. It's clear that you support such changes in regulation and social policy. The question is, do you think that such work is essential for full personal development, or that women who never work outside the home can be just as liberated as those who do?*

GM: Because they are women, because they are of color, and because

they are women of color, African American, Asian American, Indian, and Latina women certainly have been denied choices, opportunities, just rewards, and respect in their work outside the home. A key goal of any equality movement therefore must be to transform the labor market to root out its gender, racial, and racialized gender structures, ideologies and environments. It is just as important, however, to recognize that women of color historically have been assigned to work outside their own homes — to work in other women's homes as well as in the labor market. A crucial aspect of women of color oppression has been the denial of respect and legitimacy as family workers. The ideology of domesticity did not tether women of color to their own homes as it did middle class white women. A feminist politics that focuses solely on liberation from domesticity will always be skewed against those women of color who also want to win the right to meet their responsibilities to their families.

I don't think that many women who receive meager under-the-table wages cleaning other families' homes or who work in sweatshops or who are enrolled in workfare would say that such work is the touchstone of their liberation or essential for their full personal development. Moreover, no woman is liberated who is not permitted to make her own decisions about family work and wage work. No woman is liberated who is judged by everyone else as less-than-fully-developed because of the kind and place of work she does.

Slavery, Racist Violence, American Apartheid: The Case for Reparations

Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua

I may state to all our friends, and to all our enemies, that we has a right to the land where we are located. For why? I tell you. Our wives, our children, our husbands, has been sold over and over again to purchase the lands we now locate upon; for that reason we have a divine right to the land. And then didn't we clear the lands and raise the crops of corn, of cotton, of tobacco, of rice, of sugar, of everything? And then didn't the large cities in the North grow up on the cotton and the sugars and the rice that we made? . . . I say they have grown rich, and my people is poor.

—Bayley Wyatt, a freedman from Yorktown, Virginia in Roy Finkenbine (ed.), *Sources of the African-American Past* (London: Longman, 1993), p. 88.

LIKE THE PROVERBIAL COMET, over the last year the demand for reparations has blazed across the political skyline. Few current issues burn as brightly among African Americans. The movement's surging growth has predictably provoked renewed opposition. Recently critiques of the escalating reparations movement have come from two very different sources: from Adolph L. Reed, Jr., a justly-respected African American radical, and from David Horowitz, an unrespected neoconservative ideologue.

Last February, Horowitz published an anti-reparations advertisement in several college newspapers across the country. His factually challenged advertisement provoked a storm of controversy. Despite his intentions, Horowitz has helped move African American reparations into the headlines and the consciousness of the American public. Horowitz's diatribe has served to re-energize a nascent Black student movement and to transform college campuses into sites of struggle. Furthermore, his ad has helped force the mainstream media to remove the shroud covering the struggle for reparations, thus making audible the claims of African American ancestors.

Consigned to leftist circles, Reed's article in the December issue of

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The Progressive has not had nearly the popular impact of Horowitz's advertisement. Nevertheless, it is an important intervention. It inflamed Black nationalists and radicals, sparking a brief but necessary discussion among them. In addition, because many white leftists view him as a courageous and critical African American radical voice, Reed's arguments are likely to contribute toward consolidating white liberal and leftist opposition to reparations.

On the surface, the conjunction between Reed and Horowitz seems paradoxical, if not surreal. Yet, when it is considered that reparations has historically been aligned with African American nationalism, it is not surprising that its opponents come from both sides of the political spectrum. Although Reed and Horowitz both oppose reparations, their opposition is rooted in vastly different interpretations of United States history and political commitments. Moreover, an immense chasm separates their arguments. Reed's article supplies a serious but sketchy critique, while Horowitz provides an under-articulated melange of fraudulent assertions. Nevertheless, their analyses have one thing in common. From their very different points of view, both Reed and Horowitz evince hostility toward political expressions of African American identity, especially those that explicitly reflect nationalistic perspectives.

This paper has three interconnected objectives: (1) to explicate Reed's and Horowitz's arguments; (2) to contextualize their arguments; and (3) to suggest an alternative reading of the reparations movement. The first, explication of their arguments, has two aspects: explanation and critique of their positions. The second objective requires that their arguments be located in the current socio-historical and political moment. The third objective attempts to meet the requirement that social analysts move beyond rejection toward projection: that is, that social critics offer an alternative to the theories and practices that they repudiate.

Reparations: An Idea Whose Time Has Come

AFTER LINGERING ON THE POLITICAL MARGINS FOR DECADES, activists have at last pushed reparations to the center of discourse in the African American community.¹ Currently, liberal civil rights organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) have joined nationalist and radical associations like N'COBRA, the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America, and the Black Radical Congress in calling for reparations. Moreover, reparations activists have recently made successful forays into traditional politics. In addition to Representative John Conyers' perennial introduction of a bill, H.R. 40, asking Congress to examine the issue, several city councils, including those of Chicago, Dallas, and Detroit, have passed pro-reparations resolutions. Moreover, reparations activists are diversifying their targets. In an in-

novative action that transcends the State, New York Attorney Daedria Farmer-Paellman is aiming lawsuits at Aetna, Inc. and other multinational corporations. At this historical juncture, reparations appear as one issue that can unite African Americans across class, gender, generational, and even ideological fissures.

To understand what's at stake for Horowitz requires a thorough analysis and contextualization of his ad, "Ten Reasons Why Reparations for Blacks are a Bad Idea for Blacks — and Racist Too." The ad was initially published as part of his pamphlet, *The Death of the Civil Rights Movement*, a diatribe against Rev. Al Sharpton's "Redeem the Dream" March to end to racial profiling. A vociferous attack on Black activists and a fevered *defense* of racial profiling, *Death* declares race, by which he means *racism*, dead. In Horowitz's color-blind perspective, group parity is irrelevant, because race is a fiction. He wants the public to believe that because race is an unscientific concept that it is also a non-existent social reality. From this perverted position, he logically concludes that contemporary Black activism is unnecessary. Therefore, he portrays activists as self-serving con artists and the African American people as their dupes. The pamphlet's purpose is to spark racial hostility, to mobilize opposition to the elimination of discriminatory policies and practices. Horowitz is the ultimate wolf in sheep's clothing. He is the prototypical "color-blind" liberal or neoconservative who would abolish the race concept, that is racial classification, while maintaining the inequities produced by *racial oppression*.

Both Horowitz and Reed recognize the growing popularity of the reparations movement. According to Horowitz, he published "Ten Reasons" because reparations "is fast becoming the next big 'civil rights' thing."² Whereas Horowitz is content to acknowledge the movement's escalating significance and denounce it, Reed's concerns are more important. He is interested in analyzing the reasons for the movement's rise. Although bemused, he acknowledges the movement's increasing importance, which he attributes to the sharp decline in support for affirmative action. Furthermore, he suggests its ascent is a response to retrenchment. However, he later undermines this assumption by speculating that the "demand for racially defined reparations" is being promoted by the capitalist media to undercut the construction of a social movement built "across race, gender, and other identities." Reed's initial point is the relevant one for me, because it recognizes that the sudden elevation of reparations to the center of African American politics is a response to contemporary conditions.³

The reparations movement's emergence is conditioned by contemporary neoliberal and new paternalist policies. These revanchist approaches establish the contours of the current conjuncture, what can be called the *New Nadir*. Economic marginalization, political destabilization, fragmentation, and economic and political incorporation characterize this period

of retrenchment. The dominant economic trends in the New Nadir era involve the deproletarianization and subproletarianization of African American workers; hypersegregation; increasing mathematical and technological illiteracy; the economic incorporation of elites, and the subsequent acceleration in class stratification. The leading political tendencies include the resurgence of State terrorism and private racial violence; racialized incarceration; new forms of disfranchisement; and political fragmentation via demographic diversification and the promotion of Black conservatives.⁴ Thus, reparations represent a more general shift toward militant and nationalistic, if not radical, strategies within the Black Freedom Movement.

Adolph Reed has provided an appropriate heuristic by which to categorize the various aspects of the demand for reparations. According to him, reparations demands represent the confluence of three factors, *material*, *psychological*, and *symbolic*. Material components refer to justifications for reparations that are premised on the structural aspects of racial oppression. Examples would include labor exploitation, racist violence, de jure and de facto discriminatory State policies, and non-exploitative economic oppression. The symbolic element focuses on memorializing injustices via apologies, monument building, and the reconstruction of instruction. Whereas the symbolic component is aimed at the general U.S. public, the psychological element specifically targets African Americans.⁵ I will frame my interrogation of Reed's and Horowitz's arguments via this classification schema.

Refutations and Rationales of the Material Basis for African American Reparations

THEIR ANTITHETICAL READINGS OF U.S. HISTORY and diametrically opposed political understandings are most visible concerning the material basis for African American reparations. Reed, with some ambivalence, seems to accept the material foundation for reparations. Horowitz completely rejects reparations, especially its material basis. Eight of the "Ten Reasons" constituting his opposition can be construed as material factors. However, he does not initially challenge the normative foundation upon which the movement rests, what Robert Westley calls "the principle that the victims of unjust enrichment should be compensated."⁶ His strategy is positivist, thus he empirically contests self-generated concerns, rather than establish a philosophical basis for his opposition. Consequently, he asks, "Who Owes the Debt?" instead of "is a debt owed?"

The problems with his presentation here pervade the rest of his discussion. He is prone toward both minor and gross factual errors. More importantly, he decontextualizes his information. According to Horowitz, "There is no single group clearly responsible for the crime of slavery." He reaches this conclusion because of African and Arab involvement in the

slave trade and the existence of “3,000 African American slaveholders.” (Actually, the 1830 census lists 3,777 Black slave owners, not 3,000 as Horowitz carelessly states.) His discussion of Black slaveholders is illustrative of how he manipulates data to distort history. The existence of 3,777 Black slaveholders is meaningless without knowing the total number of slaveholders. In 1850 there were 348,000 slave holding families (the Census Bureau collected the data on families, not individuals). Thus, the three thousand, seven hundred and seventy-seven Black slaveholders comprised only about one percent of slaveholding families!⁷ Second, African American slave owners were a statistical reality that tells us nothing about actual social relationships. Although some Black slave owners held others in bondage, that is asserted rights of ownership and exploited slave labor, most did not. They were people of some means who purchased family and friends *from* bondage, but never imposed master-slave relationships.¹

Furthermore, stripped from its socio-historical and legal contexts, and from existing power relations, the participation of Africans in the slave(ry) trade is trivia, at best, and duplicitous, at worst.⁸ That is, without the context we do not know what this information means and when contextualized it generally mean something other than what Horowitz implies. Scholars of the slave trade generally acknowledge the role of power relations as a coercive factor stimulating African participation. As Walter Rodney pointed out in his classic text, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Europeans controlled the international slave trade. Without excusing the role of kings and other African elites, their involvement should be understood in the context of the actual power relations.

Even given the role of Africans, Arabs, and African Americans, Horowitz’s conclusion is deceptive. He offers a negative interpretation, concluding that, “no single group is responsible.” Yet, this scenario cries out for a positive one, i.e., that several groups were responsible. Moreover, the participation of multiple ethnicities does not mean that all participated or benefited *equally*. Furthermore, as citizens African Americans are seeking recompense from the governmental and corporate entities that still exist in the United States—not from an ethnic group.

Horowitz continues this faulty line of reasoning in his third and fourth propositions. In his third point, he makes three assertions. First, he contends that nationally only a minority of whites owned slaves. Second, he claims only one in five whites in the antebellum South was a slaveholder. Third, he posits that 350,000 Union soldiers “died in the war that freed the slaves.”⁹ His first claim is correct; nationally, only a minority of U.S. families owned slaves. In 1790 23 percent of the U.S. families owned slaves and only 10 percent in 1850. However, his second claim is inaccurate. In 1790 72 percent of southern families owned slaves. In 1850, in the South Atlantic and the East Central sub regions, 31 and 32 percent did.¹⁰ In his third declaration, Horowitz deliberately misleads the reader

by blurring the issue. The Civil War did precipitate abolition, but it was not fought for that purpose. The North fought to preserve the Union. It became a war to end slavery only when Lincoln realized that victory necessitated destroying the Confederacy's capacity to wage war, that is removing its most productive resource, Black slaves.

Continuing his effort to exonerate whites of responsibility for slavery, he contends in his fourth point that most contemporary U.S. citizens do not have a "lineal connection to slavery."¹¹ His argument is quite devious. First, he uses the ambiguity inherent in the term "lineal" to manipulate the reader. Second, he cynically attempts to pit African Americans against recent immigrants of color and other oppressed ethnicities. Third, he ignores claims for the segregation and contemporary eras.

Although Horowitz means simply a direct connection, for many readers lineal suggests a heredity relationship. Of course, most Americans are not biological descendants of slaveholders, but *all* white Americans have benefited from the legacy of racial oppression—white privilege and Black exploitation, exclusion and subordination—albeit to differing degrees based on class, ethnicity, and gender. Planters, small slaveholders, and capitalist manufacturers, exporters, investors, and insurers of slave-produced products benefited from the exploitation of slave labor. During the century from 1865 to 1965 the same groups, plus industrial capitalists, benefited from the superexploitation of Black labor.

Horowitz's second argument violates the basic principle of political incorporation. When one becomes a citizen of a State, that person automatically accepts the benefits and prior obligations of that State. Moreover, if Horowitz believes this argument then he should apply it consistently. Does it apply to reparation payments to Native Americans and Japanese Americans? Does it apply to the nation's general debt? Should a portion of the tax monies used to pay the country's debt to domestic and foreign lenders be repaid to recent immigrants because they were not citizens when the debt was accumulated?

THIRD, HE ARBITRARILY LIMITS REPARATIONS TO COMPENSATION FOR ENSLAVEMENT. It is on this basis that he argues post-slavery immigrants are not liable for reparations. Although post-slavery European immigrants were brutally exploited and endured ethnic discrimination, like the Irish and Germans before them they often expressed their rage by replicating their treatment on Blacks. Even so, by World War II the Italians, Hungarians, Greeks, and Poles were becoming "white" and have since enjoyed the full benefits of whiteness in a white supremacist country. Whether native or immigrant the vast majority of white middle and working class Americans, have benefited from the exclusion of Blacks from professional and civil service jobs, unions, and governmental programs. For instance, African Americans were denied the opportunity to participate in the 1862 Homestead Act that transferred hundreds of millions of acres to white

citizens and European immigrants. Additionally, Blacks were practically excluded from the 1935 Social Security Act because almost all worked as farm laborers or domestics. Furthermore, from the 1940s to the early 1960s white homebuyers obtained low interest Federal Housing Authority loans, a program from which Blacks were also excluded. Finally, as contemporary scholarship indicates, whites continue to benefit from racial discrimination in employment, loans, housing, and healthcare. Consequently, the demand for reparations is not just for enslavement, but for exclusion, discrimination, and the racial violence that characterized the era of segregation as well as for contemporary disparities.¹²

His final argument facilitates a transition to his allegation that African Americans also benefited from slavery. On the one hand, he claims that few contemporary whites benefited from slavery. Yet, on the other he asserts that contemporary Blacks have. If the present wealth of the United States resulted from slavery, as he posits, then whites as well as African Americans would be beneficiaries of slave-produced wealth. These arguments implicitly contradict each other; he cannot have it both ways.

In charging that African Americans benefited from slavery, Horowitz makes numerous errors. First, he proceeds as if wealth accumulation produces positive impacts across society. This illogical argument suggests that the quality of life of the slaves of wealthy masters was better than that of impoverished slaveholders. Relationships of domination and exploitation are parasitic, not mutually beneficial. That is, the slave trade and slavery enriched European nation-states and the U.S. (particularly the class of slaveholders, slave trading merchants and manufacturers) but impoverished Africans and African Americans. Horowitz can only make this argument in the abstract. Actual data reveals that African Americans' percentage of U.S. wealth has stayed roughly the same, about one percent, since the antebellum period. Furthermore, he limits his discussion of "benefits" to a narrow economic argument. Thus, he circumvents discussing the effects of racial oppression, particularly racist violence, especially its role in producing stressors that undermine Blacks' physical and psychological health.¹³

As empirical support for his position that African Americans benefited from slavery, he offers an estimate of the difference between African Americans' and Africans' per capita incomes. This is an ahistorical and spurious comparison. It is ahistorical because it ignores the role of five centuries of slave trading and colonialism in producing contemporary African poverty. It is spurious because of the vast differences in the gross national product of African nation-states and the U.S., which are largely the consequence of that slave trade and colonialism.

Horowitz's discussion here presages his eighth and ninth points. In them he identifies the ways in which African Americans have already received reparations, resulting in what he calls Blacks' debt to the U.S. First, he contends that Blacks' *inclusion* in Great Society social programs

constituted reparations because these programs made monetary and other transfer payments toward “redressing historic racial grievances.”¹⁴ This is absurd! He is either unaware or ignores the *multiple roles* social programs play in U.S. society. On the one hand, Great Society-initiated programs were ostensibly designed to abolish poverty. Programs, such as AFDC and food stamps, were class-determined minimum subsistence programs. Historically, whites, including white Latino/as, have made up the overwhelming majority of aid recipients, although the proportion of African Americans in these programs has been disproportionate. Nevertheless, Horowitz’s discussion rips the programs from their broader public policy context. Great Society programs were part of *Keynesian economics*, the country’s policy of using government spending to stimulate economic growth—employment and consumption. In addition to increasing levels of purchasing, these programs also created well paying government jobs for a *predominately white* middle class. On the other hand, some programs were designed to specifically address discrimination: racial, gender, ethnic, and religious. That is the point: no government program has sought to solely benefit Blacks. Specifically, in its short and contested existence affirmative action has provided opportunities not only for Blacks, but also for a broad and diverse segment of Americans, including white women and white men over fifty-five years of age.

Persisting in his distortion of the past, in point nine he misrepresents the history of the abolition movement, in both the U.S. and Britain. Two points are important: (1) his crude one-sided interpretation of abolitionism, particularly in Britain; and (2) his denial of Black agency. Continuing his Manichaeian view of history, he presents the British Anti-Slavery Movement as entirely an exercise in humanism. He simply extends his argument concerning Union soldiers and Christian abolitionists in the U.S. to Britain. In reality, the British anti-slavery movement was a mixture of humanitarians and imperialists. More important, British abolitionism drew its impetus from a complex mixture of humanist sentiments, economic motivations, and fear of slave rebellions. Horowitz misses these nuances because his purpose is to exaggerate white humanitarianism and deny Black agency. Therefore, he mentions 3,000 Black slaveholders, but omits any mention of thousands of Black abolitionists, and numerous slave revolts, and the participation of 186,000 Black Union soldiers from his account. He belittles the life and death struggle waged by African Americans and their allies throughout U.S. history by calling hard-won rights *gifts*! Because his goal is to present African Americans as *indebted, ungrateful children*, he omits any discussion of Black self-activity. In sum, this argument approximates those who called for compensation for the slaveholders!

An aspect of Reed’s argument converges with Horowitz’s assault on African American agency. By attributing the re-emergence of the reparations movement to State policies alone and suggesting that its current

popularity is due largely to capitalist media promotion, he denies or belittles the accomplishments of reparations activists. The mainstream media picked up the issue only after they could no longer ignore it. For more than a decade, media moguls ignored H.R. 40 and the overall reparations movement. The media took notice after activists targeted city councils and corporations, and high profile liberals such as Randall Robinson of TransAfrica and Harvard Law Professor Charles Ogletree became advocates.

AFTER ASSERTING THAT BLACKS AS A COLLECTIVE GROUP benefited from slavery, have already received reparations in the form of welfare, and in fact owe the U.S., Horowitz then attempts to use class to undermine support for reparations. He posits his class-over-race thesis by contrasting the Black middle class and West Indian immigrants to the so-called African American “underclass.” First, he asserts that slavery and “the lingering after-effects of racial discrimination” have been insufficient barriers to success because they have been successfully hurdled by “the black middle class majority.” That members of the Black middle and capitalist classes suffer racial discrimination is widely documented in past and current employment, housing, and loan discrimination suits. Class status does mitigate racial oppression, but it does not alleviate it. The combination of rejecting contemporary racism and African American agency blinds him to the dominant process by which the Black middle class is created and recreated. Historically the minority that has attained middle class position has generally done so by taking advantage of the ephemeral opportunities generated by Black social movements. Members of those classes best positioned have made the most advances. Horowitz tries to use Oprah Winfrey and the few wealthy Blacks to shift attention from race to class. Thus, he seeks to use socioeconomic status to negate a claim based on racial oppression. Nevertheless, according to Westley, “the claim is one of entitlement, not need.”¹⁵ Although, the claim is based on the unjust treatment of African Americans as a collectivity, the basis for redistribution among African Americans should be need.

Horowitz is unwilling to acknowledge the continuing significance of racism. This leads him to conclude that the current conditions of the alleged “underclass” are a consequence of “individual character.”¹⁶ The wealth index that measures accumulated assets over a lifetime offers some insight into this question. Currently, the median net wealth of Black households is about 12 percent that of whites; but only 1 percent if home equity is deducted. *This is extremely important since Blacks were initially excluded from government sponsored home-ownership programs.* Furthermore, that much of this discrepancy is due to inheritance underlines the *historic accumulative* nature of African American poverty. The roots of African American poverty are located in failure to provide reparations upon emancipation, their subsequently incorporation into the

southern economy as sharecroppers and domestic servants, and a century of segregation. Thus, his attempt to substitute class for race is cynical. To blame most Blacks for not surmounting racism is analogous to questioning the character of Holocaust victims because a few Jews managed to escape!

On the surface, his comparison between West Indian immigrants and African Americans seems to have merit. Yet, a closer analysis reveals the spuriousness of this comparison. Horowitz's discussion is ahistorical and superficial. He implicitly treats all slave systems as the same. West Indian immigrants are the descendants of slaves, but they come from slave systems that differed markedly from U.S. slavery. Because African slaves greatly outnumbered whites in the West Indies, the white working and yeoman farming classes were minute; therefore a large number of slaves acquired valuable skills. More important, most contemporary Caribbean immigrants are the products of independent countries and were socialized in societies controlled by people of African descent.

In his fifth proposition, Horowitz explores another kind of comparison. Here he argues that African Americans' reparations claims are "not comparable" to those of Jewish and Japanese Americans. He dismisses African Americans' reparation claims because he contends that, unlike Jews and Japanese-Americans, Blacks are not survivors of the wrongs for which they seek retribution. Horowitz frames his argument in terms of what legal scholar Eric K. Yamamoto calls "traditional remedies law," which seeks to identify specific individual victims and abusers.¹⁷ However, Black demands for reparations are based on group, not individual rights. According to Westley, "the central claim for Black reparations is redress for exploitation through government sanctioned white supremacy."¹⁸ From about 1641 to 1965, federal and state law classified individuals by race and distinguished rights and opportunities on that basis. *Group membership*, not individual merit, determined one's role, position, and status in the economy, polity, and civil society. Individuals assigned to the African category were treated as a separate and subordinate group.

To his credit, Horowitz endorses reparations for victims of the massacres in Rosewood and Tulsa (he erroneously states Oklahoma City), and the Tuskegee experiment. This, however, is in keeping with his narrow and inaccurate reading of just reparations payments. He seems oblivious to compensations to corporate groups, including persons who were neither direct victims nor their immediate descendants. For instance, since the establishment of the Indian Claims Commission in 1946, the federal government and numerous state governments have paid reparations to persons other than survivors or their immediate descendants. During the 1980s several Native American nations received reparations in the form of money and land for actions that occurred a century or more ago. For instance, in 1986 the Ottawas of Michigan received \$32

million based on an 1836 Treaty.

Psychological Ramifications of Reparations: Alienation or Efficacy

REED'S PSYCHOLOGICAL CATEGORY FOCUSES ON REPARATIONS ACTIVISTS' VIEWS on the effects of slavery and racial oppression on African Americans, what psychologists call *internalized racism*. They believe the struggle for reparations, and acquisition of even its symbolic demands (apology, memorialization, public education, etc.) contributes to African Americans' psychological health. In contrast, Horowitz contends that talk of reparations contributes toward the development of a victim mentality among African Americans.

The title of his seventh "Reason," "Reparations Will Increase Victim Mentalities, Negative Attitudes and Alienation Within the Black Community," underscores this point. However, interestingly, his argument actually subordinates the concerns advocated in the title. In its body, he declares the struggle for reparations is counterproductive because it will alienate new immigrants from African Americans. Not surprisingly, he posits a universalistic argument, charging that African Americans' pursuit of reparations will heighten racial animosity. This is classic victimology: blaming those resisting oppression for increasing racial hostility. This argument is flawed on several levels. First, Horowitz treats the new immigrants as a monolithic block. He does not take into account their U.S. racial designation, their racial classification in their homeland, or the racial politics there. For example, many Latino/as are African descended. Second, Horowitz fails to understand that the most decisive process affecting relations between African Americans and new immigrants is U.S. racism.

The concerns expressed in the title are a subtext, albeit an important one. Horowitz's essential point is that a focus on grievances will "burden" African Americans with a "crippling sense of victimhood."¹⁹ First, Blacks have been and continue to be victimized by differential group power relations. Recognition of past and present racial oppression is necessary and psychologically healthy. Horowitz has it backwards. The Black struggle for justice, equality, and self-determination—including reparations—is empowering. Participation produces positive self-esteem, a sense of political efficacy, and cognitive liberation. Horowitz seems to single out African Americans for special treatment. Has reparations created a "victim mentality" among Jewish people, Native Americans, or Japanese Americans? Alternatively, is this psychological defect something that only afflicts African Americans? The problem is not that Blacks possess a negative victim mentality, but that Horowitz is unwilling to honestly confront the centuries of racial oppression to which African Americans have been subjected.

Reed approaches the issue of psychological damages quite differently,

distinguishing between two parts of the psychological factor. He identifies the “damage thesis” and a consciousness-raising component. He is not concerned with the development of a victim mentality among African Americans. His concerns are the reverse. According to him, aspects of the reparations movement, especially its Afrocentric wing, have accepted the “damage thesis,” the view that slavery and subsequent oppression produced rampant pathologies among African Americans. Their response, according to Reed is consciousness-raising aimed at abating, if not eliminating the psychological defects that afflict most middle and working class African Americans. Reed rightly rejects this pathological interpretation of the African American people. Unfortunately, the “damage thesis” is not limited to a sector of the reparations movement but pervades a broad segment of the liberal civil rights and nationalist movements, especially the Nation of Islam.²⁰

ASPECTS OF THE MOVEMENT’S CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING TROUBLE REED. First, he doubts whether people can be mobilized around historic grievances. Second, he is ambivalent toward efforts to organize around ascriptive identities. There are two problems with Reed’s first opposition. One, the African American reparations movement is organizing around grievances of past generations, but these include injuries suffered by previous but currently living generations. Moreover, the movement’s logic relates the legacy of racial oppression to contemporary impoverishment, racist violence, and socioeconomic discrimination. In these senses then reparations is not about soothing the spirits of the dead. Second, the campaign for reparations is demonstrating a capacity to mobilize a broad cross-class group of Black people. Reed may doubt its possibilities; nevertheless reparations activists are “mobilizing popular support . . . to alter the patterns of public policy or economic relations,” Reed’s criteria for a social movement.²¹

Although he accepts the general need for social movements to instill “an understanding of history,” Reed is uncomfortable with the reparations movement’s attempt “to stress or create a sense of racial peoplehood as the primary basis for political identity.”²² This concern reflects his philosophy of questioning notions of community built on ascriptive identities. In contrast, Reed advocates a politics based on class position over a “politics of recognition.” This is similar to the class-over-race position advanced by Horowitz, although they flow from different logics and serve different politics.²³ Nevertheless, here his universalistic perspective borders on negating African American peoples’ collective identity and their right to independent political organization.

Over the course of nearly five hundred years African descended people have forged a collective identity, an identity constructed in dialectical interaction between the State, various political economies, and Black civil society. These forces have cemented a collective African American

ethnic or national identity with a set of common interests, though other identities have constructed competing and often fragmenting interests. Acknowledging the existence of crosscutting multiple identities does not mean that African Americans do not compose a particular class of citizens. The Black community's political weaknesses, particularly its lack of democratic decision-making processes, or the misuse of the concept by charlatans, does not make the community's existence a mystification.²⁴

Discussion of Horowitz's last assertion fits nicely here. Whereas Reed questions the community's existence, the logic of Horowitz's argument reiterates a tired assimilationism. Manipulating African American historical shibboleths, Horowitz calls upon Blacks to join in the conservative exultation of the U.S.'s "multi-ethnic social contract."²⁵ Inclusion in Horowitz's multi-ethnic America, however, comes with a price. He arrogantly demands that Blacks abandon autonomous political action and accept the patriots' interpretation of U.S. history. He charges that pursuing independent political action, such as reparations, will only further isolate American Americans. His antipathy toward African American nationalism and radicalism is quite raw here.

His assertions here are as duplicitous and dumb as those that preceded them. The U.S. social contract is multi-ethnic, inclusive of European ethnicities and is in that sense a "racial contract," as philosopher Charles W. Mills maintains.²⁶ Black isolation, geographically, socially, and politically is not *primarily* a consequence of Black politics. Rather it is a result of racial oppression. Blacks' isolation is an outcome of white- (especially capitalist-) created segregation, subordination, and deprecation. Moreover, in his entire consideration of African American's place in U.S. history, he avoids the issue of symbolic acknowledgment of slavery, or Blacks' contribution to U.S. development.

Symbolic Recognition: Apologies, Monuments, and Public Education

ACCORDING TO REED, SYMBOLIC ACTIONS TAKEN IN THIS CATEGORY SEEK to reeducate the U.S. population via public education. These initiatives include everything from Presidential and congressional apologies to the construction of monuments, and educating the public about the horrors of slavery. Surprisingly, neither Reed nor Horowitz advocates any of these actions! Reed of course supports memorializing African American historical experiences. His point is to contrast the hollowness of statues compared to statutes. In this regard, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott claims to have had an epiphany while watching visitors at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. According to him, the experience seemed to produce "emotional healing." Senator Lott reasoned that a monument honoring African American contributions could produce a similar effect. Reed's point is well taken, but it carries both a sense of *realpolitik* and a cynicism. Reed fails to address the political value of symbolism. Lott clearly

hopes to accrue political benefits from his gambit. More to the point, if symbolism was completely vacuous, then why did Bill Clinton, the modern master of symbolic politics, and a superb manipulator of African Americans' sentiments, refuse to apologize? If apologies are *meaningless*, then why has House Concurrent Resolution 96, Ohio Representative Tony Hall's proposal for a governmental apology, languished in Congress? The failure to apologize is especially revealing since Congress has issued apologies before, to Japanese-Americans in 1988 and to Hawaiians in 1993.²⁷

Conclusion

FROM THEIR TOTALLY DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES, Horowitz and Reed both evade the central moral principle undergirding the reparations argument—"that the victims of unjust enrichment should be compensated," according to Westley.²⁸ Specifically, does the U.S. owe African Americans? Horowitz engages in obfuscation. Skirting the issue, he claims that if a debt exists "it is not at all clear who owes it." He then proceeds to cloud the issue by identifying African and Arab slave traders, and African American slaveholders, everyone but people of European descent. In cruel and childish attempts to recast the blame, he charges that African Americans benefited from enslavement and in fact owe whites for emancipation! In his zeal to discipline Blacks for challenging U.S. reality and for rejecting the hypocritical American dream, Horowitz fails to consider the debt America owes Blacks.

Reed, on the other hand, is a strong advocate of Black rights. His apparent acceptance of the material basis for reparations can be read as an endorsement of the principle of reparations. Nevertheless, he does not explicitly do so. Thus, his position seems unclear. Instead of opposing the principle of reparations, he focuses his discussion on its presumed impracticality. Reed's approach is to raise a series of practical and technical difficulties. His ambiguity or opposition rests on three foundations: pragmatic, strategic, and political. His pragmatic, strategic, and political oppositions are mutually reinforcing, but they are not equivalent. The major basis for his opposition to reparations is political. Essentially, he views it as divisive. He also believes it expresses the essentialist view of African American people, and represents the anti-democratic liberal elite-brokerage model of Black politics. Pragmatically, Reed believes reparations is a dead end. At one point he asks, "How can we imagine building a political force that would enable us to prevail on this issue?"²⁹ He also implies it is nearly impossible to identify the class of citizens entitled to reparation payments from the U.S. government. This difficulty troubles Reed because it presents opportunities for "quacks" to enrich themselves via genealogy and DNA schemes. While his interpretation of U.S. history commits him to support structural arguments for reparations, it also

leads him to oppose them strategically. Contending that the current period is a moment of crisis, similar to the industrializing era and the Great Depression, Reed argues for a class-over-race approach. He believes the “common circumstances of economic and social insecurity” engendered by this historical moment offers real potential to build “broad solidarity across race, gender, and other identities.”³⁰ Thus, he contrasts an *universalist* approach to the *particularity* of what he calls the politics of “public acknowledgment” and “psychobabble.”³¹

Among the problems with Reed’s political opposition to the reparations movement is that the form of universalism he advocates here seems to negate African Americans’ need for autonomous organizations. At this historical stage, it is impractical to think that Blacks will readily abandon the institutional infrastructures that compose Black civil society. Moreover, Reed seems to accept it as a foregone conclusion that this *particular* manifestation of independent African American action cannot contribute toward building a broad multi-racial coalition. Yet, the history of the Black Freedom Movement clearly indicates that autonomous Black organizing has not only advanced the causes of African Americans, but has made great contributions toward political and economic democratization of the U.S. The Black Freedom Movement has been at the crux of every progressive social change in the nation’s history. African Americans have been the most thorough and determined fighters in the struggle to expand democracy and socio-economic security beyond white male elites. The Black Freedom Movement has served as the inspiration and model for the new social movements that are challenging the American nightmare. Because he views the reparations movement as an expression of the “elite-brokerage model” he cannot see its possibilities. I think he reaches this conclusion because he privileges Randall Robinson in his analysis. Horowitz makes the same mistake of focusing on Robinson’s book, *The Debt: What America Owes To Blacks*. The reparations movement is a broad movement into which liberal elites have only recently entered, albeit at the head. Nevertheless, the movement is a contested space that includes revolutionary nationalists, social democrats, and Marxists.

Whereas Reed cannot see the possibility of reparations being an opening to meaningful dialogue and social transformation, Horowitz simply wants to maintain the racial status quo. His one-sided analysis obscures the potentially positive aspects of reparations. Finally, the payment of several hundred billion dollars in reparations could *ultimately* benefit all Americans. Reparations would enable the rebuilding of Black civil society, the transformation of inner city ghettos, the rebuilding of urban infrastructure, and go a long way toward eliminating poverty. Reparations represent a way to repair the past, a means “to rebuild relationships through attitudinal changes and institutional restructuring.”³²

However, the practical significance of the reparations movement may

lie in its contribution toward creating the space to address one of Reed's central concerns—the undemocratic decision-making process currently hegemonic in African America. The struggle for reparations has the possibility of generating the type of conversation and community organizing that would destroy the elite-brokerage model of Black politics. How can the struggle for reparations revitalize the Black Freedom Movement and reconstruct the Black community? First, it offers a means by which Blacks can coordinate their *social capital* to rebuild, revitalize, and redirect African American civil society. By social capital, I refer to webs of social relationships that exist among African American people. These relationships are rooted in common experiences with rac(e)ism, in common norms and values derived from African American culture, and in the myriad multiple connections that evolve from kinship, neighborhood residence, and from common membership in organizations and institutions. Second, the struggle for reparations *necessitates* an internal dialogue about the process of political and economic decision-making. For instance, how would the Black community determine what reparation proposal to pursue? How would we decide on a process for allocating resources and redistributing wealth? *For me, reparations are simultaneously an objective but more importantly a means for strengthening and democratizing Black civil society.* The struggle for reparations has the potential to politically mobilize a broad cross-section of Afro-America. Mass participation is the key to creating a strong participatory democratic culture throughout Afro-America. Finally, I contend that rebuilding and transforming African America's autonomous institutional structure is the key to Black liberation and a radical transformation of the United States.

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1999 by agreeing to pay \$192.5 million to 2,000 African American employees. Norfolk Southern Corp. accepted a consent decree to settle a 1993 suit involving 7,700 Black workers by agreeing to pay \$28 million for race discrimination. Suits are currently pending against Microsoft for \$5 billion and Office Depot for a sum rumored to be larger than the amount filed against Microsoft. See "Coke to pay \$192.5 million to settle race suit," AOL News, Reuters, Nov. 16, 2000; "Coca-Cola names civil rights lawyer as general counsel," AOL News, Reuters, Jan. 24, 2001; "Office Depot denies race bias allegations," AOL News, Reuters, Feb. 28, 2001.

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The Politics of the Disability Rights Movements

Ravi Malhotra

OVER THE COURSE OF THE LAST FEW DECADES, the socialist left throughout the industrialized West has been challenged to become more inclusive by an array of activist social movements including the women's movement, the Civil Rights and anti-racist movement, and the gay and lesbian liberation movement. In each case, fundamental questions have been posed as to how the left conceives itself and its commitment to fighting for the equality and liberation of oppressed groups. While the formulations of the left may be seen by some to be seriously wanting, it can be said that at the very least the issues were openly debated and all sides were richer for having had the discussion. In the case of the disability rights movements, however, one is faced with the sad reality that few on the left have even seriously begun to consider the issues at stake, let alone develop a preliminary praxis for disability liberation politics from a socialist perspective. Yet when neo-liberal attacks to roll back the welfare state throughout the West have reached fever pitch, a counter-hegemonic politics of disability liberation is more essential than ever for the more than fifty million disabled Americans. What follows below is a modest first step towards that goal.

A Brief History of Disabled People¹

PRIOR TO THE ENLIGHTENMENT AND INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, disabled people in Western society were undoubtedly poorly treated. Often the victims of religious superstition and persecution, disabled people in medieval Europe were associated with evil, witchcraft, and even the Devil. Children born with disabilities were often perceived as the consequence of their mothers' support for satanic beliefs, illustrating both the ableist and patriarchal values of the era. However, it is also the case that under feudalism, disabled people were generally able to make a contribution, in varying degrees, to a largely rural production process. If disabled people were hospitalized, it was in relatively small medieval hospitals where the focus was on palliative care rather than a cure.²

With industrialization came the rise of the factory system and waged

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labor. This required workers to complete tasks in accordance with specified time standards. Those who were unable to do so as a result of an impairment were labelled deviant even though they might have in fact contributed to production under previous regimes of capital accumulation. They were therefore marginalized and excluded from the labor force. Disability accordingly developed into a crucial boundary between the deserving poor entitled to relief and the undeserving poor. Yet what is remarkable is how even in this time period, the concept of disablement was not a static category enshrined in medical science but a variable boundary category in flux that might change depending on the state of the economy, the needs of the labor market, and the state of the labor movement and level of class struggle.³

It was during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that one saw the large-scale segregation of disabled people away from society into a number of institutional settings including asylums, hospitals, workhouses and prisons, frequently under conditions of intense abuse. However, again, incarceration in an institutional setting was hardly a direct function of a physical impairment but reflected trends in the political economy. Hence, the huge growth of heavy capital industries such as iron, steel and the railways in the late nineteenth century resulted in a much higher level of physical fitness and dexterity as a prerequisite for employment and a concomitant increase in the institutionalization of those deemed unable to work. Large numbers of disabled veterans of course were created as a result of the Civil War. In response to a long recession in the 1870s and 1880s, the rate of institutionalization also increased, revealing its relationship with the state of the economy.⁴ Such practices continued well into the twentieth century.

The rise of the Eugenics movement and social Darwinism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries also played an important role in the oppression of disabled people. The seminal text in this regard is Charles Darwin's *Origin of the Species*, published in 1859. In his 1871 text, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*, Darwin commented:

We civilized men, on the other hand, do our utmost to check the process of elimination; we build asylums for the imbecile, the maimed, and the sick; we institute poor-laws; and our medical men exert their utmost to save the life of everyone to the last moment . . . Thus the weak members of society propagate their kind. No one who has attended to the breeding of domestic animals will doubt that this must be highly injurious to the race of man.⁵

Social Darwinist rhetoric combined ableist and ignorant assumptions about the capabilities of disabled people with racist concerns about protecting the white race from the corrupting influences of immigrants.⁶ The birth of disabled children was accordingly seen as a dire threat to preserving racial purity. Tragically, this disturbing ideological framework had very real consequences. The United States Supreme Court ruled in its infamous 1927 decision of *Buck v. Bell* that a Virginia statute permit-

ting the forced sterilization of disabled people was not unconstitutional. Some 33 states had sterilization laws in place by 1938. Between 1921 and 1964, more than 63,000 disabled people had been sterilized.⁷

The Holocaust and Disability Oppression

THE DYSFUNCTIONAL LOGIC OF EUGENICS REACHED ITS NADIR in the brutal oppression of disabled people in the Nazi German regime, both in the years leading up to the Holocaust and in the Holocaust itself. Yet even as there has been an abundance of literature on the Holocaust, Nazi policies on disabled people have received relatively little scrutiny. Disabled people were nonetheless a major target of the Nazi regime. Hundreds of thousands of disabled people ranging from those with intellectual disabilities to blind and deaf people to those with psychiatric disabilities were sterilized. Propaganda in schools directly attacked disabled people as economic burdens on the state. This soon evolved into a monstrous program, undertaken by physicians, to exterminate disabled babies and children in what might be seen as a precursor to the Holocaust. By 1945, some five thousand children had been murdered by lethal injection, starvation, withholding of treatment, or chemical warfare weapons. In 1939, the program was extended to disabled adults. Hundreds of thousands of disabled people were killed before pressure by the Roman Catholic Church, notwithstanding its questionable role in other aspects of the Holocaust, resulted in the ending of the program in 1941. Still, euthanasia by medical doctors continued in hospitals.⁸

The post-war settlement is very revealing in how it demonstrates clearly the marginalization of the sterilization and extermination of disabled people. Sterilization of disabled people in fact could not be prosecuted in the Nuremberg trials because similar legislation existed in the United States and other countries. The extermination of disabled people was largely ignored. No compensation to families of disabled people was paid and the cases were not prosecuted as a distinct group that was targeted by the state. In the United States and other countries, policies of sterilization and institutionalization would continue, albeit on a reduced scale in the wake of increased concern for individual rights, even into the postwar Keynesian conjuncture.⁹

The Emergence of the Disability Rights Movements

AT THEIR VERY ROOT, CONTEMPORARY DISABILITY RIGHTS MOVEMENTS have as their goal the empowerment of disabled people. This is hardly a surprise as disabled people today remain among the most marginal of citizens in the United States, as well as in other leading Western industrialized countries. By every statistical measure known to sociologists, whether it is poverty levels, unemployment rates or levels of education, disabled people score very poorly. Even after years of a boom economy, disabled

people remain disproportionately unemployed and impoverished. This goal of empowerment, however, is undermined by the fact that disablement is still widely perceived, even on the left, as a personal problem fundamentally caused by the individual's medical impairment. The medical impairment is seen as the primary cause for the disabled individual's lack of success.

The disability rights movements, however, are predicated on the notion that it is the structural and attitudinal barriers in capitalist society that are the fundamental cause for the discrimination and oppression faced by disabled people. In this framework, disabled people are handicapped by the systemic lack of wheelchair access to public services, the failure of educational institutions and employers to make materials available in alternative formats for blind and visually impaired people, and the intricate bureaucracy that disabled people must navigate in order to get essential services such as income support and medical services. Hence, attention needs to be redirected from the medical impairment or medical model of disablement to the social-political issues that underpin disability oppression. In other words, the first step in the liberation of disabled people is a fundamental paradigm shift.

However, just as feminist theory has splintered into myriad camps with vastly different perspectives,¹⁰ the disability rights movements contain organizations with significantly different politics, strategies and tactics. A large number of charitable organizations have been created *for* disabled people, sometimes by parents of disabled children, but are not actually controlled by them and do not consistently endorse the social-political model of disablement. Instead of seeking solidarity with large numbers of disabled people based on common interest, they usually define their mandate on the basis of narrow diagnostic categories derived from a medical model of disablement. Furthermore, they often receive considerable funding from the state, unlike grassroots disability organizations, and are therefore inherently compromised when their constituents want to challenge fiscal austerity measures or other government policies they find objectionable. More fundamentally, they simply do not reflect the views of disabled people but instead subscribe to the belief that technocratic experts such as physicians, social workers and occupational therapists from above are best suited to solve the problems faced by disabled people.¹¹

In response, disabled people have begun to establish their own organizations in the quest for empowerment and self-determination. A very early example was the League for the Physically Handicapped, established by a few hundred disabled pensioners in New York who engaged in civil disobedience to protest their discriminatory exclusion from employment made available under the Works Progress Administration (WPA).¹² However, disability politics only developed significant roots after the flourishing of the New Left in the 1960s. With the revitalization of the women's movement, the emergence of the Civil Rights movement,

the movement against the war in Vietnam and the gay and lesbian movement, this new conjuncture provided the space for disabled people to self-organize.

In fact, it was in Berkeley, a central site of left organizing and home of the famous Free Speech Movement, where the Independent Living (IL) movement emerged. Spearheaded by the Rolling Quads, a group of disabled university students, a new political movement directly controlled by disabled people gained strength. The first Independent Living center was founded in Berkeley and sought to address the structural and attitudinal barriers in society. A vehicle was now in place to raise as political struggles issues ranging from accessing transportation to obtaining personal attendant care services that assist disabled people with activities of daily living to the high levels of physical and sexual abuse faced by disabled people that had been perceived as merely private troubles. Issues of physical access and attitudinal barriers could now be problematized in the way that the women's movement had challenged their oppression, be it violence or wages for housework, as a political issue. Within a few years, hundreds of IL centers were in operation across the United States, as well as a number of other countries including Canada, Britain and Brazil.¹³

THE LIMITATIONS OF THE INDEPENDENT LIVING MOVEMENT, however, quickly became apparent. It saw its role as promoting disabled people's equal rights as *consumers* within the framework of a free market society. Furthermore, it was not fully representative of the disabled community, often marginalizing the perspectives of disabled women, people of colour and gays and lesbians. By limiting itself to accept the restrictions imposed by market forces, it therefore undermined its own radical potential to empower disabled people.

Among organizations of disabled people, however, there have emerged more radical activist organizations that have sought to mobilize from below to transform society. Disabled in Action was founded in 1970 and adopted the tactic of direct political protest to raise both the consciousness of disabled people and awareness of the discriminatory barriers endemic in American society. During the 1972 presidential election, militants in Disabled in Action joined with disabled and often highly politicized Vietnam veterans, clearly an influential base of support for the American disability rights movements, in the Paralyzed Veterans of America to demand an on-camera debate with President Nixon. They also organized a demonstration at the Lincoln Memorial after President Nixon vetoed a spending bill to fund disability programs.¹⁴

The high point of the 1970s resurgence of disability liberation politics was the remarkable San Francisco occupation that occurred in conjunction with protests aimed at forcing the release of regulations pursuant to s. 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The regulations were to outline

how it was illegal for federal agencies, contractors, or public universities to discriminate on the basis of handicap. They had been delayed by previous Administrations but there was an expectation that the incoming Carter Administration would fulfill its promise to issue the regulations. When it became obvious that the Democrats' policy makers were stalling and wanted to substantially modify the regulations to permit continued segregation in education and other areas of public life, disability rights activists mobilized in nine cities across the United States. In Washington, three hundred demonstrators occupied the offices of the Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) Secretary for some twenty-eight hours despite the termination of the office's telephone lines by authorities and the refusal to permit food through to the protestors. While most demonstrations ended fairly quickly, in San Francisco, however, the movement took on a truly extraordinary trajectory. There, disability rights activists occupied the HEW federal building for twenty-five days culminating in total victory: the issuing of the regulations without any amendments.¹⁵

Many of the participants of the occupation, at times as many as 120, literally risked their lives, as they were without their personal care attendants or assistive devices, in order to pursue their fight for social justice and integration into mainstream society. Yet the impact in building cross-disability solidarity was remarkable in what can be seen, in retrospect, as the disability liberation movements' Stonewall. Instead of arbitrary divisions based on diagnostic categories, disabled people united around common political goals. The HEW Occupation was one of those rare events where the consciousness of the participants was dramatically transformed and their largely neglected creativity unleashed.¹⁶ Solidarity with other social movements was also built as the local branch of the Black Panthers Party prepared food supplied by civil rights organizations and unions.¹⁷ Whereas many of the participants had previously seen their oppression as personal medical problems, a real sense of disability pride was inculcated that would have lasting positive effects in building grassroots disability rights movements.

Despite the consolidation of a neo-conservative current that swept America and the world in the early 1980s, rank and file disability rights activists continued small but important struggles in unfavourable circumstances. The general weakness of the left in this period, however, may partly explain the relatively minimal attention given to disability oppression by other social movements and the broader socialist left. In 1983, the organization, American Disabled for Accessible Public Transit (ADAPT) was formed by disability rights activists in several cities across America to highlight the inaccessibility of public transit to mobility impaired people. It quickly became known for its colourful and confrontational tactics. For instance, it repeatedly disrupted the conventions of the American Public Transit Association, to the point of requiring mass arrests, in order to raise awareness of the industry's hostility to imple-

menting accessibility features that would enable disabled people to participate fully as citizens. They also demonstrated a dramatic flair for symbolism and a sense of strategic genius. Hence, they crawled up the stairs of important but inaccessible public buildings, including the eighty-three marble steps of the Capitol building, to demonstrate their exclusion from American society. Having secured a measure of victory in this field, they renamed themselves American Disabled for Attendant Programs Today and have continued their direct action tactics to raise awareness of the need for attendant care programs, that provide assistance with activities of daily living, to permit disabled people to live independently rather than face warehousing.¹⁸

For those seeking to formulate a disability liberation praxis from below, ADAPT is an interesting example of both the possibilities and limitations of the strategy. On the one hand, mobilizations by ADAPT have drawn sharp criticism from more moderate disability organizations. IL centers in Michigan, for example, went so far as to condemn ADAPT's activities in a letter to the state's governor.¹⁹ On the other hand, ADAPT itself never adopted a coherent ideological perspective that might guide its actions and enable it to form long-lasting coalitions with others seeking social change, including anti-poverty activists, single mothers and homeless people. Even worse, at times it relied on informal personal connections with politicians, including Republicans, for favourable treatment. While this occasionally meant less harsh treatment by police when engaging in civil disobedience, ADAPT and the disability rights movements paid a high price for this connection. It felt compelled to downplay demonstrations against the first Bush Administration while the ADA was under consideration, rejecting the option of chaining themselves to the gates of the White House, so as not to embarrass President Bush Sr.²⁰ Having chosen to undermine their own power to "stay relevant," ADAPT activists, lacking theoretical clarity and leadership, at times limited their own potential as a social movement.

The Americans with Disabilities Act: Limited Victories and Backlash

THE PASSAGE OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) in 1990 clearly marked a turning point in the history of disabled people. The culmination of years of mobilization and lobbying by disability rights activists, it has to be seen as a victory on many fronts. Simply by raising the level of awareness and consciousness, it has given far greater attention to disability issues than in previous years. The ADA and the regulations eventually issued pursuant to s. 504 of the Rehabilitation Act have also resulted in real improvements to physical access. The sign of success is a backlash and ADA and disabled people have been subject to a right wing backlash that should be very familiar to social justice activists. Politicians ranging from Tom DeLay to Pat Buchanan to Newt Gingrich have strongly attacked the ADA and numerous negative and

often very ignorant articles have appeared in the media.²¹ Leftists who focus exclusively on transformation in the economic sphere would do well to remember that wheelchair access to government offices, public schools, universities and private businesses is clearly far superior in the United States than in Canada, many social democratic European countries, or Australia.

At the same time, the structural framework of the ADA, what Marta Russell has astutely called “free market civil rights,”²² places the onus on individuals to make complaints and allows employers and businesses lengthy “phase-in” periods during which they are exempt from compliance. An original version of the legislation would have had much stricter access requirements but the legislation as passed only requires existing buildings to be made accessible upon renovation.²³ Moreover, the enforcement mechanisms of even the more modest requirements that were enacted are very weak due to lack of funding and a lack of political will. For instance, as recently as 1995, several years after the passage of the ADA, it was estimated that only twenty percent of federal buildings in Los Angeles complied with federal access requirements. One study found that two out of three cases of ADA civil rights cases filed with the Department of Justice are not investigated due to inadequate resources. Between 1990 and 1994, more than 3,600 complaints had been filed with the EEOC alleging disability discrimination in employment during the hiring process. However, the EEOC only approved *three* of these complaints for further investigation. Yet even as civil rights enforcement has been drastically underfunded, Congress has been willing to allocate ten times as many funds to Social Security to conduct reviews to determine whether individuals no longer qualified for the meagre social assistance programs provided.²⁴

Nevertheless, it is work that is the defining feature of capitalist society. On this central criterion, it is evident that the ADA has done particularly poorly. Disabled people continue to remain largely outside the workforce. Whereas approximately eighty percent of adults, aged eighteen to sixty-four, work full or part-time, only 29 percent of working age disabled adults work full or part time. Despite ADA, the unemployment rate remains between 65 and 70 percent and for those with severe disabilities, it is approximately 75 percent. The economic implications of this are clear: the poverty rate for disabled Americans is more than twenty percent according to Census Bureau data, compared to 13.5 percent for those without disabilities.²⁵ This is hardly surprising given that the benefit rate for SSI, the primary income support program used by disabled people with little or no work history, is set at 71 percent of the poverty level.²⁶ Moreover, the current political climate has been one of severe cutbacks for social assistance programs in general, with pernicious effects on many disabled people, especially those trapped in the bureaucratic quagmire of facing employment-related disability discrimination

but nevertheless being ineligible for SSI under that program's stringent criteria.²⁷

It is evident that a rights-based approach may be able to secure gains in physical access to services. The emergence of a vibrant disability pride or what some are increasingly referring to as disability culture, speaking of the experiences and barriers faced by disabled people and usually coated with a heavy dose of postmodern philosophy, may enrich the American social fabric. However, for leftists, it is clear that a disability rights praxis that takes a class analysis seriously must grapple with the intense unemployment and poverty experienced by a majority of disabled people.²⁸ A strong case can be made that this challenge ultimately strengthens the socialist case for a radical democratization of the economy. The full inclusion of disabled people into society would shatter the link between self-worth and full-time employment that has been predominant in capitalist societies since the Industrial Revolution. It would also open the door to the possibility of coalition-building with others such as single mothers and welfare recipients who also are punished by the arbitrary value placed on working a standard job and might ultimately permit a greater appreciation of the commodification of labor under capitalism so as to strengthen working class consciousness and mobilization as a whole.

Such coalition-building would certainly not preclude autonomous and varied disability politics movements that continued the important work on fighting physical access struggles, pressuring government and the private sector to make materials available in alternative format on a timely basis and the obtaining badly needed attendant care services to allow disabled people to live independently. The pursuit of a transformed economy would also not preclude grassroots campaigning, by both disability organizations and the broader left, in pursuit of specific reforms. A variety of incremental measures would make a real difference in the lives of disabled Americans including increases to SSI benefits, eliminating the ridiculous delays in obtaining benefits, affirmative action programs with teeth to get disabled people into the workplace, increasing subsidies to employers for funding accommodations and of course universal single payer health care.²⁹ It is incumbent upon anti-poverty activists, feminists, trade unionists, anti-racist militants, gay and lesbian community activists and above all the organized socialist left to work constructively with disability rights activists to make medium term solutions a reality while working toward long term transformation.

The Two Souls of Disability Liberation Politics

IN HIS NOW LANDMARK ESSAY, "The Two Souls of Socialism," American socialist activist Hal Draper outlined the fundamental difference between rank and file socialism-from-below that creatively seeks to transform society and the bureaucratic monstrosity that is socialism-from-above.³⁰ There

is clearly a similar divide in the politics of disability liberation. Whereas on the one hand, the well-funded bureaucratic impairment-specific organizations accomplish little and often undermine the possibility of broader solidarity, rank and file disability organizations seek to empower disabled people through militant struggle from below. Yet it would appear that there is an ambiguity in the political perspective of some of the best disability organizations. Even ADAPT would seem to lack a coherent anti-capitalist agenda that would enable it to form concrete alliances with other marginalized people, including poor people, homeless people, single mothers, and psychiatric survivors. Its occasional alliances with Republican politicians are deeply troubling for principled activists. Disability studies in the universities, a nascent field worthy of development, is tragically mired, at least in the United States, in utterly obscure postmodern debates that have little to do with the everyday lives of disabled people.

Nevertheless, the tactics of organizations like ADAPT undeniably indicate the potential for a praxis of disability politics from below. Unflinchingly critical of the state, independent from other social movements so as to articulate a social-political analysis of disablement and committed to strategic alliances with other social movements as well as expanding its base among disabled women, people of colour and gays and lesbians, such a disability liberation movement would be truly breathtaking and capture the imagination of thousands of young radicalizing disabled people. It would embrace the empowering resistance of the 1977 HEW occupation and transform it into a vibrant movement capable of leading mass struggles. Its fundamental critique of employment under capitalism goes to the heart of the socialist project's desire to challenge the commodification of labor for the working class and opens the door for solidarity with part-time workers, single mothers, and welfare recipients. As the neo-liberal juggernaut continues unabated at the dawn of the twenty-first century, disabled activists seeking to address the challenges of globalization would do well to heed Draper's legacy and work towards the formulation of an activist praxis of disability politics from below in a creative dialogue with grassroots left activists. And the socialist left would be gravely mistaken if it chose to continue to ignore this vibrant and important social movement.

NOTES

1. In this paper, the term "disabled people" is used as it emphasizes the need for disabled people to embrace their identity. See the discussion in Marta Russell, *Beyond Ramps: Disability at the End of the Social Contract* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1998), pp. 14-16. The plural is used to refer to disability rights movements to acknowledge the distinct and autonomous yet overlapping nature of the physical disability, blind, and psychiatric disability rights movements among others. I state at the outset that this article does not discuss the rich politics and history of the deaf movement for reasons of space and the limitations of the author.

2. Colin Barnes, *Disabled People in Britain and Discrimination: A Case for Anti-*

Discrimination Legislation (London: Hurst & Co, 1991), pp. 12-13.

3. Barnes, p. 15.

4. Barnes, p. 18.

5. Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (New York: Appleton, 1922), p.136, cited in Russell, p. 19.

6. David Pfeiffer, "Overview of the Disability Movement: History, Legislative Record, and Political Implications," *Policy Studies Journal*, vol. 21(4) (1993): p. 726.

7. Russell, pp. 22-27.

8. Russell, pp. 27-28.

9. See the excellent discussion in Sue Ferguson, "Building on the Strengths of the Socialist Feminist Tradition" *New Politics* vol. 7(2) (new series) (1999).

10. Michael Oliver, *The Politics of Disablement* (London: Macmillan, 1990), pp. 113-116. See also Tom Shakespeare, "Disabled People's Self-organisation: a new social movement?", *Disability, Handicap and Society*, vol. 8(3) (1993): pp. 249-264 and Tony Fagan and Phil Lee, "'New' Social Movements and Social Policy: A Case Study of the Disability Movement," in M. Lavalette and A. Pratt (eds.), *Social Policy: A Conceptual and Theoretical Introduction* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), pp. 140-160.

11. Joseph P. Shapiro, *No Pity: People with Disabilities Forging a New Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Times Books, 1993), pp. 63-64. Shapiro's account is the classic liberal account and essential reading for those interested in the history of the disability rights movements.

12. James I. Charlton, *Nothing About Us Without Us: Disability Oppression and Empowerment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 131-136.

13. Shapiro, pp. 57-58.

14. Shapiro, pp. 64-69.

15. See C.L.R. James, Grace C. Lee and Pierre Chaulieu, *Facing Reality* (Detroit: Bewick Editions, 1974) for a classic discussion of spontaneous struggle from below.

16. Shapiro, pp. 64-69.

17. Shapiro, pp. 127-141.

18. Charlton, p. 122.

19. Russell, pp. 128-129.

20. Russell, pp. 117-118. One of the more bizarre stories sometimes mentioned by right wing demagogues is the Los Angeles strip joint that was ordered to make its stage showers, that dancers used to entertain customers, wheelchair accessible for any disabled dancers that might wish to apply for the job.

21. Russell, pp. 109-124.

22. Shapiro, pp. 114-115.

23. Russell, pp. 109-121.

24. Marta Russell, "Inequality, Neo-Liberalism, and Disability," *Disability Studies Quarterly* vol. 19(4) (Fall 1999): p. 372.

25. Mark C. Weber, "Disability and the Law of Welfare: A Post-Integrationist Examination," *University of Illinois Law Review* vol. 2000 (3): p. 950. This study used 1997 data.

26. See Betty Reid Mandell, "Welfare Reform: The War Against The Poor," *New Politics* vol. 8(2) (new series) (2001): 37-56. In an otherwise superb article, the author regrettably does not address, to any significant extent, the impact of the war against the poor on disabled people, especially with respect to SSI recipients.

27. For an interesting and early, if ultimately flawed, analysis of disability oppression from a socialist perspective, see Heidi Durham, *The War on the Disabled: Adding Insult to Injury* (Seattle: Freedom Socialist Publications, 1982). Whatever one may think of the politics of the Freedom Socialist Party, they are one of the only radical left organizations in the United States known to this author to ever issue a publication specifically on disability oppression.

28. See the excellent discussion in Weber, pp. 942-956.

29. Hal Draper, "The Two Souls of Socialism," *New Politics* vol. 5(1) (1966): pp. 57-84.

Mass Protests in Quebec City: From Anti-Globalization to Anti-Capitalism

David McNally

No longer will an affinity for used clothes, a refusal to eat fast food, a vegetarian lifestyle and a subscription to Adbusters suffice. I want to buy myself a gas mask, tear this world apart and rebuild from the roots with others of like mind.

— A Quebec City protester writing in FTAA Diary

ANYONE WANTING EVIDENCE OF THE CONTINUING RADICALIZATION of the movement which disrupted the WTO meetings in Seattle in late 1999 need only have come to Quebec City during the third week of April. Not only did the protests there against the Summit of the Americas (designed to create a Free Trade Area of the Americas by 2005) draw somewhat larger numbers than the Seattle actions, but, arguably more significant, the political mood indicated an ongoing swing to the left among participants. This radicalization was measurable in the stronger positions taken by the popular organizations which came together in the Hemispheric Social Alliance, and in the widespread support for anti-capitalist ideas among thousands of the most determined, courageous and inventive activists who took to the streets on April 20th and 21st, holding their ground against teargas firing riot police on two successive days. For the first time in decades, it is possible to realistically envision the emergence of a new radical left — an activist anti-capitalist left — animated by the tremendous energy and resolve of thousands of young people.

Breaching “The Wall of Shame”

AS SOON AS THE LAST WHIFF OF TEARGAS had dissipated in Seattle, Canadian government officials began planning to “protect” the April 2001 FTAA talks (and the 34 heads of state from the Americas, excluding Cuba, who were invited) from disruption by global justice activists. To this end, they mobilized 6000 police and 1200 troops for the occasion. Most offensive to huge numbers of people, however, was the government’s decision to use cement blocks and chain link fencing to create a nearly three mile-long wall that would prevent demonstrators from getting anywhere near the conference site. Behind the wall loomed thousands of riot police equipped

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with teargas, rifles, rubber bullets, shields, water cannons, concussion grenades, and more. Had the government deliberately set out to create a symbol of anti-democratic exclusion, they could not have done better. Letters to newspapers and calls to talk-shows in both Quebec and English-speaking Canada regularly decried the construction of the wall as a naked attempt to silence popular opposition.

For several days prior to the opening of the official event, a couple of thousand representatives of unions, women's and environmental groups, indigenous and peasant organizations, church, student and human rights associations met in the Second Peoples' Summit of the Americas, organizing a number of actions including a women's march of several hundred. Perhaps most significant was the position the Peoples' Summit took in its Declaration adopted on April 19. Rather than taking the anticipated "FTAA plus" position which simply demands the inclusion of labor, environmental and other clauses, its delegates declared their "opposition to the Free Trade Area of the Americas." This stance represented a significant victory for the more militant organizations involved. Instead of calling for modifications to capitalist trade deals (which had been the dominant position in the past), the Second Peoples' Summit had moved to an anti-FTAA position. By the end of the week, after two days of battles with riot police, even this position would be overtaken by the more uncompromising words and actions of thousands in the streets.

Not surprisingly, the "wall of shame," as it was dubbed, became the center of the most dramatic confrontations between police and demonstrators. The action began on Friday, April 20th when thousands of student and youth activists, alongside smaller numbers of union and social movement veterans, marched to the wall. After some milling around, a disparate group of protesters attacked and tore down a section of the fence, eliciting a huge roar of approval from the crowd. While this group had been brought together largely by the Anti-Capitalist Convergence (known as CLAC according to its French initials) and the local group with which it collaborated (CASA), soon other activists, some of them attending the Peoples' Summit, joined the protests and the numbers swelled. Meanwhile, the police started a barrage of teargas that would be unrelenting over the next two days — firing nearly 5000 canisters in the course of the event.

The sheer brutality of the police response shocked most protesters. The most peaceful of groups — usually sitting on the road near the fence, chanting and singing — were attacked mercilessly, as police repeatedly lobbed teargas canisters into their midst. Snatch squads circled the streets with cops in plain clothes arresting unsuspecting activists. Jaggi Singh of the Anti-Capitalist Convergence was dragged off the street and held for 17 days for the crime of speaking to the crowd through a megaphone.¹

In the midst of this ferocious police assault, shock, anger and determination grew. One activist with the Green Party described his experi-

ence of moving toward the wall once a section of the fence came down. “I walked toward them, giving the police the peace symbol. I got about five feet from them, and was shot in the chest with a teargas canister.”

Yet, rather than deter the demonstrators, the police brutality inspired them to courageous resistance. Despite being injured and periodically overwhelmed by teargas, activists returned again and again to areas near the fence. Groups like the Guerrilla Rhythm Squad pounded out beats that animated the crowd. At times large groups of people could be heard banging out rhythms on street signs, lampposts and homemade drums. Activists in costumes roamed the streets alongside giant puppets. At one point a group calling itself the “Medieval Bloc” rolled a wooden catapult up the street and proceeded to launch teddy bears at the police behind the fence. As the day went on the crowd became more enthusiastic and celebratory, more emboldened and defiant.

Yet, all minds were focused on Saturday when tens of thousands of trade unionists were set to arrive by bus and train. The appearance of large numbers of labor activists clearly had the capacity to shift the whole nature of the protests.

A Tale of Two Marches

IN TERMS OF SHEER NUMBERS, those anticipating the Saturday labor mobilization could not have been disappointed. Most commentators had been expecting 25,000 to 30,000 people; in the event, perhaps twice as many turned up.² Over the span of a couple of hours, loud, festive demonstrators spilled out of up to 2000 buses, while a few thousand more protesters pulled in on a train booked by two unions. The crowd was also impressive in its diversity. While the vast majority were trade unionists from Quebec, many thousands came from other areas. Women and workers of color were more prominent than at many similar events; and banners, signs and slogans dotted the throng in French, Spanish and English. In addition to being inspiringly large, the union gathering was also tremendously colorful and festive in spirit. Banners, puppets, and flags were everywhere; jugglers, clowns, dancers, artists and drummers filled the crowd with energy.

Yet, as in Seattle, there was a political discussion and debate that needed to be had: was labor going to send its march (or much of it) to support the 7000 young protesters who had already converged at the wall and were getting blasted with teargas and water cannons, or was it going to stick with its plan to walk away from the wall and head to a large field and parking area a couple of miles away? Much to the dismay of the activists at the fence, labor largely marched away.

I say “largely,” because a few thousand union activists figured out what was happening and broke away to join the battle at the wall. But huge numbers of unionists were unaware of what was occurring only a small distance away. At no point did any labor leader inform the crowd

as to what was taking place; not once did any union leader publicly suggest that those who wanted to support the protesters at the fence should form contingents to march there. While some labor people have privately blamed the Quebec unions for the decision, it is clear that the top leadership of the Canadian Labor Congress (CLC) was centrally involved. Several days before the demonstrations, for instance, CLC president Ken Georgetti, publicly defended the decision not to go near the security fence: "It's a good symbolic act to walk away," Georgetti told reporters.³

Meanwhile, the battle at the fence escalated beyond the proportions of the day before. Police unleashed mammoth amounts of teargas (which seemed to be of a nastier grade than the previous day), blasted people with water cannons, and hit dozens upon dozens of protesters with rubber bullets. Medics were run off their feet attending to the wounded and washing teargas out of people's eyes. In a particularly brutal act, police raided the makeshift medical center and confiscated supplies.

Once again, however, the demonstrators displayed inspiring courage and solidarity in the face of the police onslaught. Protesters repeatedly returned to the battle zone, and confidence grew with the addition of a few thousand activists, many carrying union flags, who had left the labor march to support the battle at the wall. As the street-fighting continued throughout the afternoon, even veteran activists recorded their amazement. "This reporter has never witnessed such a well-organized and sustained fight between demonstrators and police," wrote Judy Rebeck, a well-known feminist with over 30 years of activist experience.⁴

Despite the important presence of several thousand union activists, the direction of the labor march produced a terrible sense of betrayal among those at the wall. As they withstood hours of bombardment by teargas and rubber bullets, activists at or near the wall eagerly anticipated the arrival of tens of thousands of trade unionists. Yet, the labor leaders repeated the Seattle scenario in which, as one participant put it, "The absent masses never came."⁵ One union activist who went to the fence accurately describes the situation: "As the crowd at the fence grew throughout the afternoon, a question was repeated again and again: Where are the unions? The answer, sadly, was that the labor march was kilometers from the fence and headed in the wrong direction . . . The presence of individual workers at the fence was no compensation for the mistaken union decision to avoid meaningful protest in the first place."

The Challenge: Labor and Anti-Capitalism

THE FAILURE TO CONNECT THE TWO SATURDAY PROTEST ACTIONS underlines an enormous challenge to serious forces on the left. For all the impressive unity and solidarity they displayed, most of the union members who went to Quebec City did not experience the radicalization that exposure to naked police violence produces. Nor did they experience the qualitative leap in solidarity — with colorful punks, young environmentalists,

militant anarchists and socialists, among others — that common action in the face of state violence can produce. One trade union member who did go to the wall described the experience: “At the front line we are all just people, asserting our rights and protesting our injuries. No other affiliations matter. People trade water, bandannas, food, and other supplies freely. The solidarity is incredible.” And so is the politicization: “We no longer refer to the police as police. Now we call them ‘cops,’ or ‘pigs.’ People are speaking openly about ‘the revolution.’ ”

Because they engaged in a relatively staid, passive, and decidedly less militant action, the majority of union members who went to Quebec City did not experience anything approximating the same degree of radicalization, nor were they exposed to the widespread presence of anti-capitalist ideas that percolated among so many engaged in direct action. At the same time, because they were not exposed to thousands upon thousands of union activists joining them in the struggle at the wall, there is a tendency among some younger activists to simply dismiss “labor” as a potentially radical force, making no distinction between bureaucratic leaderships and rank and file members. The political danger, then, is that we will have a radicalizing youth current largely disconnected from the unions and with little identification with radical working class politics, alongside labor activists who are not connecting with anti-capitalist ideas and the energizing experiences of more militant forms of direct action.

This split is exacerbated by those in the established leaderships of many unions and NGOs who have been only too eager to condemn “violence” and point fingers at “anarchists” and other “disruptive” elements in the anti-globalization movement. In Seattle, for instance, Carl Pope of the Sierra Club attacked the violence of those who broke windows at Starbucks, Nike and the like. More recently, following May Day protests in Britain, which involved a frightening level of police brutality, environmental campaigner George Monbiot attacked “anarchists” and “violent activists” in a *Guardian* article entitled “Violence is our enemy.” Much to her credit, Maude Barlow of the center-left Council of Canadians initially refused to denounce violent protesters in Quebec City, but since then has backtracked, condemning “violence” and “vandalism.” Philippe Duhamel of the Montreal-based group SalAMI, originally formed to fight the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, has been more outspoken in his attacks on violence and “mob action.” Behind the scenes, there is an unhappy discussion happening in more established left circles in Canada about weeding out some anarchist elements from future global justice protests.

Despite these worrying developments, there are also some hopeful signs. Dozens of activists — among them militants with Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 3903 and the Rosa Luxemburg affinity groups⁶ — intervened at the labor march to urge trade unionists to go the wall.

Their efforts were vital in encouraging a few thousand union activists to join demonstrators at the fence. Beyond these efforts on the ground, a debate has been taking place elsewhere in which many union members have questioned their movement's strategy. Nowhere has this discussion been sharper than in the Canadian Auto Workers where, as Carol Phillips, director of the CAW international affairs department explains, "A lot of our members who came to Quebec are now telling me they want to take part in the fight-back that takes place in the streets. A lot want training in direct action." Commenting on the strength of rank and file activist opinion, Phillips claims, "Our activists are becoming more radical . . . It's easy to become cynical. But this, this is real. This is a rejection, I guess, of capitalism."⁷

Developments like these, which create a context for joint work and political discussion among young anti-capitalists and labor radicals, will be crucial both in preventing a debilitating split in the global justice movement and in continuing to foster its radicalization.

Opposing the Criminalization of Anarchists

TO BE SURE, THERE ARE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS of strategy and tactics to be debated, but these cannot occur constructively in a climate where anarchists are regularly vilified. Knee-jerk attacks on anarchists simply widen the divisions in the movement and throw up obstacles to open, democratic discussion. For this reason, dedicated activists need to insist on a few basic principles.

First, everyone genuinely interested in the future of the anti-globalization struggle must clearly and publicly oppose attempts to divide the movement into good and bad (read: anarchist) protesters. Former U.S. President Bill Clinton used the divide-and-conquer approach quite deliberately during the Seattle protests. Moreover, these tactics have a long history. In the United States, for instance, they figured prominently from the aftermath of the Haymarket affair during the 1886 strike wave for the eight-hour day, through to the witch-hunt of the Italian-American anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti in the 1920s. In both periods, the criminalization of ostensible "anarchists" regularly opened the door to wider attacks on the civil rights of all radical and labor protesters.⁸ Today, in the midst of a rising global justice movement, police and media demonization of anarchists is being used to justify paramilitary forms of police action against demonstrators. If a fair-minded debate over strategy and tactics is to happen, it will be necessary to challenge all those in the global justice movement who lend legitimacy to the criminalization of anarchists by using the very language of the police to denounce "vandalism," "hooligans," "violent elements" and the like. Whatever differences many of us may have with the tactics of some anarchist groups, anarchists must be recognized and defended as a legitimate and important part of the movement.

Secondly, concerns with violence must be regularly turned back on the state. It is the riot police who turned parts of Quebec City into a near-civil war zone. It is the riot police who lobbed nearly 5000 teargas canisters, and who attacked protesters with clubs and rubber bullets. More than this, it is capitalist globalization — in the forms of neo-liberalism and IMF- and World Bank-sponsored Structural Adjustment Programs — that has led to a doubling since 1971 of the number of countries in which per capita income is less than \$900 per year. The violence of poverty, starvation, rising infant mortality, a poverty-driven AIDS pandemic in Africa, and so on is what actually kills people — not the trashing of a few store windows, or the lobbing back of a few teargas canisters by angry activists.

Finally, serious activists need to recognize that the failure of labor leaderships to mobilize union members to build the protest movement and to support its most courageous activists generates a disillusionment in which tactics of frustration often come to the fore. Isolated adventurism looks a lot less compelling when it is possible to participate in truly mass-based militant actions.

Socialists, Anarchists and Strategy for the Movement

NONE OF THIS IS TO SHY AWAY FROM DEBATES that need to be had; it is merely to insist that we cannot have the discussions we need if a legitimate section of the movement is being demonized. More than this, I would argue, beyond just opposing vilification of anarchists, radical socialists need to recognize the important contributions that many who describe themselves as anarchists have made to the global justice movement.

After all, many of the decentralized forms of direct action organizing — in particular the creation of affinity groups and spokescouncils — owe much to the way in which young activists have seized upon certain anarchist traditions.⁹ Equally important, the emphasis on the cultural and festive side of social protest, while also an integral part of the radical and revolutionary tradition of socialism-from-below, has rightly been promoted by anarchist groups as a counterpoint to the often boring, predictable and staid events mounted by bureaucratized unions and NGOs. In short, at their best, anarchists have injected a real energy and enthusiasm into the global justice movement while promoting participatory forms of organization. For all of this they ought to be commended.

Furthermore, those of us who operate in the tradition of *socialism from below*¹⁰ share some key commitments with many anarchists — particularly their hostility to the state, their suspicion of bureaucratic parties and organizations, and their emphasis on self-organization. Nevertheless, there are important differences to be debated. In the context of the emerging anti-capitalist movement three main issues of debate stand out in especially sharp relief. These concern agencies of social change; the role of reform struggles; and tactics for building a stronger move-

ment.

One of the inspiring things about the predominantly young anti-capitalist current that has developed in the global justice movement is the way growing numbers now talk of the need for revolutionary change in society. Yet, and here we touch directly on the first point, it must be said that there is a widespread unclarity about the agencies of such revolutionary change. This is captured in a not-untypical statement made to a newspaper journalist by one Quebec City protester, a 22-year-old university student: "If we create a revolution we can change this system," he insisted. "When the power of money is defeated by the power of the street it must be not just in Canada, but around the world."¹¹

There is much to commend in these sentiments: their radicalism and internationalism, in particular. But there is a crucial strategic problem with suggesting that "the power of the street" can defeat "the power of money." All the modern experience of working class and radical movements indicates that the power to defeat capital lies in the first instance in the workplaces. True, street protest and mobilizations along with community-based protests are decisively important for any radical or revolutionary movement. But to overthrow the power of capital requires a movement that can paralyze the production of surplus value (profit) and seize control of the means of production (the places of work). More than this, only such a struggle can involve the vast majority — the working class — in a movement in which it frees itself, taking control of the very places of work that have dominated and exploited them. Without such a grassroots struggle by the majority, capitalism cannot be overturned. And without such a movement of self-emancipation, no struggle can arrive at a truly post-capitalist result. As Rosa Luxemburg put it, "The struggle for socialism has to be fought out by the masses, by the masses alone, breast to breast against capitalism, by every worker against his employer . . . Socialism cannot and will not be created by decrees; nor can it be created by any government, no matter how socialistic. Socialism must be created by the masses, by every proletarian. Where the chains of capitalism are forged, there they must be broken. Only that is socialism, and only thus can socialism be created."¹²

Yet, and this brings us to our second point, a movement that intends ultimately to mobilize the majority in a struggle for their self-liberation must confront the question as to how such a movement is to be built. And here again, all the experience suggests it will not happen simply by issuing abstract calls for revolution. Instead, it will require building struggles for concrete social reforms — for social housing, against police racism, for union rights and a living wage, in defense of picket lines, and so on — in ways that develop revolutionary capacities. Too often, however, many anarchists reject such a perspective, denouncing all social reform movements as "reformist." One group, the Northeastern Federation of Anarcho-Communists, for instance, issued a tabloid in Quebec City that, among

other things, claimed that “reforms are like chloroform, they put us to sleep.”¹³

As Rosa Luxemburg also insisted, however, the difference between reformists and revolutionaries does not have to do with which of these groups supports social reforms. Instead, it has to do with how they approach the struggle for reforms and whether or not they use that struggle to develop a revolutionary movement. For the reformist, the achievement of a set of social reforms is the very purpose of the movement. Moreover, the reformist prefers polite negotiations among elites to the mobilization of loud and angry masses. For the revolutionary socialist, on the other hand, “the struggle for reforms is its *means*; the social revolution its *goal*.”¹⁴ To that end, socialism-from-below approaches reform struggles in terms of building the self-activity, consciousness, combativity and self-organization of workers and oppressed peoples. Recognizing that the vast majority of people desperately want improvements in their conditions of life, revolutionary socialists hope to assist a process of struggle for improvements that raises the participants’ sense of their own power to change the world and clarifies the nature of the system they are fighting. To abstain from reform struggles, to denounce them as “chloroform,” however, is to renounce building a mass movement that really can transform society.

This brings us to the third point that needs to be debated: the role of tactics in the movement. After all, it is clear that some, although by no means all, anarchists really do see confrontations with the police as the very purpose of global justice protests; indeed, some anarchist publications circulating after the Quebec City protests have focused almost entirely on the lessons of street-fighting to the exclusion of any consideration of strategy and tactics designed to build the mass base of the global justice movement.

Here, some important criticisms raised by activists with the Bus Riders Union (BRU) and the Labor/Community Strategy Center in Los Angeles are very much to the point. The BRU represents one of the most exciting examples of inner city, multi-racial organizing around class, gender and race issues.¹⁵ Yet, in protest organizing around the Democratic National Convention in LA last year, the BRU chose not to affiliate with the Direct Action Network (DAN), which has a considerable involvement of anarchists. As one BRU activist explains, the base of the Bus Riders Union consists predominantly of people of color, some of them undocumented immigrants. To many of these people, he points out, “the police department is a paramilitary force that occupies our communities.”¹⁶ Much anti-racist organizing consists, therefore, in protecting communities from police. However, BRU activists became convinced that many in DAN had made a fetish of a single tactic: direct actions designed to confront police. They concluded that such an approach would weaken efforts to involve activists from communities of color. As Labor/Commu-

nity Strategy Center director Eric Mann explains, “We were worried that a group that defined itself by a tactic not a strategy would be in danger of walking into a police ambush, as well as being restricted permanently to a white middle class base that equated militancy with radical or revolutionary politics.”¹⁷

The question of tactics — and the error of defining a group or a movement by a single tactic — is one that will need much discussion and debate in the next few years. To some in the anarchist milieu, confrontation with police seems to have become the overwhelming objective of global justice protests. But much of the time, this approach undercuts the movement-building goals of those in unions, communities of color, and working class communities generally. To resolve these issues means bringing direct action and mass action/movement-building tactics into a common strategic perspective. There is no simple either/or at issue here; it is not a question of direct action or mass action. What is required is the political vision to creatively weave together direct action and mass action approaches in order to develop the energy and enthusiasm of direct action in concert with the larger mass mobilizing and movement-building approaches of mass action tactics. In the long run, in fact, each approach can do much to strengthen the other. The development in Ontario over the past year of union flying squads that participate in direct actions — often around anti-poverty and immigrant rights issues¹⁸ — and direct action training among union activists will be crucial in this regard, as they will help overcome the fissure between direct action and union activists. But equally vital is promoting recognition among some protesters that not every confrontation with police builds the base of the movement. This means arguing for militant movement-building strategies which can mobilize growing numbers of working class people — and women workers and workers of color in particular — and where union flying squads participate in direct actions alongside younger activists.

If the struggle in Quebec City showed anything, then, it is that the anti-globalization movement continues on its post-Seattle upswing. More than this, it demonstrated decisively that there is a radicalizing anti-capitalist current embracing thousands of young activists. And equally important, it underlined the crucial responsibilities of radical socialists in helping to shape the strategies and perspectives of the militant left wing of this dynamic movement for global justice.

NOTES

1. Singh was also charged with possession of a dangerous weapon — a wooden catapult used to toss teddy bears at the police!

2. My calculations of overall numbers are based on the modest formula, derived from years of protest experience, of multiplying the first police estimate of the trade union march (35,000) by 1.5. This would give a total of about 52,500 on the labor march. Another 7000 to 8000 gathered in a separate student and education sector march, much of which went directly to the Wall of Shame. This gives a total of at least 60,000 partici-

pants in the events of Saturday, April 21. Some on the left have claimed that 80,000 were involved; while this is not impossible, it strikes me as something of an exaggeration. I am more comfortable claiming that *at least* 60,000 protesters turned out on the largest day. This would make the event modestly larger than the biggest of the Seattle protests.

3. Thomas Walkom, "Demonstrator's dilemma — to march to or fro?" *Toronto Star*, April 18, 2001. Having said this, the close ties of the main Quebec unions to the Parti Quebecois government of Quebec clearly figured in the timid decisions that were made. These decisions did not in any way conflict, however, with the position of the CLC brass.

4. Judy Rebick, "Quebec City: Policing the People," online report at www.rabble.ca

5. Jeffrey St. Clair, "Seattle Diary: It's a Gas, Gas, Gas," *New Left Review* 238, November/December 1999, p. 89.

6. CUPE 3903 is one of the most militant unions in Toronto, having overwhelmingly won an 11-week strike last fall and winter. The Rosa Luxemburg affinity groups were organized by the New Socialist Group but included many other activists.

7. Thomas Walkom, "Melange of Quebec protesters united in rethinking strategy," *Toronto Star*, April 28, 2001.

8. See, for example, Richard O. Boyer and Herbert M. Morasi, *Labor's Untold Story*, 3rd. edn. (New York: UE, 1972), Chs. 3 and 8; Jeremy Brecher, *Strike!* (San Francisco: Straight Arrow Books, 1973; expanded and revised edn., Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1997), Ch. 2; Paul Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). For a useful introduction that relates these past episodes to the present, see Kristian Williams, "The Criminalization of Anarchism," *clamor*, April/May 2001.

9. See, for instance, the "Note on Affinity Groups" in Murray Bookchin, *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* (San Francisco: Ramparts Press, 1971). I do not mean to romanticize the processes of direct democracy the movement has created — they certainly have their flaws — but I do mean to applaud their participatory objectives.

10. The classic delineation of socialism from below is Hal Draper, "The Two Souls of Socialism" in Draper, *Socialism From Below*, ed. E. Haberkern (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1992). As should be clear from the above, while recognizing the force of Draper's criticisms in that essay of the individualism of the erstwhile "fathers of anarchism," Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Mikhail Bakunin, I believe a more balanced consideration of the anarchist tradition is in order, particularly of anarcho-syndicalism. For more on Marx's politics of socialism from below see Draper, *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution*, v. 1 (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977), part 1.

11. Zev Singer, "It's about giving him fear," *Ottawa Citizen*, April 22, 2001.

12. Rosa Luxemburg, "Our Political Program" in Rosa Luxemburg, *Selected Political Writings* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), pp. 396-7.

13. It should be said that this tabloid, "Anarchists/Les Anarchistes," had many laudable features. But the attitude toward reform struggles highlights a weakness I am analyzing.

14. Rosa Luxemburg, "Social Reform or Revolution" in *Selected Political Writings*, p. 52.

15. See Eric Mann, "A race struggle, a class struggle, a women's struggle all at once: organizing on the buses of LA" in *Working Classes, Global Realities: Socialist Register 2001*, eds. Leo Panitch and Colin Leys (London: Merlin Press, 2000).

16. Martin Hernandez, "Los Angeles, the Democratic Convention, and the Left: What the Hell Do We Do Now?" *Socialism and Democracy*, v. 14, Fall-Winter 2000, p. 140.

17. As quoted in *ibid.*, p. 141.

18. At the moment, direct action flying squads have developed in Ontario within several locals of the Canadian Auto Workers, and in CUPE 3903 (see note 5 above). These union flying squads work especially closely with the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, a militant, grassroots activist coalition that brings together poor people, trade unionists, anarchists and socialists into one of the most dynamic protest groups in the province.

Palestine and Israel: Hope is a Scarce Commodity

Adam Keller

GENERAL ARIEL SHARON WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT precisely eighteen years after that memorable day in February 1983 when Israel heaved a collective sigh of relief at the news that he had been forced to leave the Ministry of Defense. It was after months of mounting tension and struggle. The invasion of Lebanon, Sharon's initiative, had claimed thousands of lives already in its first week. The months-long siege and bombing of Beirut culminated in Sharon's allies of the Falange militia massacring hundreds of Palestinian refugees in Sabra and Shatila, under the protection of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). During those months, the anti-war movement had mushroomed from a few isolated dozens to hundreds of thousands filling the squares, forcing the government to appoint the Kahan Commission of Inquiry which found Sharon totally unfit to hold a position of responsibility. Even then, he clung to power. Only after an over-zealous Sharon fan murdered Emil Grunzweig, a decorated war hero turned Peace Now activist, did the outpouring of public anger finally force Sharon to quit the Defense Ministry. What we did not know then was that Sharon's war would go on without him for nearly two decades.

These memories were revived among those who marched through the streets of Jerusalem on the night of February 3, 2001 — with the elections three days ahead and the victory of Sharon already a foregone conclusion. They were about a thousand dedicated people, ready to come out into the street on a night of pouring rain, march and hold banners aloft, chanting: "Emil is not Forgotten! Lebanon is not forgotten! Peace Yes, Sharon No!" It was the last effort to save a Prime Minister who could not — who did not — deserve to be saved. The passions of the participants in this annual Emil Grunzweig Memorial of Peace Now were not reflective of the general mood of the country. By and large, Israel did forget. So much had happened since, wars and confrontations and bloodshed, hopes raised and dashed, bloodshed again — to say nothing of so many more political careers made and lost. A whole new generation grew up for whom the war of 1982 is ancient history. The same for the million new Israelis who were still Soviet citizens when Sharon rampaged through Lebanon.

Sharon's place as the foremost nationalist demagogue of Israel was long since taken by Benjamin Netanyahu, and for the younger leftists it was

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Netanyahu who was “The man you love to hate.” Sharon was considered a spent force, by his own camp as well as by his opponents. An old man, long past his peak, still nursing pathetic illusions of a comeback, still having a bee in his bonnet about creating and extending settlements, but soon to retire to his Negev farm. Yet here he is, smiling in the seat of power. The babies born at the time of his downfall are soon going to put on military uniforms and learn firsthand the effect of his political and military policies.

Barak Defeated Himself

TO SOME DEGREE, SHARON'S VICTORY IS DUE TO HIS SHREWD ABILITY to seize an opportunity and use it to the fullest. But mostly he owes it to Ehud Barak, the Prime Minister who so discredited his own policies, so systematically alienated and splintered his own supporters, that he would have probably been defeated by virtually any contender. Many causes were cited in explaining Barak's crushing defeat, and certainly all of them contributed: haughty and arrogant behavior to persons and groups which he later desperately needed; surrounding himself with a coterie of dubious advisers who soon split into mutually-hostile cliques; posing in his campaign as a social reformer and completely discarding these pretensions the moment he was elected; raising the idea of “a secular revolution” and then repeatedly “freezing” and “unfreezing” it according to expediency — with the result that he made the religious parties into his implacable enemies, and still had not the slightest concrete achievement to show to his secularist voters.

Still, the electorate may have been willing to forgive Barak all these, had he fulfilled his basic promise to make peace with the Palestinians and the Arab World. It was Barak himself, who in countless speeches defined this as his major task, who stated again and again in his down-to-earth military manner: “It is the result which counts, judge me by the results.” Barak presented himself to the voters after a year and a half of supposed peacemaking, at whose end Israel was embroiled in a brutal conflict and peace had rarely seemed so distant. True, very different views existed among the voters, but hardly anybody held a high opinion of Barak's record. There were voters who got their information from the liberal newspaper *Ha'aretz*, supplemented by foreign TV stations, material circulating on the Internet and some personal contacts with Palestinians. They saw a Prime Minister who offered great verbal concessions but implemented none of them, and who on the ground launched a campaign of brutal repression unprecedented at any time since 1967. There were also the voters who learned of events mainly through the mass-circulation papers and the two Israeli TV channels. Relying on such sources, it was very easy to form the image of a softie PM, persisting in a policy of “restraint” in the face of a wave of murderous Arab terrorism, and even offering the terrorists ever-new concessions, which they flung back in his face.

And then, the Arab citizens of Israel, the community which in 1999 gave Barak 95 percent of its votes — more than any other group in Israeli society. They have their own media, in which the photos of the 13 Arab Israeli demonstrators killed by the police in October appeared again and again. And the main debate there was whether to cast a blank ballot or to boycott the elections altogether.

Different as they were from each other, none of these groups of voters was impressed with the Barak election propaganda. Barak's spin doctors decided to concentrate on the war which Sharon conducted two decades ago, and the hypothetical one which Sharon may launch if elected — but could find little to say about the clear and present war, daily intruding with news of horror. A considerable part of the electorate sought in vain for a third candidate to challenge both Barak and Sharon — and since there was none, campaigned for a blank ballot or just stayed home in disgust; while voters of the other kind flocked to Sharon, who after all solemnly promised that he would be the one to make “a different kind of peace, peace with security.” Barak was not totally abandoned. He still had the “My-Party-right-or-wrong” Labor faithful, plus those who “took anti-nausea pills” to be able to vote for the only anti-Sharon candidate. But altogether, these amounted only to about a third of Israeli citizens. Given the circumstances, one may actually wonder how Barak still got the support of so many.

Incompetence or Hidden Agenda?

THROUGHOUT THE LONG STAGES OF BARAK'S SLIDE INTO PERDITION, it had been common wisdom that his political survival depended upon the ability to present the voters with a signed peace agreement. Relying upon the axiom that a politician always takes care of his interests, the Israeli peace camp more or less waited for Barak to produce an agreement around which it could rally and campaign. At the time of Camp David, the majority of Israelis were willing, according to all polls, to welcome a peace agreement, however far-reaching the concessions, and vote for it in elections or referendum. The right wing was certainly very apprehensive that this was what was going to happen. Even later — even after the new Intifada broke out, after blood had been shed and distrust sown — there seemed still a chance for Barak to turn the tide. Until the last moment, the Meretz Youth were still willing to stand at roadsides, day after day, with the banner: We must not lose the future — vote Barak!

Clearly we had all made a gross miscalculation. Either we had pinned our hope on an incompetent bungler, dragging his own career to ruin and the cause of peace with it; or else we had totally missed the point of what Barak's real aim was. After all, from the very start his declared wish to do “everything” to achieve peace and “to leave no stone unturned” was accompanied by the easily overlooked addendum “if everything fails, at least the people will go to war in the knowledge that there is no other choice.” Could that have been his motivation all along — as such radicals as Professor Tanya Reinhart said right from the start, and as more and more of us came to suspect?

Was that why all the rounds of negotiations — from the talks with Syria last April, through Camp David, and up to the last-ditch talks in Taba — always came “almost” to a successful conclusion, and still always failed? Was that why the unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon — Barak's one and only achievement — had to leave a bone of contention, the bare mountain ridge known as the Shaba Farms whose continued occupation by Israel ensured the continuation of the guerrilla war?

Without access to Barak's confidential papers — which future historians will perhaps gain one day — the question of his true motives cannot be defi-

nitely resolved. But in any case it is a secondary issue. Barak was either an incredibly incompetent opportunist or a crypto-warmonger (idealistic enough to sacrifice his own career), and in either case the peace camp has been following the wrong man. The results of Barak's year-and-half in power are obvious: the cause of peace has been discredited enormously. While part of the peace camp is coming to the conclusion that its "leader" has been cheating all along, most Israelis believe that Barak really intended peace and was willing to sacrifice everything for it, but the ungrateful Palestinians responded with violence and "with ever-new demands." For their part, the Palestinians tend to believe just as firmly that they had gone very far — even to accepting the settlement blocs planted on their land — but that Barak never intended to make peace, which goes to confirm the old suspicion that no Israeli government can be trusted. All in all, it will take tremendous investments of time to undo the damage done by Barak. And now that he has paved Sharon's way to power, this damage will long outlast the end of his own term.

Sharon's Cosmetics

ARIEL SHARON CAME OUT OF THE ELECTIONS UNDER QUITE AUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES. He is credited with having won by a wide margin, the largest in Israeli history. The fact that the abstention rate had also never been as high was conveniently forgotten.

The Labor Party was not defeated but routed, many of its leadership quick to jump on the bandwagon and scramble for ministerial positions in the winner's cabinet. It did not take Barak long to join the queue and declare his intention of serving as Sharon's Defense Minister — save only that this declaration caused an explosion of public outrage and indignation, not least from that very minority of faithful activists who had worked until the last moment on his behalf. Before finally bowing out, Barak left to his successor the inestimable boon of declaring null and void all Israeli concessions made at Camp David and Taba, and ramming a resolution to that effect through the rump Labor cabinet at its last meeting.

Apart from the protests at Barak's perfidy, the formation period of the Sharon cabinet was accompanied by hardly any manifestations of opposition. Internationally, too, Sharon found his path much smoother than might have been expected. The Bush administration accepted without demur the Israeli electorate's choice, though in the time of the senior George Bush, Sharon had been a definite *persona non grata* in Washington. The new U.S. administration seemed also to go along with Sharon's contention that "negotiations cannot take place under fire." (According to this new rule, the Vietnam War would still be raging.) Furthermore, while it is not clear what Sharon would offer if talks ever take place, one thing is clear: it will be much less than what was talked about until a month ago. Hardly a strong inducement for the Palestinians to make a huge effort.

The Americans also prevailed upon their European and Arab allies to "give Sharon a chance" and "not hold his past against him." For all that, Sharon knows that his bloody past — the Lebanon exploits as well as his earlier record, going all the way back to the 1950s — have been dug out of the archives and plastered across many of the world's newspapers. With many pairs of eyes

watching carefully for any sign of the old Sharon peeping behind the new mask of moderation, Sharon's highest need is for legitimacy and respectability. For that reason, he had offered Labor the choice portfolios in his cabinet — even at the cost of leaving old ideological allies, such as the National Religious Party, out in the cold.

Sharon would have liked to have Barak, with his credit as the one who “tried the way of peace,” in his cabinet. But when that proved impossible, he made do with Peres. Who could doubt the bona fides of a PM who has a renowned Nobel Peace Prize Laureate at the Foreign Ministry? And as a further embellishment the daughter of Israel's Peace Martyr, Dalya Rabin-Philosoph, was appointed Deputy Minister of Defense. It doesn't seem likely that a few tame doves can make much of a difference inside Israel's new cabinet. Still, Sharon must realize that Labor's participation in his government cannot be taken for granted, given the considerable opposition inside that party — led by Yossi Beilin, once Peres' disciple and protege.

An additional constraint upon Sharon manifested itself during Secretary of State Powell's visit to the Middle East, and again at Sharon's maiden visit to the White House. The Bush administration's declared priority in the region is to reestablish the anti-Saddam coalition. While not having any special liking for Arafat, Bush and his advisers are well-aware that any conspicuous Israeli brutality towards the Palestinians could play into the hands of Saddam Hussein by rousing the masses in the Arab World and threatening the stability of the fragile pro-Western regimes. Sharon was asked, politely but firmly, to desist from giving the hated Iraqi ruler such aid.

First Confrontation

ON MARCH 8, ARIEL SHARON PRESENTED TO THE KNESSET his oddly assorted “National Unity” cabinet. On the same day, lecturers and students at Bir-Zeit University, the oldest academic institution on the West Bank, alerted their Israeli and international contacts that Israeli forces had just dug a deep trench right through the Bir Zeit-Ramallah Highway. Students and faculty — and some 70,000 inhabitants of villages and suburbs north of Ramallah — were suddenly, without warning, cut off from the main city of the district. The news roused Israeli peace activists out of their post-electoral lethargy. Protest actions were initiated, and lecturers at Tel-Aviv University started circulating a petition of support for their Palestinian colleagues. Meanwhile, more alarming news came from the ground: cutting off the road to Bir-Zeit was just a first step; all the roads to Ramallah were cut off, and the city came under a full-scale siege.

This was, in fact, not so much a new policy as an intensification and exacerbation of what the army had already been doing under Barak since the Intifada broke out: erecting ever-new checkpoints and road-blocks, cutting off Palestinian roads with cubes of concrete and high earthen ramparts, reserving the main highways to settler and military traffic, while Palestinian vehicles were shunted off to rutted, unpaved side-roads. As revealed in the papers, all this fits into an old contingency plan made by the army long before the Intifada, aimed at dividing the West Bank into 64 military districts or “cells,” to each of which a military unit will be assigned to control the population. That would, in the generals'

mind, make a fine solution for Israel's "security."

After the news of the total siege of Ramallah, some seventy activists of different groups answered the call of Peace Now to hold an immediate protest outside the Defense Ministry in Tel-Aviv, and rolls of barbed wire were symbolically spread out on the pavement outside the central military compound. On the following day, there were already four simultaneous protests by Gush Shalom and the Women's Coalition — at Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv, Haifa and the Northern Valleys. After months of swimming against an overwhelmingly strong current, the protests of the peace movement found resonance in the wider Israeli society. The closure policy, hitherto only denounced by the hardcore left, suddenly became a controversial issue in mainstream politics, hotly debated on the airwaves and even in the new cabinet's first meeting.

A change was also evident on the pages of the mass-circulation *Yediot Aharonot*, whose news reporting of the past months had often been war propaganda in all but name. Now the same paper came up with a full-page color photo of Palestinian parliamentarian (and Bir-Zeit lecturer) Hanan Ashrawi holding a shovel and taking part in filling up that infamous trench, accompanied by a sympathetic interview with a Ramallah resident telling of the hardship experienced by the besieged population. At the Surda Road-block, halfway between Ramallah and Bir-Zeit, soldiers opened fire on a crowd of hundreds of unarmed students, killing the 28-year old Abed-el-Kader Ibrahim and wounding several others. The footage was shown repeatedly on international TV, and there were protests by various governments and institutions. Also an expression of American displeasure — not very loud or sharp, but then even a whisper from Washington is highly audible in the halls of the government of Israel. Sharon was quick to take a step back, hastily dissociating himself from the whole move and attributing its origin to "the colonel commanding the Ramallah region," though admitting that he himself had approved the colonel's action. One day after the shooting at the Surda Road-block, it was opened to Palestinian traffic. There followed an official cabinet decision to ease the closure — making Palestinian traveling merely difficult instead of virtually impossible.

On the Palestinian side, the whole affair increased the tendency to renew the big demonstrations and protests by unarmed crowds, after months in which the Intifada had been carried on almost exclusively by the armed groups. On March 16, the extreme-right paper *Makor Rishon* published an angry editorial: "This week Ariel Sharon tried to give the army its freedom of action. The attempt failed because of international and internal opposition. Yes, also internal opposition, despite the fact that we have a National Unity Government, and that Shimon Peres stood by the Prime Minister. . . . True, it is not easy to withstand a campaign of international pressure, coordinated with such internal forces as Meretz, Peace Now, Gush Shalom and the Arab parties. But why did the National Camp elect a bulldozer for Prime Minister, if not in order to resist such pressures? If he did not succeed now, what will he do if on a future occasion the pressure is joined by Peres and the fickle Laborites?"

We should not delude ourselves. This struggle has barely begun, and next time Sharon may be better prepared. Still, the affair of the Ramallah siege gives some hope at a time when hope has become a scarce commodity.

Postscript

ON HIS VISIT TO THE WHITE HOUSE — THE INDISPENSABLE INITIATION CEREMONY through which every new Israeli PM must pass — Ariel Sharon gained a considerable, but by no means unlimited, freedom of action vis-à-vis the Palestinians. The press reports published at the time were rather bland and uninformative; however, a clearer idea of what was and was not agreed on between Bush and Sharon could be gleaned from the events of the following month. For several weeks, there was virtually no reaction from the White House or the State Department while Sharon undertook steadily escalating military measures against the Palestinians. It started with the reintroduction of bombings and bombardments by helicopter gunships, tanks and naval vessels — which Barak has already done in the early stages of the Intifada, but now on a much larger scale. Then came systematic assassination of Palestinians (“pinpoint preemptive measures” in the official military parlance, “liquidation” in fiery news reports of the Israeli mass media, “extra-judicial executions” in the reports of human rights organizations) deemed to be terrorists. This was followed by “search-and-destroy” military incursions into “Area A,” the enclaves handed over to full Palestinian control in the course of the Oslo process. The largest such incursion, into the Khan Yunes Refugee Camp, lasted several hours, during the course of which the Israeli forces destroyed dozens of houses and leaving some 500 people homeless.

The tacit American acceptance of all this encouraged Sharon and the generals of the IDF High Command to take what may have seemed to them the logical next step: capturing and holding for an indefinite period a piece of Palestinian territory in the northern Gaza Strip, making of it a “security zone” somewhat like the one Sharon had created in South Lebanon in 1982, and holding over the Palestinians’ heads the threat of further such conquests. But from Washington’s point of view, a forcible change of the territorial status quo — as distinct from raids, however extensive and destructive — was a strategic move with wide-ranging repercussions. It might have aroused anger in the masses in the Arab World to a point threatening the stability of pro-Western Arab regimes, or forced these regimes themselves into a militant position they did not really want.

A terse public reprimand of Israel by the State Department spokesperson and a single phone call from Washington to the Prime Minister’s residence in Jerusalem were sufficient to get the invading force immediately withdrawn, with the Sharon cabinet denying that there had ever been any intention to keep them on the spot for more than a few hours. Public blame for “the misunderstanding” was placed on the army, to the generals’ great displeasure. While the extreme right criticized Sharon for “caving in to American pressure,” opinion polls indicated most of the Israeli public pleased with his avoidance of a confrontation with Washington. Indeed, up to the time of writing, the level of public support for Sharon was reportedly a surprise to the PM himself, and certainly an unpalatable reality to those who still remember Sharon’s past record. Opposition from the Israeli Left remains — as it was under Barak — confined to radical groups. The activists of such groups are becoming increasingly militant, ready to undertake acts of civil disobedience in company with Palestinians and risk detention and the violence of army and police. Still, that

is no substitute for the mass peace rallies that characterized the times of the Lebanon War and the first Intifada. This state of affairs can be attributed to the pernicious legacy of Barak, who convinced many in the peace movement's grassroots that "peace is impossible" and that "violence is due to Palestinian intransigence."

Another major factor is the Labor Party's participation in Sharon's cabinet, in particular the willingness (indeed, eagerness) of Shimon Peres, the internationally-renowned Nobel Peace Prize laureate, to serve as Sharon's Foreign Minister and place his prestige and diplomatic skills entirely at the PM's disposal. True, former minister Yossi Beilin, once Peres' disciple and protégé, heads an inner-party opposition, making public criticism of Peres' joining the Sharon Government and maintaining his own extensive network of "parallel diplomacy" with the Palestinians, the Arab states, the Americans and the Europeans. And even among the Laborites who did join the cabinet there are occasional voices of dissent ("Sharon can go to the Hague War Crimes Tribunal without me," said Transportation Minister Ephraim Sneh, following the Gaza invasion fiasco, only to immediately retract the remark and offer an apology to the PM). But in general the Labor Party seems too thoroughly broken down by the disastrous Barak episode to take any real assertive step.

To be sure, Sharon must pay some price for the rehabilitation and legitimacy which Peres so lavishly confers upon him. The Foreign Minister was given some leeway to develop diplomatic initiatives. In particular, Sharon agreed to accept as "a basis for negotiations" the Egyptian-Jordanian proposal for cease-fire and restarting the peace process — a proposal he was originally inclined to reject out of hand. However, Sharon's "reservations" about the plan — namely, his refusal to halt the extension of Israeli settlements or to discuss a "definite solution" involving significant territorial concessions — seem likely to foredoom this diplomatic initiative, which at the time of writing has captured the limelight. As long as Sharon goes no further than to allow Peres some tactical diplomatic gestures, the PM's right flank remains secure; the settlers and extreme right, grumble as they might, are unlikely to seriously threaten him.

By the same token, it would take far more than soft-spoken Peres statements to make the Palestinians stop shooting. In particular, the Palestinian militias in the Gaza Strip are now emulating the Lebanese Hezbollah in using what seems a perfect guerrilla weapon: mortars. Light in weight, easily and quickly transported, fired and dismantled, hard to pinpoint and with their shells bypassing even the most massive lines of fortifications, the mortars used extensively by Gaza Strip Palestinians prove a difficult challenge to the Israeli military. From Arafat's point of view, the mortars provide an important bargaining chip. The Palestinian leader might be willing to stop or suspend mortar attacks — but only for a price, for example in return for an invitation to the White House, something which the Bush Administration so far denied him.

The Business of Security

THE ALLIANCE OF PERES WITH SHARON IS SUPPORTED, and had been indeed actively promoted, by the Israeli business community. During the coalition ne-

gotiations in February, the most illustrious names among the Israeli "Captains of Industry" adorned a petition calling upon the Labor Party to join "a Cabinet of National Unity, which alone can address the national crisis." During the 1980's and 1990's, many of the same business leaders were known as outspoken doves. Such organizations as the Industrialists' Association and the Confederation of Chambers of Commerce had publicly embraced Peres' concept of "The New Middle East." For them, a New Middle East primarily meant the opening of the Arab World, with its 100-million strong population, to Israeli products and investments. Textile tycoon Dov Lautman was the chief donor of the Dor Shalom ("Peace Generation") movement and financed its peace rallies. At the same time, he relocated several plants of his Delta Textile Group to Egypt and Jordan, where salaries are much lower than in Israel — a policy which considerably helped discredit the peace process among unemployed workers, or those feeling threatened with unemployment.

For all their proclaimed dovishness, however, some of these Israeli business leaders started feeling uneasy when last year the Barak Government entered into concrete negotiations on the "Definite Solution" issues. A central point on the agenda was the possibility of full Palestinian sovereignty, which would naturally imply the Palestinians' control of their own borders and border crossings. Though never getting much attention in the Israeli or international media, this issue was in fact one of the chief sticking points both at Camp David and later rounds of negotiations, and was never resolved. When the issue was mentioned at all, Barak's demand for continuing Israeli control of Palestine's access to the outside world was usually justified by "security considerations." There was hardly a reference to the "customs union" which Israel enforced upon the West Bank and Gaza Strip upon conquering them in 1967, and which it was also careful to retain also in the framework of Oslo. It is effectively a colonial situation, with three million Palestinians constituting a captive market for Israeli goods, many of which the Palestinians could have imported far more cheaply elsewhere. (Foodstuffs, for example, could have been imported from Jordan or Egypt at a fraction of the price of equivalent Israeli goods — except that Israeli customs officials are careful to forbid any such transaction.) The collapse of the negotiations and of the Barak cabinet, and the rise to power of Sharon who among other things declared himself committed to keeping full Israeli control of the border passes, presumably pleased those business sectors dependant upon exports to the Palestinian territories.

On the other hand, Palestinian militias and popular organizations started enforcing a boycott of Israeli goods — at least of all goods for which a locally-produced alternative could be found — thus diminishing the value of "Israel's second-largest trading partner." (Statistics on the extent of this boycott are not available). The confrontation with the Palestinians damaged the Israeli economy in many other ways, even if not remotely comparable to the devastation visited upon the Palestinian economy. Israeli farmers were hard-hit by the closure which prevented their Palestinian laborers from entering. The violent images on international TV screens drove foreign tourists away from Israel, and the threat of terrorism even deterred many Israelis from traveling to holiday spots inside the country. The same images also considerably discouraged foreign investment. In particular, the Israeli high-tech industry — the country's pride and hope in the past decade, a sector with little or no interest

in keeping the Palestinian territories and vitally dependant upon full Israeli integration in the global economy — was damaged by the outbreak of the new Intifada, a damage compounded by the NASDAQ collapse which was immediately reflected in the Tel-Aviv stock exchange. During his year and half in power, Ehud Barak often pointed to the burgeoning high-tech industry as an example of economic growth. Even at the time, this was largely deceptive, since the growth of high-tech touched only very specific social and geographical sectors, while the impoverished “development towns” in Israel’s periphery continued to stagnate. Under Sharon, the reality of economic stagnation could no longer be masked, with the whiz kids of “the Israeli Silicon Valley” joining the lengthening lines at the employment bureau. (To be fair, the same thing would probably have happened had Barak remained in power.)

Reservist Protest Emerges

THE TROTSKYITE GROUP “MAAVAK SOTZIALISTI” (SOCIALIST STRUGGLE) recently observed that the lower classes of both societies bear most heavily the burden of the ongoing military conflict and economic crisis; that refugees have the highest unemployment rate of all Palestinians and are often the targets of Israeli tanks and helicopter gunships, while those Israelis who use public transportation and frequent marketplaces are the most likely to fall victim to random terrorist attacks by desperate Palestinians. However, neither Maavak Sotzialisti nor anybody else has made much headway in forging workers’ solidarity across the ethnic divide. So far, only one phenomenon with any claim to be a grassroots mass movement has emerged in Israeli society in response to the ongoing crisis — the protest movement of reserve soldiers. The need to hold hundreds of settlements scattered throughout a hostile Palestinian territory, the access roads and corridors leading to each and every one of these settlements, and the lines of confrontation and siege around countless Palestinian towns and villages, forced the IDF to make increasingly heavy demands on the reserve units. As a result, an already-known situation was thrown into the spotlight: the “People’s Army,” which in Israel’s early decades was one of the country’s proud claims to be an egalitarian society, is no more. No longer are all Israeli Jewish males, regardless of class and social status, required to don military uniform for one month a year (or longer in times of national emergency). In the past decade, military reserve service has become restricted to a shrinking minority in the Israeli society, and combat reserve duty to a still smaller group. Moreover, those still serving their country get little recognition from the Israeli society at large.

Reservists are likely to lose jobs, employers preferring a worker who would not be suddenly called away at the army’s convenience, and students (a significant fraction of the reservists) find the university administrations cold and unresponsive on such issues as examination dates missed due to military service. In fact, as pointed out by the eloquent speakers of the reservist protest groups, those who still go to the army are often considered “suckers” in their social milieu, and increasingly think of themselves in the same way. And as social critic Avirama Golan observed in *Ha’aretz*, while Israelis of all social classes find ways of quietly dropping out of reserve service, it is easier for the well-to-do. Moreover, even among those who do serve, the gap between rich

and poor has become evident — some reservists paying others to replace them at guard duty and other onerous tasks, a practice which though strictly illegal is still very widespread. The government has already approved some monetary compensations and benefits to reservists — which some of the reservist groups welcome as “a first, though insufficient, step in the right direction” while others denounce it as “an attempt to fob us off with crumbs.” The threat of radical groups to organize a mass refusal of reserve service “unless the burden is more equally distributed” still stands — though more conservative reservist groups denounce it as “unpatriotic.” And meanwhile, there is a continuing, steady trickle of reservists who belong to no organized group, sign no manifestos, and just find individual ways of quietly dropping out. The reservist dropout seems part of a wider phenomenon — a mood of weariness and malaise affecting all parts of the Israeli society.

The elections in February had seen the highest abstention rate in the country's 53 years. On Israeli Independence Day, any casual stroll on the streets of Israeli cities showed a sharp decline in the custom of hanging national flags on balconies. There are many reports of Israelis — especially, but by no means only, from the left-wing milieu — going into “internal exile,” refusing to listen to news broadcasts and absorbing themselves in various “escapist” pastimes. In the ongoing struggle between occupier Israel and its rebellious Palestinian subjects — essentially a war of attrition, to be ultimately decided by the differing resilience of the two societies — such phenomena may prove crucial.

May 1, 2001

Postscript II

THE MONTH OF MAY SAW CONSTANT ESCALATIONS, with a more confrontational line emerging in Israel. While the dominant thinking in Israel's political and military establishments — and still Sharon's official line — was to regard Arafat and the Palestinian Authority as partners in negotiations and use the fighting to force the other side to accept terms more favorable to the Israelis, that line is being pushed aside. Increasingly, hard-line ministers and generals speak openly of “causing the collapse of the PA,” “expelling Arafat from the territories,” and the like.

The army is authorized — even encouraged — to take out almost all the stops. Regional commanders at the rank of colonel are empowered to undertake on their own authority the kind of raids and attacks that previously needed the prime minister's personal approval. One colonel immediately launched an invasion of the Palestinian town of Beit Jala, which got worldwide headlines (and which was no brilliant military success).

Israeli ferocity was reciprocated in a grim series of what the *Washington Post* called “tit for tat raids” — a four-month old Palestinian baby killed in the shelling of a refugee camp by an Israeli tank; two Israeli settler boys killed by Palestinians and their bodies thrown into a cave; five Palestinian policemen killed in their sleep by an Israeli commando unit, whose men “confirmed the kill” by shooting a second time at men now writhing in pain on the ground; a Palestinian suicide bomber blowing himself up at a shopping mall in the Israeli city of Netanyah; the Israeli government reacting by immediately having Israeli air force planes (U.S.-made F-16 fighters) bomb the Palestinian

cities for the first time since 1967, killing twelve people who had nothing to do with the suicide attack (most of the victims were prison guards at the Nablus central prison, which was bombed and destroyed in a futile attempt to kill a Hamas leader who was thought to be incarcerated there).

Sharon authorized increasingly wild and unrestrained attacks under pressure from the extreme right. But throughout a checkered military and political career extending over 50 years, unrestrained violence had been his way of solving problems. To Sharon's frustration, nothing seemed to have the desired effect of bringing the Palestinians to their knees.

"I must say I had thought defeating terrorism would not take so long" the PM frankly told a crowd of angry settlers, frustrated at finding that — under Sharon as under Barak — the ongoing Palestinian guerrilla actions had made the armed settler enclaves scattered over the West Bank and Gaza Strip into even more dangerous places to live.

ADDING TO SHARON'S FRUSTRATION WAS AN INCREASINGLY UNCOMFORTABLE diplomatic situation. Initially, Sharon claimed credit for winning American support for his position that "negotiations could not be conducted under fire" and for his call for "an immediate and unconditional end to violence." This seemingly fair demand (who can oppose "an end to violence") in practice amounted to a demand that the Palestinians stop resisting an Israeli occupation that Sharon has no intention of dismantling.

However, the diplomatic coup was shortlived; soon, the Jordanian-Egyptian Peace Initiative started to gather momentum on the international arena, in which cessation of shooting by the Palestinians was linked to an end to the Israeli expansion of settlements. And the same linkage was taken abroad and made the core of the report presented by the international commission headed by former U.S. Senator George Mitchell, which was charged at the Sharm-A-Sheikh Summit with investigating the reasons for the outbreak of the Intifada and offering possible solutions.

As a statement by Gush Shalom, the Israeli Peace Bloc, read: "the linkage between cessation of violence and cessation of settlement is an obvious and indispensable one. Settlement creation and expansion is itself an extremely violent process, involving military bureaucrats arbitrarily declaring a certain parcel of Palestinian land to be 'state land'; large military forces enforcing the decree, fencing off the land and excluding the former owners; and finally a group of settlers, composed of Jews only, coming to take up possession and set up an armed community in the enclave behind the barbed wires. There can be no 'end to violence' while such settlement practices continue; the fact that Oslo contained no provision to stop them was a major reason why — in spite of high expectations — the process deteriorated into the present gloomy situation."

Of course Sharon — the Israeli politician most intimately associated with settlement creation and extension over the past decades — sees things differently. Still, diplomatically he could not afford to reject either the Jordanian-Egyptian Initiative or the Mitchell Report. Rather, he had to let his foreign minister, Shimon Peres, spin a web of "compromises" and "creative formulations," an actual rejection cast in the form of acceptance. The real substance of Peres's formulations — if there is one — seems thin.

Still, the news that the foreign minister was peddling in world capitals a promise (however suspect) to “severely limit” settlement activities — all with the complete concurrence of the prime minister — was enough to get the settlers up in arms and let the settler-friendly political parties start making dire threats against Sharon. For his part, Peres found himself under mounting criticism in what had been for many years his own constituency — the Israeli peace camp. A newly-formed Peace Coalition — led by Yossi Beilin, Peres’s former disciple and protégé, is conducting its own meetings with Arafat and its own extensive network of “alternative diplomacy — including holding protest demonstrations against settlement expansion right in front of Peres’s residence.

In the world of international diplomacy, a milieu that Peres made his own for decades, the foreign minister’s credibility is eroding, and things seem to be coming to a head at the time of this writing. The images of buildings in Palestinian cities destroyed in the recent F-16 bombing raids enhanced the Palestinians “Little David” image, shifting the weight of international opinion to their side. But since there seems little resolve to actually interfere in this long-lasting, very unequal struggle, the Palestinians are left with nothing to rely upon other than their own endurance.

May 21, 2001

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A Personal Perspective on Conscientious Objection in Israel

Ruth Hiller

JUST THREE YEARS AGO MY SON Yinnon approached me and told me that he could not serve in the military on moral grounds. He said he knew with growing certainty that pacifism was his ideal. He was 16.

The soul searching that followed this declaration was not just my son's but became mine as well, and that of the entire family. The process was deep and often painful. It forced us to question not only our core values, but also demanded an evaluation of ourselves as parents, siblings, as family partners and as Israelis.

Once this dialog started at home everything entirely changed. We agreed with Yinnon, as a son, a brother and a young Israeli. And as our support grew, we needed to find ways to help him in his struggle. Little did we know that this declaration of protest would nearly consume our lives.

I knew that it would not be easy. The first time I dared to talk to someone outside the family circle about Yinnon's choice, for some reason I whispered. It was as if I was afraid that the walls would hear what I was saying and pass on this information. I knew at the time that his decision was bigger than Yinnon, bigger than any of us.

In a country where both men and women have to justify their very existence and their birthright by being party to an ongoing machine that perpetuates warfare, challenging the status quo was almost unheard of. As we eventually discovered, being "unheard of" actually meant "unspoken about." Not being a part of an accepted ritual in Israeli adolescent development, it was covered in dark rumors and almost total social ostracism. Not serving was totally taboo. But, under all that hush-hush, things were happening.

Eventually, with the help of friends, we made contact with a small group called The Association of Conscientious Objectors in Israel (ACOI). ACOI was a small organization made up of draft resisters, some of whom objected as ideological pacifists like Yinnon, some of them objected on the grounds of their religion, and others still on the basis of political beliefs. All of them had been drafted and resisted through accepted channels. Most of them had served prison sentences. All of them were eventually discharged from the army and given a "21" or "24" military profile classification.

These classifications mean that the military has designated the individual

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as having some health, mental or emotional problem or as having difficulty adjusting to certain situations. A "21" profile usually means these health related problems disqualify him/her for military service. A "24" classification can also mean that the individual is not educated or comes from an underprivileged background. But profile "24" is also a medical status that can be given by a psychologist. Often the term "unsuitable" is used along with the "24" profile.

No Provision for Conscientious Objectors

THERE IS NO PROVISION OR CLASSIFICATION FOR DRAFT RESISTERS who are conscientious objectors, political or religious, (other than Orthodox Jews, Orthodox Druse and Jehovah Witnesses, who have automatic exemptions) or otherwise. When resisters do not meet the military's moral standards because of their beliefs, they are often given a "21" or "24" profile. Usually neither of these classifications have anything to do with military courts; they are granted by military doctors and psychologists during the initial induction process, which takes about a year, generally during the senior year of high school. (The draft age is 18.) Some men who are deferred for moral and political reasons receive a "24" profile classification, and may have to go to jail, which means that there may be a military trial or hearing. An individual may go to jail for refusing to serve or to obey orders or for a variety of other reasons. After going to jail the men are often released from army service, seemingly when the army has decided that the men cannot be forced to obey, or when they have seemingly paid their debt to the society and the country (given up their freedom by being in jail with other individuals who may or may not be objectors).

In cases of medical deferment (these cases usually receive a "21" profile classification), which seems to be the more common route to exemption, the individual is released from military service without a trial or hearing. We also learned that there is a special exemption, which applies to women only — covered by law #39c in the Security Service Act. The guidelines and provisions for young women enable them to present objections at a military hearing with or without legal representation, or have a character witness testify in their behalf, and to be released on the grounds of their beliefs without receiving a military classification.

Unfortunately for young men this is not the case. In 1995, a military committee was formed for the purpose of interviewing young men who have refused to serve in the military on the grounds of their beliefs. The committee has the jurisdiction to release men if the committee finds they have a real moral commitment to conscientious objection. Young men are not allowed to appear at these hearings with legal representation, or a member of their family, or a friend. They are not allowed to write anything down or take notes or to tape record the interview. This is the case even though they are often only 17 years old, still in high school, and are legally considered minors. To date we know of only 5 men who have been released from military service by this committee.

My son, Yinnon, has appeared twice before this committee and was refused a release from army duty on the grounds that his beliefs were not "pure" enough. One of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) criteria for proving that a young man's beliefs rule out military service, is supposed to be his adherence to his beliefs from a very young age, and his application for an exemption as early as age

sixteen, when he is first summoned for a preliminary pre-conscription examination. Yinnon firmly advocates non-violence and believes in creating alternative means for resolving conflicts. He objects to the organized violence used by states, and therefore to both the use and existence of military organizations.

Yinnon has been committed to these views for a long time, and applied for exemption from service in the military even before he was asked to undergo a preliminary physical check-up. Nevertheless, the committee, of military personnel and civilians employed by the army, claimed that he was not a true pacifist.

ACOI gave us an enormous amount of guidance on how Yinnon should present his request to be released from the military on the grounds of his total belief in Pacifism.

Since it is illegal in Israel to give advice to potential draft resisters, these ACOI members risked going to jail by helping Yinnon pursue his ideals.

During the time that we became involved with the ACOI, the group merged with New Profile, a feminist movement of women, men and youth working together to civilize Israeli culture by focusing on the influence of the military in all aspects of our lives and combining efforts to demilitarize society as a whole.

The New Profile movement was formed by women who had been studying and learning together for over a year, and focused on the influence of the army and militarization of Israeli society and its influence on women and feminism. New Profile has made its goal to change Israel's national profile from one that is focused and influenced by the military and a militaristic agenda to a national profile that is more democratic, equal and committed to solving conflicts in non-militaristic ways.

Together with ACOI, New Profile finds funding for the legal support for young draft resisters who have chosen, as Yinnon did, to appeal to the High Court for an exemption. In addition New Profile also morally supports resisters who are in jail and their families by initiating letter-writing campaigns to government and army officials, promoting advocacy with different governmental bodies and representatives, and organizing demonstrations for the release of jailed resisters.

As our commitment to the cause grew, so did our awareness. We slowly began to learn some interesting facts regarding the military and draft resistance. Many of these facts are considered military secrets and were virtually unobtainable by the public. Through diligent research we learned the following:

In a country where all Jewish males and females are supposed to be subject to the draft, (males for 3 years, females for 1 year 9 months) in fact, 25 percent of all secular graduating high school students are not drafted for various reasons. In addition, about 8 percent of high school graduates who are practicing religious Jews of draft age, claiming that their commitment is to learning Torah, are automatically exempted from military service. Amongst the religious, only the males are drafted. All young religious women receive exemptions automatically. (We learned this fact when a Member of the Knesset, Amnon Rubinstein, tabled a bill in 1998.)¹

Another interesting fact is that about another 20 percent of young soldiers "drop out" of the military and do not complete their required tour of duty. We learned this from a published interview with Brigadier-General Israel Einhorn.

We also learned that it is against Israeli law to either assist someone in evading the draft or incite him/her to resist it. Moreover, although it is debat-

able, it might even be considered a breach of law to give out information to someone who has already decided to resist the draft, including information that is in the public domain because it is related to past cases.

In recent months, the political situation in Israel has become dangerously tense. It is difficult to say if the new Intifada and recent violent attacks of the military and police on Palestinians within Israel and the Palestinian Authority have made Israeli youth aware of the incredible danger that they may subject themselves to, and the danger to the targeted Palestinian victims. It is difficult to say if they have been made more aware of the military being an occupying force. But even prior to the past four months, I have had, as have had other members of New Profile, numerous phone calls from youth just starting their induction process, and young men in reserve duty. The recent situation has not seemed to discourage those who seek guidance and are determined not to serve. The opposite is true. We are getting more and more calls all the time. Everyone has the same questions. "How do I get released? And what are my options?"

In addition I have had many phone calls from parents. All are concerned and scared by the path that their child has chosen. All are searching for the best way to have their child released from military service while hoping that they will not be affected and suffer emotionally. All are supportive of their child even when politically they may not agree. I encourage parents to keep in touch and to inform me of what is happening during the resistance process. I find it is harder for them to accept draft resistance than it is for their children and their peer group. The parents are more vulnerable to the opinions of the communities they live in and society as a whole.

Unfortunately we are unable to obtain statistics from the army, so we will never really have the full picture of how many young men and women are actually drafted, how many finish their stints, how many are released on 21 or 24 profiles or for religious reasons and how many young people are denied the right to military exemption on the grounds of their beliefs in pacifism or otherwise.

High Court of Justice

AS FOR THE RELEASE OF MY OWN SON, YINNON, from the army, his appeal was heard in late March, 2001 by the High Court of Justice. The hearing itself was a meaningful substantive discussion rather than a merely technical, legalistic exchange. The presiding judges were Judge Tirkel, Judge Engelrad and Judge Rivlin. Judge Engelrad grilled the state's counsel regarding the state's refusal to recognize the implications of Yinnon's true and firm belief. He persisted in asking the state counsel, in various forms, why Yinnon should be coerced to join the military, even if only officially, against his belief. The state counsel gave the usual reasons — "Israel isn't Switzerland," and it needs to make sure that every man is registered and available for military service. Attorney Keidar cited a letter from former Defense Minister Barak (available on the New Profile website) claiming that the military already recognizes the rights of pacifists. Yinnon's adherence to pacifism was taken as a given by the court. Attorney Keida noted Yinnon's exceptional status as a rare case where the army accepts that he is a pacifist, and stressed that Yinnon's case is a test case for how the IDF deals with pacifists. Judge Engelrad also asked the state counsel how the state could justify the discrimination between women (who are allowed exemptions on

grounds of conscience) and men (who are not).

At the same time that it was considering Yinnon's case, the High Court also heard the case of Dana Moed, 19, an officer in the IDF, who reported sexual harassment during her obligatory service. She charged that she had been harassed by a middle-aged reserve lieutenant colonel serving a term of reserve duty in her unit. Dana's complaint was handled by the army through an internal disciplinary procedure, and her harasser was found not guilty on grounds of doubt. Dana and her family appealed to the High Court of Justice, requesting the court to instruct the army to conduct a full and fair trial. New Profile members learned of Dana's case through the press about two months ago, and contacted her family to offer assistance and support. New Profile views sexual harassment in general and particularly in the military as a central mechanism of intimidation and control, maintaining women's subservient second class status, and further entrenching the sexist distribution of labor which is central to militarization.

Dana's hearing also dealt with substantive issues, particularly the issue of how the military handles sexual harassment cases. The very fact that expensive, high-profile lawyers are routinely provided by the state to defend military officers from charges of sexual harassment attests to the biased character of the military's internal procedures. The issues raised by these two court cases are both parts of the core of beliefs and social analysis that New Profile represents. Both are manifestations of the deep and ongoing militarization of Israeli society; separate but related facets of the ways in which this militarization directly damages individual lives and underpins undemocratic practices.

In April the High Court issued injunctions on both cases, ordering the army and the state to justify their refusal: 1) to accept the arguments of CO Yinnon Hiller; 2) to conduct a full and fair legal procedure based on the charges presented by Dana Moed. The Ministry of Defense was given 45 days to respond to the injunctions in writing. If he is released from military service this will set a precedent; he will have opened new opportunities to other young people who have similar beliefs.²

For readers who would like to learn more about New Profile and the work that we do, I invite you to check out our website. The address is: www.newprofile.org.

NOTES

1. In a January 2001 article published by the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University, Major General (res.) Gideon Sheffer, former chief personnel officer of the Israel Defense Forces, currently deputy chairman of the National Security Council, asserted that in a few years, less than 50 percent of teens eligible for conscription will be drafted into the ranks of the IDF. Sheffer noted that in 2000 8.1 percent of draft-age individuals were exempted from the draft because they study in yeshivas. This figure is expected to rise to 8.6 percent in the next year. Sheffer notes that the total rate of annual exemptions among the eligible Jewish population, which increases by 0.7 percent every year, is 20.1 percent. When adding the Arab population, which is also exempt from conscription the total of those not being drafted comes to 42 percent. Cited in "Ex-officer calls for salaried conscripts" By Amos Harel, *Ha'aretz* Military Correspondent, *Ha'aretz*, January 30, 2001.

2. Also see, "A Farewell to Arms: More soldiers are refusing to do military service in the territories and mothers are getting into the act, too. Should the army be worried?" By Sara Leibovich-Dar, *Ha'aretz*, January 12, 2001.

Argentine Grandmothers' Resistance

Rita Arditti

THE GRANDMOTHERS OF THE PLAZA DE MAYO is a human rights organization in Argentina, searching for two generations: their children and grandchildren, kidnapped with their parents or born in captivity during the 1976-1983 Argentine dictatorship. I have been fortunate to meet and interview many Grandmothers for the past fifteen years and I continue to marvel at their intelligence, fortitude and perseverance. While the country was paralyzed by fear and practically nobody dared raised their voices, the Grandmothers, defying the stereotypes of sex and age, started peacefully and with enormous persistence to gather weekly at the Plaza de Mayo demanding to know the fate of their missing relatives. It is estimated that 30,000 people disappeared during the dictatorship, this in a country of about 31 million people. Still under the dictatorship the Grandmothers were able to locate and identify a few of the estimated 500 kidnapped children. Currently they have identified 70 children, most of them living under false identities with members of the repressive regime. The Grandmothers are responsible for the creation of the National Genetics Data Bank, the only institution of its kind in the world, where the blood of the relatives of the disappeared is deposited. This will allow in the future the identification of individuals who want to know their origins, even if their grandparents are dead. The Grandmothers, furthermore, conceptualized a new human right, the "right to identity," now part of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and they were instrumental in creating the National Commission on the Right to Identity with deals with all conflicts in the area of identity. This work has long term implications in the struggle against illegal adoptions, concealment of identity and child trafficking, all serious problems in Latin America.*

The work of the Grandmothers involves so many aspects that an interdisciplinary approach was needed to deal with the medical, psychological and legal issues that arose. In so doing, the Grandmothers created a much needed model of work in the human rights scene. Their collaboration with scientists, to develop the genetic testing that allows for the identification of children; the current collaboration with a psychology team to create a service center that will deal with identity issues, and the continuous work with human rights lawyers to make

*For detailed information on the work of the Grandmothers, see my book *Searching for Life: The Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo and the Disappeared Children of Argentina* (University of California Press, 1999).

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Argentina respect the international treaties that it has signed is unique. And their work at the international level is impressive: the Grandmothers have consistently taken their cases to the United Nations Human Rights Commission and to the Inter American Commission for Human Rights and this has forced the Argentine government, at least in some cases, to restore a measure of justice.

A Culture of Impunity

IN 1983, AFTER THE FALL OF THE DICTATORSHIP, constitutionally elected president Raúl Alfonsín announced that the members of the first three juntas, who had run the country from 1976 to 1982, would be tried for their countless human rights abuses. In 1985, the “trial of the century” (as it was called in Argentina) took place. Five generals were condemned to sentences ranging from four and a half years to life imprisonment and four were found innocent. All nine were absolved of the charges of theft of children and concealment of identity. While the trial did not satisfy either the human rights organizations or the military, who saw themselves as “saviors” of the country, it did establish an important precedent: for the first time in Argentina, military men were brought to trial and condemned for their crimes. Shortly after the trial, however, President Alfonsín, under pressure by the military, passed two laws, popularly called “amnesty laws” that granted immunity to hundreds of lower rank human rights abusers. To make things worse, the next president, Carlos Saúl Menem, issued a series of pardons that covered the ex-junta leaders tried in 1985 and who were still serving their sentences. Popular sentiment was strongly opposed to the pardons. On very short notice, over 80,000 people attended a rally in Buenos Aires to protest President Menem’s decision. General Jorge Rafael Videla, who had led the first junta for three years and had been condemned to life imprisonment, even demanded an apology and full recognition for his work on behalf of “democracy”!

In spite of the huge setback that the amnesty laws and the pardons meant, the human rights groups continued to press for truth and justice. They took their case to the Inter American Commission of Human Rights who declared that Argentina was in violation of several international treaties that it had signed which required prosecution for crimes against humanity, like genocide, murder and torture. But the pardons and the amnesty laws were not rescinded. As a result of this, under the banner of “pacification” and “reconciliation” a culture of impunity flourished in Argentina. Police brutality, particularly against the young and the poor, governmental corruption, and lack of independence of the judicial system are all endemic components of everyday life in Argentina. The most spectacular examples of impunity are the bloody terrorist attacks in 1992 and 1994 against the Israeli Embassy and the Argentine Israelite Mutual Association where 23 and 89 people respectively died and hundreds were wounded. Both crimes remain unsolved in spite of strong evidence of police involvement.

Recent Developments

THE AMNESTY LAWS AND THE PARDONS WERE SUPPOSED to pave the way to reconciliation and national unity. But it did not work that way. The human rights orga-

nizations, particularly those led by the relatives of the disappeared, did not accept the “kidnapping of history,” (to use Eduardo Galeano’s felicitous expression) that the government tried to impose. Collective memory and the recovery of historical truth became the center of countless campaigns, educational events, and rallies. In 1995 another human rights group appeared on the scene, H.I.J.O.S. (*Hijos por la Identidad y la Justicia contra el Olvido y el Silencio*), an organization founded by the children of the disappeared. Now in their twenties, these young people demanded truth and justice for their parents. New styles of activism were introduced, like the “escraches,” public gatherings where H.I.J.O.S. alerted the neighbors of the repressors, through graffiti and denunciations, that there were criminals living among them. Several repressors had to move after an “escrache.”

In 1996 the Grandmothers took a new and courageous step. In the 1985 trial the junta leaders were absolved of the charge of abducting the children of the disappeared on the basis of a few individual cases. Now, six Grandmothers, armed with new evidence, collected through their many years of investigation, brought forth the charge that the military had elaborated a “systematic plan” to kidnap the children of the disappeared. They also pointed out that the amnesty laws did not cover the crimes of kidnapping and concealment of identity of children so that lower rank members of the military could now be prosecuted. They argued that the kidnapping of children was not the isolated work of a few deranged individuals but a carefully crafted plan by the military commanders to punish the families of the “subversives.”

This new charge of the Grandmothers has resulted in the detention of eleven military officers, General Videla and Admiral Emilio Eduardo Massera, (members of the pardoned first junta) among them. Some time in 2001 their public trial will take place. Twenty five years after the coup, the Grandmothers are putting the military back in court, and their case is stronger than ever. This is one of the most significant legal challenges to the impunity that still pervades the country. That is why I was not surprised recently to hear that the Grandmothers have been nominated for the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize by two independent sources. The international recognition that the prize would give them would inspire young and old all over the world to take part in creating democratic societies and would restore hope in the value of peaceful human rights activism.

The Grandmothers’ work is bearing fruit. The Grandmothers are now in their late sixties, seventies and eighties. Two out of the twenty Grandmothers that I interviewed for my book have already died. Eric Stover, director of the Human Rights program of the University of California at Berkeley wrote: “The Grandmothers are truly the unsung heroes of our times.” Now the Nobel Peace Prize committee has the opportunity to give them the international recognition that they deserve and to ensure that Stover’s statement is no longer true.

Mexico In Transition . . . To What?

Dan La Botz

WHEN MEXICANS VOTED LAST SUMMER TO ELECT Vicente Fox Quesada, ending 70 years of rule by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), many began to talk about the “transition.” The term suggested something like what had happened in Europe with the fall of the Fascist and Nazi regimes at the end of World War II, the long overdue fall of Spanish and Portuguese fascism in the 1970s, or the end of the military regimes in South America in the 1980s. Like those societies Mexico was moving from some unique kind of dictatorship (albeit not a fascist or military dictatorship) to some sort democracy. Earlier this year in dozens of roundtables held in universities, union halls, non-governmental organization offices, and the centers of the social movements, Mexicans discussed and debated the significance of the end of PRI rule and the coming to power of Fox and the National Action Party (PAN). I attended one such discussions, at the headquarters of the Authentic Labor Front (FAT), an important independent labor union federation, where I heard the participants express joy at the victory of political democracy that had ousted the PRI, wariness of Fox and the conservative PAN, and a commitment to building strong independent labor organizations and social movements that would create a new democratic Mexico with an agenda of economic and social justice. All of the participants agreed that Mexico was in a transition, but none claimed to have an answer to the question: transition to what?

So certainly we in the United States have to wonder: What is becoming of Mexico, now that Fox is president? Where are things headed? What will it mean for the people of Mexico, and what will it mean for all of us in North America who live under the umbrella of the North American Free Trade Agreement? To those who see the occasional newspaper article on Mexico in *The New York Times* these questions must be unclear if not utterly confusing. Fox himself created the confusion in his masterful election campaign — run like the campaigns of all three of Mexico's leading parties with advisors from Clinton's Democratic Party or Madison Avenue — in which he succeeded in maintaining his conservative, pro-business base while reaching out to incorporate dissidents in the ruling PRI, and many supporters from the left-of-center Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD). While a network of militant neopanistas (new PAN activists), many of them young entrepreneurs, provided the dynamic base of his organization, he also incorporated others from the PRI and PRD, including the former Communist and leftist intellectual Jorge Castañeda. While arguing for

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private enterprise, the free market, and NAFTA, Fox also took up the Zapatista cause of autonomy for indigenous peoples, and the labor issue of the rights of migrant workers. To the surprise of many, he spoke out strongly against the racism and violence that greeted Mexican sojourners in the United States. He called for a new policy permitting more visas, and eventually for an open border, though he said he recognized that such progress might take decades. Despite this hedging, his outspoken demand for decent treatment of Mexican migrants won him much support. He seemed to suggest that corporate capitalism might be democratic, indeed, might even wear a human face. Eschewing the dark suits of the bureaucrats of the PRI, Fox donned his cowboy hat, mounted his horse, and went out to round up the vote of all of those who considered themselves Mexico's maligned and mistreated little people, and evoking the same populist tradition — but not the same politics — as the PRD's Cuauhtemoc Cárdenas, he won.

Above all, Fox's election held out the hope of democracy as well as economic and social improvement in Mexico, and so the central question is, how has that promise been fulfilled? We might attempt to answer that question by examining several areas in which Fox promised reforms: political democracy, indigenous rights, labor, and, finally, general economic and social progress.

Political Democracy

WHILE FOX SHARES THE SAME NEOLIBERAL AGENDA as his predecessors in the PRI, it would be a mistake to think that that means continuity dominates over change. Fox's election has fundamentally altered Mexican politics. Between 1929 when the PRI was founded until Fox assumed the presidency earlier this year, that is for over 70 years, Mexico had a one-party state that in many respects seemed to have more in common with the governments of the Soviet Union or Eastern Europe than with what one thinks of as parliamentary democracies. Until the 1980s the PRI controlled the presidency, the Supreme Court, virtually all the seats in the Senate and the House of Deputies, as well as the governorships and mayoralties. In addition, through a long history combining repression with cooptation, the state-party controlled all of the mass social organizations of labor unions, peasants, government employees, the self-employed, women, and students. Since the state through the state-owned enterprises was also the largest employer, it controlled not only what we usually think of as government patronage, but also much of what we think of as private employment. Symptomatic of the situation, workers who signed up for a new job in a steel mill, for example, would fill out their employment forms, their union membership forms, and automatically become members of the PRI. Boss, union and party were often all one. Without a military coup, and without a personal dictatorship, the PRI installed every six years a new president in power, and ran what South American author Mario Vargas Llosa called "the perfect dictatorship." In this peculiar political system known as authoritarian populism, the president was all-important; he held all the reins in his hands in a regime that political scientists called presidentialist.

Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, the PAN and three small leftist parties — the former Communist Party, called the Unified Socialist Party of Mexico (PSUM); the nationalist Mexican Workers Party (PMT); and the

Trotskyist Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) — chipped away at the PRI. Then in 1988, the PRI underwent a split as a nationalist grouping led by Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, son of the former president Lazaro Cardenas, rejecting the party's neoliberal agenda, created the Democratic Current which later evolved into the National Democratic Front, and finally in 1989 the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD). As the candidate of the Front in 1988, according to many accounts, Cardenas actually won the presidential election. Cardenas refused to recognize the victory of Salinas, and PRD members engaged in sporadic protests, but in the end Cardenas hesitated to fight for his victory lest President de la Madrid unleash military repression and a bloodbath. De la Madrid installed his successor Carlos Salinas in power, and the neoliberal counter-revolution went forward with force, such force that between 1988 and 1994 the Mexican political economy was utterly transformed, and 500 members of the PRD were murdered in the fight to defend state and local elections.

The PRI made it clear that it would never surrender power to the PRD, and the Mexican people drew the not unreasonable conclusion that if they were ever to move from a one-party-state to a parliamentary democracy, they would have to do so by voting for the more conservative PAN. They also understood that standing behind the PRI, the United States would presumably never permit a populist, quasi-social democratic, but in any case leftist party to come to power at its southern boundary. For these reasons, in the national elections in the summer of 2000, disaffected voters from the PRI and PRD joined with the PAN regulars to elect Fox to the presidency.

Fox's election represented the decapitation of the PRI-state, and the end of the old authoritarian populist regime. Moreover, with the Mexican legislature divided between the three major parties, the president could not count on automatic support as the presidents had in the old regime. Since the election the PRI and the PAN legislators frequently join together in defense of economic neoliberalism, but legislators from the PRI and the PRD join together to condemn assaults on the old nationalist institutions, or simply to bring the PAN to heel. For the first time since the 1920s, Mexico has a parliamentary democracy; state-capitalism has given way to what Marx would have called bourgeois democracy. Not surprisingly, bourgeois democracy means a more direct and greater influence from the bourgeoisie. While Mexico under the PRI was certainly a capitalist country, capitalists did not directly control the political parties or the government. The *clase política* tracing its origins to the Mexican Revolution, controlled the state-party, negotiating with the country's economic elite. But, though capitalists could not be members of the PRI, many PRI members became wealthy, and certainly Mexico's capitalist class exerted enormous influence on the PRI-state. Certainly that state defended capitalism, albeit a Latin American, populist, statist version of capitalism. Fox's election has changed all that, bringing the capitalist class directly into control of the government for the first time since the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz that ended in 1910.

Fox — Catholic Businessperson

FOX HIMSELF IS A NEARLY PERFECT REPRESENTATIVE of the Mexican capitalist class. Born on July 2, 1942, the second son of a Mexican business family, he attended the Instituto Lux, a Roman Catholic school where the Jesuits taught his classes.

Around 1960 Fox entered the Iberoamerican University in Mexico City, a private Catholic school and a very elite college where Mexico's finest families sent their children. After graduating from college, he went to work for the Coca Cola Company as a route salesman, studying English on the side. He rose to route manager and then district superintendent, working in cities and states all over Mexico. The company eventually made him president of its Mexican operations. During that period he traveled for the company throughout Latin America and frequently to the United States, his English by then nearly perfect.

Fox writes in his autobiography that he took pride in working for Coca Cola which he saw as a socially responsible corporation, particularly in terms of purchasing Mexican products, respecting the environment, and promoting economic development. While a Coke executive Fox, like many corporate executives, also engaged in charitable work with a number of foundations and non-governmental organizations, doing social work with alcoholics, drug addicts and battered women. He also took a degree in management from Harvard Business School.

In addition to his work for Coke, Fox always had a role in the family businesses, a ranch that produced grains and vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, garbanzos and potatoes. The Fox family farm's employment of child labor became a national scandal in the first few weeks after his election to the presidency. The family also owned a shoe company, "Botas Fox," with a factory in Nuevo Leon that produced men's and women's shoes both for the national and the international market. During the Echeverría years (1976-82) the Fox family sometimes felt besieged by peasants who invaded and seized land, and the now-president remembers that his father personally confronted and faced down the peasant interlopers. Under Vicente Fox's management, the company employed as many as 3,000 workers.

Both his experience as an executive for a U.S.-based multinational corporation and as a Mexican businessperson shaped Fox as an economic conservative. Fox claims that he rejects both the old Mexican state-controlled economy and neoliberalism, and seeks to find a harmonious relationship between government and the market. Yet, not surprisingly, given his work as a Coke executive, a shoe manufacturer for export, and his Harvard business degree, Fox's views on political and economic matters seem very close to those of American conservatives.

The New PAN

IT WAS MANUEL J. CLOUTHIER, AN EARLIER PAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE who recruited Fox into professional politics.¹ Clouthier represented a new PAN created out of the crises of the 1970s and 80s. The key event in contemporary history of the PAN was the PRI government's 1982 expropriation and nationalization of the banks, an act that appeared as a move toward socialism that drove key sectors of Mexican business to the right and into the PAN. The PRI-state's take over of the banks combined with the economic crisis and peso devaluation of the same year, caused a reaction and led to the creation of a new political current in the PAN called "neopanismo," or new-PANism, which reflected the politicization of the business class. Capitalists with medium and small businesses moved into the party, but some large corporate capital began to back the party as well. Important among these were the agribusiness leaders of Sinaloa and Sonora. Many were young businessmen, local leaders in their chambers of

commerce. The neopanistas took electoral politics seriously and wanted to see electoral victories, but they also brought a new militancy to the party.

These aggressive young businessmen provided a new political strategy and new tactics to the party, and in particular they introduced the idea of engaging in “direct action” and “civil resistance.” The old PAN had eschewed public political displays as undignified, but the new PAN took to the streets with car caravans, public demonstrations, and soon with generally nonviolent civil disobedience. These militant PAN activists quickly became frustrated with the PRI-government that they felt fraudulently denied them the electoral victories that they had won and to which they were entitled.

The experience in Chihuahua in 1986 proved a turning point. The PAN leaders and activists believed they had won the governorship, the electoral authorities gave the victory to the PRI, and the result was a public, political struggle. The PAN leaders Francisco Barrio Terrazas and Gustavo Villarreal, joined by longtime leader Luis H. Álvarez participated in a 22-day hunger strike. The PAN activists blocked the international bridges to the United States, and began a tax strike. The Roman Catholic archdiocese put out a letter calling upon the public to preserve political pluralism — that is to support the PAN.

The PAN's new militancy suddenly brought the party, its politics and its people to national and international attention. The PAN became front-page news in the United States where the archconservative Jesse Helms suddenly spoke out against electoral fraud in Mexico. Publicity and political support from *el Norte* encouraged the party activists who now seized banks, bridges and the tollbooths on the international bridges and highways, as well as taking over railroads and public buildings. The PAN pursued an international human rights strategy, taking its complaints to the Organization of American State and the Inter-American Human Rights Court in Washington. While the PAN lost the battle over the Chihuahua governorship, the strategy and tactics had changed the party.

Fox and Clouthier first met in employers' organizations such as the U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce and COPARMEX, the Mexican Employers Association. After the nationalization of the bank in 1982, Fox joined the businesspeople flowing into the PAN, and Clouthier was his political godfather. In 1988, Fox ran for Congress as the representative for Leon, and participated in the struggle over the 1988 election, identifying with Clouthier's resistance to the PRI more than with the old PAN leadership's acquiescence. In 1991 Fox ran for governor, but the election results were contested and president Salinas appointed another person interim governor. When Fox ran again in 1995 he won, and his outspoken populist style soon made him a national figure. Fox used his five years as governor to promote himself for the presidency.²

Clearly Fox, while he has a distinctive personality, is hardly a maverick. In fact, with his Roman Catholic education, his business background, and his conservative political-economic views, he well represents the traditions of the National Action Party, and particularly of neopanistas, the activist business wing. Within the PAN, he also represents the more pro-U.S. and pro-multinational wing. Though he denies that he is a neoliberal, his support for the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and for expanding NAFTA to the rest of Latin America locate him in the neoliberal globalization camp. At the same time, we might note that for the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Treasury Department, Fox's elec-

tion represents the last step in a long process that began back in 1980 when the U.S. government started to shape a new Mexican political economy. In any case, the election of Fox and the PAN ended the old state-capitalist regime and the one-party-state. Because there is now what might be called normal parliamentary democracy, with all that implies, Mexico's legislature now debates issues that were formerly imposed, such as the question of indigenous rights.

Indigenous Issues

THE INDIAN PEOPLES' RIGHTS HAVE BECOME the most important political controversy facing the new government. The issue goes back to January 1, 1994, the date of the Chiapas Uprising when the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) thrust the question of the indigenous people before Mexico. Initially a guerrilla movement hoping to spark a national revolution that would overthrow president Salinas, undo NAFTA, empower the poor and move toward some sort of socialism (as some of the Zapatistas told the press at the time), the EZLN has been transformed by seven years of political struggle into a leading force in the fight for the rights of indigenous people. The EZLN helped to create the National Indigenous Congress (CNI) as an alternative to the government National Indigenous Institute (INI) and to other Indian organizations. Indigenous people make up about 10 percent (and some say 14 percent) of Mexico's population of approximately 100 million people, but they constitute the poorest element in society with, for example, high rates of illiteracy and infant mortality. Mexico's indigenous people have for decades faced racism and discriminatory practices in every area of life, and a relentless pressure to assimilate and thus eradicate their languages and cultures. At the same time the PRI and its organizations such as the INI and the National Peasant Congress (CNC) worked to control indigenous groups in the interest of the then one-party state. The experience of poverty, racism, and political manipulation necessarily led to deep anger and resentment and a desire for change that led to the creation over the last three decades of scores of opposition indigenous organizations throughout the country. The Zapatista-led Chiapas Rebellion acted as a catalyst in the indigenous movement, leading to the establishment of the National Indigenous Congress as a kind of parliament of the native peoples of Mexico.

The central demand raised by the indigenous peoples has been autonomy. President Salinas used the army and air force to stop the EZLN advance and to surround the Chiapas rebels within two weeks of the outbreak of rebellion. Then his successor, President Zedillo entered into a long process of negotiation with the Zapatistas, resulting in February 1996 in the San Andrés-Larráinzar accords, an agreement that recognized limited political and cultural autonomy for the indigenous people of Chiapas. But Zedillo then reneged on his agreement, and for four years the negotiations between the Zapatistas and the government were stalled because of the president's intransigence. The military occupation of Chiapas, the paramilitary attacks on civilians, the disruption of normal life for hundreds of thousands of people in Mexico's most southern state brought about tremendous suffering — so much so that for the first time thousands of migrants from Chiapas began to appear in the maquiladoras along the northern border, and in the fields of the United States. Nevertheless, throughout these long, hard years, the Zapatistas and other indigenous groups held firm to the

demand for autonomy.

Fox's support for autonomy was shrewd. He recognized that the Chiapas situation — military occupation, political deadlock, and economic and social disintegration in parts of the state, accompanied by the establishment of hardcore concentrations of Zapatista supporters — would only hamper his efforts to move forward with his conservative economic and social agenda. As long as the Chiapas situation remained unresolved, the Zapatistas or more likely the PRI's and the ranchers' paramilitary forces might at any moment provoke a violent confrontation, and create a sense of political instability, threatening foreign investment, international loans and New York bond ratings. In order to clear the decks of the political debris of previous administrations and to win broad public support he sought to end the impasse in Chiapas. While still a candidate Fox announced his support for the Zapatista and National Indigenous Congress program of autonomy, and fought a battle with his own PAN party leadership over the issue. When the Zapatistas proposed the Zapatour, a two-week march through 12 states ending in Mexico City, Fox used his presidential authority to help clear the path for them. The Zapatistas arrived in Mexico City to a tumultuous welcome, and then, in one of the most moving moments of contemporary Mexican history, a Mayan Indian woman, Comandante Esther of the EZLN, took the podium in the Mexican legislature on March 28 to call for peace in Chiapas, and for a new indigenous rights law that would grant autonomy to Indian communities throughout Mexico.

So, in April under the pressure of the indigenous movement, and under Fox's prodding, the Mexican Congress finally passed a new indigenous law that would protect indigenous people from discrimination and give them a degree of political and cultural autonomy. Fox praised the new law as a significant advance for Mexico's native peoples. But, in last minute negotiations legislators made changes in the bill's language, giving state governments the power to negotiate and ultimately determine the shape of such autonomy within their jurisdiction. Since many indigenous groups live in areas that overlap state boundaries, and, since many state governments have historically been controlled by parties and forces hostile to indigenous peoples, both the National Indigenous Congress and the Zapatistas immediately rejected the new law, and promised to continue the struggle for Indian rights. Subcomandante Marcos, spokesperson for the Zapatistas, not only lashed out at the PRI and the PAN, but also at the PRD legislators who voted for the new law.

The EZLN and CNI rejection of the new law promises to be a serious political problem that has thrown the parties into disarray. Fox, bludgeoned his party leadership to pass the law, then saw it scuttled by members of his own party, and in the end had to bear the attacks of his erstwhile, momentary allies in the EZLN. For him, this could prove to be a big defeat. At the same time the PRD has suffered a crisis as its legislators have been called to account by the PRD party leadership that wants to maintain its political position as democratic allies of the Zapatistas. Finally, for the PRI, the acrimony following the vote on the new law represents just another wound, one cut among many. At the same time, the indigenous groups' rejection of the law puts the EZLN once again at the center of opposition to the government.

While this crisis of the parties has been exacerbated by the vote on the indigenous law, that is not the cause of it. Fox's election caused a crisis in all of

the major parties. The PRI, like the Communist Parties of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, went into crisis because it had lost power; ever since it has been rupturing, dividing, splitting and hemorrhaging. The PRD has been in crisis because its champion, Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, has thrice lost presidential elections, leaving its many interest groups and factions without a strong unifying force. While Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador attempts to build a power-base in Mexico City, the rest of the party remains deeply divided between the old PRI sections of the party, the various leftists, and individual personalities. Finally, the PAN has been in crisis because while Fox has been a genuine representative of the Catholic and capitalist core of the party, his attempts to resolve the Zapatista issues have been perceived by the most conservative sectors of the party as an appeasement of dangerous radicals.

Labor Issues

WHILE FOX SOUGHT TO RESOLVE INDIAN AFFAIRS in a way that would accommodate the indigenous grassroots movement, he has done no such thing with labor. As governor of Guanajuato, Fox had always distinguished himself as a promoter of business, not as a champion of labor, but by the time of the presidential election, his anti-labor record was clear. For example, the Center for Labor Reflection and Action (CEREAL), a Jesuit labor rights organization, criticized Fox for his failure to do anything for workers whatsoever. "We know of no initiative that he has taken to improve the labor rights of the workers of Guanajuato," said Carlos Rodriguez, the director of CEREAL. "There is a striking contrast between the situation in Guanajuato and the improvements in labor policy in the Federal District, for example, where there have been efforts to protect the most vulnerable groups such as women and children." But benign neglect might be preferable to the paternalistic policies that Fox has been introducing as president.

Fox indicated his future direction by his choice for Secretary of Labor, Carlos Maria Abascal Carranza. Abascal is the former head of COPARMEX, the Mexican Employers Association, a group with a longstanding commitment to company unions. As director of COPARMEX, he had previously negotiated a "New Labor Culture" agreement with Fidel Velazquez, the former head of the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM), an agreement based on the idea of productivity, quality, and competition. Now Abascal promises to revamp Mexican labor relations in its entirety, to create a new Federal Labor Law and a new system of industrial relations system in line with the new technologies and work relations that have already been established in the plants.

Within a couple months of taking office Abascal deeply offended some sectors of Mexican society and angered labor union leaders and workers with his combination of piety, parsimony and repression. First he shocked many Mexicans when he organized a special mass for the Department of Labor employees, a radical change after 70 years of not only secular but anti-clerical government. Then the Mexican Labor Boards (which no one believes are independent of the president) declared an almost month old strike by sugar workers to be "non-existent" — that is, illegal. Fox's head of the Mexican Institute of Social Security, Santiago Levy, moved next to deny an increase in benefits to hundreds of thousands of working class retirees, saying that any improvement would jeopardize

dize the system. Then the Fox government's National Council of Minimum Wages (CNSM) handed down an increase in the minimum wage of 6.9 percent, or just about the inflation rate, when most unions had demanded 25 percent, equivalent to the workers' loss of purchasing power in the last six-year presidential term. (Many Mexican workers' wages are pegged to the national minimum.) Finally, Abascal suggested that women had a special feminine role in society, a statement that many women's and feminist organizations understood as "back to the kitchen, the house, and the church."

Duro Bag a Test of Workers' Rights

FOX FACED A REAL TEST OF HIS COMMITMENT TO WORKERS' RIGHTS in the case of Duro Bag, a U.S. company operating in northern Mexico's maquiladora zone. Workers at Duro Bag in Rio Bravo, Tamaulipas, after failing to democratize their CTM-affiliated local union, created their own organization and fought bravely to have it recognized by the labor authorities. Despite beatings and arrests, the workers continued a fight for an independent union, and asked Fox and Secretary of Labor Abascal to insure a secret ballot election. In Mexico, workers typically vote in union representation elections by stating out loud before their employer and the existing (often gangster) union their preference, and then throwing their company identification card into the box of the union they want. Obviously a vote for an independent union in such a situation is rather like shouting, "Fire me!" Faced with such undemocratic practices, U.S. and Canadian labor unions wrote to Fox and Abascal, insisting that they uphold a promise by the previous Secretary of Labor to make such elections secret. Abascal, however, not only did not protect workers' rights, but he launched an attack on foreign labor unions for supposedly attempting to destabilize Mexico and deter foreign investment.

Fox and the PAN have no commitment to democracy in the area of workers' rights; in fact their practices will certainly have a negative impact on labor unions and workers. Fortunately, the fact is that a number of unions, federations and alliances are prepared to resist neoliberal policies and authoritarian and pro-employer practices. The Mexican Electrical Workers (SME) has mounted a coalition to resist privatization of the electric power industry. The National Union of Workers (UNT) has drawn together many unions and claims 1.5 million members (probably an exaggeration). The Authentic Labor Front (FAT) continues to be a beacon of democracy and idealism in a labor landscape dominated by authoritarianism and corruption. In the last few years there have been impressive demonstrations of workers' militancy in giant protests by the National Coordinating Committee of the Teachers Union (la CNTE), by the Federation of Unions of Workers at the Service of the State (FSTSE), and by Secretary of Health employees.

Mexican workers have proven to be quite combative in the recent period, though government statistics obscure their militancy. For years now, the Mexican government has suggested that the country has virtually no strikes, or at least no official strikes, since, most are declared illegal by the Mexican labor boards (JFCAs). Somehow it has always seemed hard to reconcile the officially recognized handful of strikes reported each year with the hundreds of walkouts, demonstrations, and other labor protests that even the most casual observer noted. Now a recent study by the Universidad Obrera de Mexico (the Mexican

Workers' University or UOM) find that in the last 18 years — that is since the beginning of the technocratic or neoliberal presidents Miguel de la Madrid, Carlos Salinas and Ernesto Zedillo, there have been not a few dozen strikes but several thousand. The UOM reports that under the last three presidents there were 11,382 strikes of all sorts. During Zedillo's term there were 1,738 strikes, or almost one a day. Public employees carried out a virtual strike wave involving 74 Federal government union and 32 state unions. So, while Fox comes to power planning to promote employer unionism, and opportunistically working with the old PRI unions, he may find that he confronts the beginnings of a new more independent, more democratic, and more militant labor movement that has no intention of being swept aside.

The Migrant Labor Issue

EVERY YEAR PERHAPS AS MANY AS A MILLION MEXICANS cross the border legally and illegally to work or live in the United States. California alone needs 500,000 to plant, tend and harvest the crops each year. Mexican migrants' remittances total \$6 billion a year, the country's third largest source of foreign exchange. Today, after three decades of continuous migration, ten percent of all Mexicans (over ten million) live in the United States. The U.S. thus constitutes a safety-valve that reduces the likelihood of social explosions in Mexico. At the same time, the U.S. government attempts to control if not stop the flow of undocumented workers. Since 1994, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and its Border Patrol have carried out measures such as "Operation Gatekeeper" in the San Diego area to militarize the border in urban areas, forcing migrants into the desert and mountains where over 1,500 have met their deaths through exposure. The case of the 14 Mexican immigrants found dead in the desert in Arizona on May 24 clearly shows that Fox's desire to improve the situation has had no impact so far on this the most deadly aspect of the situation.

When they reach the United States, many Mexican (as well as Central or South American) migrants find work in agriculture, construction, services such as restaurant work, and in manufacturing, and, for that matter, in nearly every aspect of the U.S. economy that can use unskilled or semi-skilled labor. Such workers usually receive low wages, work long hours in what are often the dangerous and dirty jobs of the society, usually with no union representation, and often in violation of existing labor laws. Many women for example find work in domestic labor, in garment sweatshops, or in the service industries where they work in substandard conditions and often for less than the minimum wage. Though the AFL-CIO has, since the election of John Sweeney, undertaken campaigns to organize and represent these workers, and has changed its position on immigration policy calling for a new general amnesty for undocumented immigrants, still its efforts have not been capable of defending and enhancing the lives of these workers. The Mexican immigrant, like many black and Asian immigrants, all too often still faces racism, exploitation, and repression from the authorities.

As a reformer, Fox has insisted that the U.S. government be willing to discuss the racism, violence, and suffering experienced by immigrants, and negotiate new policies which protect Mexican workers from the worst sorts of abuses by government authorities and vigilantes. The Mexican president says that he

understands that this is a long-term issue of ten or twenty years. In the meantime, because of the powerful role of U.S. agribusiness in this area, the most likely proposal may be some sort of new “bracero” or guest worker program that would bring in young Mexican males to work in agriculture and other industries with some protections but at wages so low and conditions so basic that they constitute a kind of sub-proletariat. Depending on the version of law that passes, braceros, for example, could be ineligible for social security, or could even work for below the minimum wage!

The Economy and Society

ALL OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS TAKE PLACE WITHIN THE CONTEXT of an ominous economic situation. The possibility of resolving the problems of indigenous people, dealing with migrant workers issues, and improving the situation of the working class all depend upon the global economic and social context, and upon the government's political economy. Fox no doubt sincerely believes that private enterprise and the free market within the context of regional agreements such as NAFTA and the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) offer the best strategy for Mexican economic development. Given his own experience as an independent rancher and manufacturer and corporate executive for Coca Cola with responsibility for Latin America, such a faith is hardly surprising. However, the record suggests that NAFTA has been a failure for Mexico in several respects. Since NAFTA, and especially since former president Ernesto Zedillo's 1994 devaluation of the peso, the Mexican people have seen their real purchasing power cut almost in half. Seven years since NAFTA went into effect, almost half of all Mexicans work in the informal sector, that is are either self-employed or work for illegal employers who pay no taxes or social security (the national health care system), and have no unions. Since NAFTA the concentration of wealth has grown more unequal, as the rich have grown richer and the poor have fallen into abject misery — about a fifth of the population living on a minimum wage of \$3.30 that does not provide for basic caloric intake, much less real nutrition. According to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) *World Fact Book 2000*, the top 10 percent of all households have income that permits them to consume 36.6 percent of all products sold in Mexico, while the lowest 10 percent have income that allows them to consume only 1.8 percent of all products. The top 20 percent of income earners get 55 percent of the income, while some 27 percent of all Mexicans live below the poverty line (1998 estimate).³ NAFTA was accompanied by the sale or shutdown of national enterprises, the destruction or debilitation of many medium and small enterprises, the weakening of communal and collective land tenure (because of changes in Article 27 made by former president Carlos Salinas in preparation of NAFTA), and the ruin of many medium and small farmers because of the importation of U.S. agricultural products, especially corn. For most Mexicans, NAFTA has been not only a failure, but, arguably, a disaster.

What NAFTA has succeeded at is integrating Mexico into the U.S. economy, so that the economic rhythms — or at the moment perhaps we should say arrhythmia — of the U.S. business cycle find immediate expression in Mexico. Upon his election, Fox had hoped that the Mexican economy might grow at a rate of between 5 and 6.5 percent, based upon rising oil prices, manufacturing

for export, particularly from the maquiladora sector, and other major industries such as tourism, plus the important remittances of Mexican migrants in the U.S. Such a growth rate would very slowly — that is over decades — lift Mexico out of the developing world and into the first world. But those projections were made before the U.S. stock market began to sputter and then show the first signs of a recession. Already in March the U.S. and other foreign investors began to cancel plans for new plants in Mexico, and manufacturers began to lay off workers, even in the maquiladora sector which had until recently seemed immune to such economic illnesses. In May, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) projected a growth rate for Mexico of 3.7 percent for 2001, or a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) two percent below what Mexico needs just to tread water.⁴ In order to provide employment for new entrants in the labor market and to achieve some measure of economic growth, Mexico must create one million new jobs each year, but this year it will create only perhaps 750,000. And this was all before the May 4 announcement by the U.S. Labor Department that the U.S. economy lost 223,000 jobs in a single month, the biggest loss since 1991, suggesting that indeed Mexico's northern neighbor was headed into a serious recession.⁵

The U.S. recession means painful social problems for Mexico, beginning with government retrenchment. Fox has promised that his cutbacks will not harm working people or the poor.⁶ But already 10,000 Federal government jobs have either disappeared or been frozen, most reportedly from administrative positions or people who held two government jobs.⁷ These most recent cutbacks and layoffs come on top of 20 years of belt-tightening during the regimes of presidents de la Madrid, Salinas, and Zedillo. For example, the Mexican Institute of Social Security (IMSS), once the best health system in Latin America after Cuba's, has been ravaged by fiscal austerity, so that today its hospitals and clinics lack adequate equipment, supplies and medicines. Profoundly integrated into the U.S. economy, Mexico's economic problems reflect its neighbors: slow growth, rising unemployment, and necessarily an increase in poverty.

May Day

WE CONCLUDE OUR DISCUSSION with Fox standing on the balcony watching tens of thousands of workers pass before him on May 1. Mexican workers celebrated their first PRI-less May Day, the international labor day, with demonstrations by hundreds of thousands of workers throughout the country who marched carrying banners and chanting slogans against President Vicente Fox's economic program. In what was the first labor day since the PRI lost the presidency, workers and labor unions showed what seemed to be a new militancy, a new unity, and perhaps even an emerging new politics. In many places independent unions marched alongside the old "official" or pro-PRI unions in common opposition to new regressive taxes, to privatization of the state-owned electric power system, and for higher wages.

In Mexico City according to police figures more than 200,000 workers participated in at least three overlapping marches and demonstrations in the Zocalo, the national plaza. The Congress of Labor (CT), the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM), and other labor organizations long associated with the PRI declined to march, but assembled in the Zocalo for a rally. The independent

National Union of Workers (UNT) and the Mexican Union Front (FSM) each marched through the city to occupy the Zocalo. While the three different labor events respected each other's marches and assemblies, at times they also overlapped and found themselves chanting the same slogans, all in opposition to Fox's economic program, and particularly against his proposed Value Added Tax (VAT) on food, medicine, books, rent, and public transportation.

When Fox himself appeared before the rally at the Zocalo to speak for 20 minutes in defense of his economic and fiscal program, he found himself repeatedly drowned out by workers chanting, shouting, and whistling, a sign of rejection and disrespect in Mexico. As he tried to talk, workers chanted slogans such as: "Push back the tax reform!" "A living wage, not an impoverishing tax!" They also shouted, "Women can go to work, Abascal can go to hell!" in reply to the Secretary of Labor's remarks about women workers. When workers from the three different demonstrations happened to overlap they shouted, "A common front against the tax reform!" and "We are all one in the workers' struggle."

With workers whistling down the president, and "official" and independent unions marching and chanting together, May Day 2001 represented a dramatic break with over 70 years of a tradition of state-control. Since the 1920s, May Day in Mexico had been a government-sponsored holiday where union leaders and members passed before the national palace (or state and city palaces) to swear their allegiance to the president, the ruling party, and the state. May Day was a celebration by the state-party and the "official" unions allied with the PRI of their "historic compromise," in reality a bond between politicians and union bureaucrats based upon a common commitment to serving the interests of capitalism and the corporations, and keeping workers from getting out of line.

Beginning in the late 1960s independent labor unions challenged the "official" labor day events with their own marches, demonstrations, and rallies, which were often attacked either by the pro-government unions or by the police. But on May 1 of this year, both of these earlier traditions were supplanted, as labor unions and workers not only stood in opposition to the party in power, but also joined together in a common repudiation of Fox's political program. With workers united in opposition to the government, despite different party and union affiliations, this May Day may have been another milestone on the road to independent unions and working class political autonomy.

Fox finishes his first five months in office facing an economic downturn that could become a real depression. His most important political initiative, the new indigenous law, has proven a failure. Mexico's political parties seem to be in some state of decomposition (in the case of the PRI), of recomposition (the PAN), and of possible implosion (the PRD). The EZLN still dominates the far left, acting as the voice of the country's most oppressed people, but without a strategy to build a national political movement. Fox and the PAN, and the continuing changes in the structure of the economy and of industry, have put the labor unions on the defensive, but still the independent unions stand in a stronger position than they have since the early 1980s. We will be watching to see if Mexico's progressive forces prove capable of taking advantage of Fox's current difficulties and of the challenges and opportunities posed by economic crisis.

NOTES

1. Vicente Fox, *A Los Pinos: Recuento autobiográfico y político* (Mexico: Oceano, 1999), passim.
2. Soledad Loaeza, *El Partido Acción Nacional: La larga marcha, 1939-1994* (Mexico: El Fondo de Cultura Economica, 1999), passim.
3. CIA, *World Fact Book 2000* (<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/mx.html#Econ>).
4. D. Estévez et al, "Mexico ingreso a la desaceleracion," and, Isabel Becerril, "Optimismo moderado de la OCDE sobre el crecimiento mexicano," both in *El Financiero*, May 5, 2001.
5. Louis Uchitelle, "U.S. Jobless Rate Hit 4.5 percent in April; 223,000 Jobs Lost," *New York Times*, May 5, 2001.
6. "Descarta Fox costos sociales con el programa de reajuste economico," *Proceso*, May 5, 2001.
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Haiti: The Crisis Persists

Sony Esteus

FIFTEEN YEARS AFTER THE FORCED DEPARTURE OF THE DICTATOR, Jean-Claude Duvalier, Haiti has not yet found the way to political stability, which might allow economic development and an improvement in the social conditions of the population. The arrival in power of Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1991 aroused great hopes among the disadvantaged masses of the shantytowns and rural areas. But the experience did not last, for seven months after Aristide took the oath of office the army intervened to reclaim power in a bloodbath.

After three years of dictatorship, and economic and commercial boycott, on October 15, 1994, Aristide returned to power under the protection of more than 20,000 American soldiers. The mission of these troops, according to the Clinton administration, was "to create a secure and stable environment for the consolidation of democracy in Haiti." The landing of American troops, which was regarded by some as a second occupation of the country after that of 1915, has not produced the anticipated results. In reality, for more than four years, Haiti has been plunged into one of the gravest crises of its history.

The crisis began with the implementation of the Paris accord by the Aristide government. The accord, it seems, was one of the conditions imposed on the Lavalas leader by the so-called friends of Haiti, notably the United States, Canada and France, for restoring him to power. In fact, since the return to power of the Lavalas government, it has applied in an orthodox manner a program of "structural adjustment" under the eyes of such international financial institutions as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The plan includes lowering tariffs to a level between zero and three percent, lower than many other Caribbean countries. This represents a severe blow for agricultural production, especially for the rice planters of the Artibonite Valley. The government has likewise launched a policy of reducing state employment through what it calls "voluntary leavings and anticipated retirements." As a result of this program, 25 percent of the country's 45,000 civil servants — a number already insufficient to serve the people — have been dismissed. The Haitian currency loses more and more of its value in relation to the U.S. dollar: today there are about 25 gourdes to the dollar. This has enormous consequences for the cost of living. Necessities are very expensive, especially for the disadvantaged sectors of the population whose purchasing power is so weak. In Haiti the educational system is in private hands (80 percent of schools). Since 1994, the Lavalas governments of Aristide and Préval have carried out the construction of several

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dozen schools. But these are far from sufficient to change a system that requires large state investments. Several profitable state enterprises, such as cement and flour making, are privatized. The government is now preparing to sell its telecommunications company, the port of Port-au-Prince, the airport, etc. The invitation of Jean-Bertrand Aristide to the summit of the heads of state of the governments of the Americas is proof of the loyalty of the authorities in Port-au-Prince to anti-popular, neo-liberal politics.

A Nation Torn by Division

THE LAVALAS POLITICAL MOVEMENT, which took power on February 7, 1991 with Aristide as president, is today divided into several political parties devoted to a merciless struggle for power. Friction began at the heart of the Lavalas movement in 1995 when Aristide launched a campaign to recover the three years of his presidential tenure that he spent in exile. The most important component of the group *Organisation Politique Lavalas* (OPL), led by Professor Gérard Pierre-Charles, was opposed to this and supported the candidacy of Rene Préval, Aristide's former prime minister in 1991, for the presidency.

In 1997 the divorce was consummated on the occasion of partial legislative elections. On one side was the Fanmi party, founded by Aristide, who put up his own candidates, and on the other the OPL. These elections have still not been concluded. The second round did not take place because of challenges by the OPL, which accused the Fanmi of electoral fraud — hence the crisis that has brought the country to its present condition.

A climate of insecurity produces dead and wounded almost every day, only two to three hours of electricity every second or third day, scenes of violence in the streets, the freezing of international aid. This is the situation in which Haiti finds itself just a few months after Aristide's return to power on February 7. "Haiti is at the edge of an abyss; all the conditions are present for a social explosion, if not for a civil war," declared Pierre Emile Rouzier, a member of an employers' organization, the *Centre pour la Libre Entreprise et la Démocratie* (CLED).

Indeed, since parliamentary and local elections on May 21, 2000, the political situation in Haiti has become increasingly grave. The opposition parties that took part have rejected the official results, published by the *Conseil Electorale Provisoire* (CEP), which give almost total victory to Aristide's party, Fanmi Lavalas, in power since 1994. According to these results, Fanmi controls both houses of parliament with 26 senators out of 27, 72 deputies out of 83, more than 100 of the 133 municipalities. As a protest against what they consider electoral fraud, the opposition parties did not participate in the second round of voting. They denounced the implantation of a one-party dictatorship in the country, and since then they have demanded the pure and simple nullification of the vote.

The results of the 2000 elections have also been placed in doubt by the international community. A mission sent by the Organization of American States (OAS) to supervise the elections in May 2000 expressed reservations concerning the methods used by the CEP to determine the percentages of the vote won by the senatorial candidates, and requested the correction of these methods. The Haitian authorities rejected this request, which was also supported by the rest of the international community. For that reason, the OAS did not supervise

the second round of elections on July 9, 2000.

For the presidential election on November 26, 2000, the main opposition parties, reassembled as the *Convergence Démocratique*, called for a boycott. Aristide was thus the only well-known candidate to face six other politically insignificant persons. For good reason, then, these presidential elections took place amid almost total indifference in the population, with a participation rate of between 10 and 15 percent according to the observers of CARICOM, and five percent according to the opposition. (However, the CEP and observers from the American organization Global Exchange spoke of 60 percent participation.) The Haitian press and foreign journalists verified the high rate of abstention among the population. People questioned in various neighborhoods of Port-au-Prince spoke of their disappointment that most popular demands had not been satisfied by the politicians of Lavalas, who had nevertheless promised much.

The Crisis Becomes Total

"WE NO LONGER HAVE A SIMPLE ELECTORAL CRISIS, we are living through a crisis of the society," declared former senator Rosny Mondestin, once a member of the *Parti Unifié des Communistes Haitiens* and now leader of a small group, the *Mouvement pour la Reconstruction Nationale*. According to Mondestin, the contemporary crisis of Haiti cannot be resolved even by general elections; what is needed is a political agreement resulting from genuine negotiations among the parties involved.

In October 2000, several weeks before the presidential elections scheduled for November 26, the OAS sent a mission to Haiti, headed by its adjunct secretary general Luigi Enaudi, to encourage the protagonists to sit down and work out a solution to the crisis. After three days of coming and going between the two sides, Enaudi left without having succeeded in bringing them together around the same table. After the failure of several more attempts at negotiations under the aegis of the OAS, a group of organizations from Haitian civil society, assembled as the *Initiative de la Société Civile*, formed a facilitating commission to help in resolving the crisis.

One week before the inauguration of Aristide on February 7, the two sides having finally been brought face to face, some proposals were formulated to help Haiti emerge from the crisis. Fanmi put forward a program that it had previously submitted to the Clinton administration. It proposed, among other things, a second round of elections for about ten senators who had benefited from the "special calculations" of the CEP in May 2000. The opposition parties, for their part, suggested annulling purely and simply the May election and forming a presidential council headed by the leader of the Fanmi. This council would have a mandate of two years to organize general elections in the country.

The talks stumbled once again over the intransigent positions of both sides and failed to find a compromise capable of resolving the political crisis. It was thus with a disputed legitimacy, at the national as well as the international level, that Aristide took the oath of office as President of the Republic on February 7, 2001. The same day, the opposition, grouped together as the *Convergence Démocratique*, installed its own president, the lawyer Gérard Gourgue, a former human rights activist under the Duvalier dictatorship. Accordingly, the country has today two presidents, one real and the other virtual.

The Balance of Forces

AFTER SEVEN YEARS OF LAVALAS RULE, there has been no major change in the miserable situation of the Haitian people, which has undermined Aristide's popularity a little. Nonetheless, the leader of Fanmi Lavalas can still count on the support of a rather considerable layer of the population, especially in the shantytowns. Since his return in 1994, Aristide has made a goodly number of friends among the bourgeoisie and the Haitian oligarchy. However, in recent years he has lost many allies among the progressive petty bourgeoisie.

In his quest for legitimacy from the international community, President Aristide has brought into his government some former functionaries under Duvalier and some supporters of the very military putschists who threw him out in September 1991. Aristide and his partisans present this decision as an expression of their willingness to open up the government to oppositionists. The presence of these *macoutes* in the Aristide government is vigorously denounced by several civil society organizations, but those who are close to the authorities reject the protests. "The *macoutes* appointed to the government and to the new CEP have no record of criminality or corruption," said Lovensky Pierre-Antoine, leader of an organization of victims of the 1991 coup d'etat and friend of the government. Nevertheless, another supporter of Lavalas, Benjamin Dupuy, head of the *Parti Populaire National*, printed in his newspaper *Haiti Progrès*, edited and published in New York, a dossier proving that one of the Duvalierist ministers chosen by Aristide, Stanley Théard, was implicated in the embezzlement of several million dollars under the government of Jean-Claude Duvalier. While continuing to support President Aristide, Dupuy was very critical of the decision to include crooks and former executioners of the people in a government that claims to represent the aspirations of the majority.

As for the opposition, its greatest weakness is its lack of a popular base. *Convergence Démocratique* is a multiform alliance composed of former militants of the Left, such as Gérard-Pierre-Charles and Evans Paul (once close to Lavalas), and politicians of the Right formerly associated with the civilian and military dictatorships, like Hubert de Ronceray and Lesly Manigat. Most of those politicians who once participated in corrupt and repressive governments have no significant audience among the population. That is why they rely above all on the international community, especially the U.S. Republicans, to recapture power.

The International Community Exerts Pressure

THE PRINCIPAL LENDERS OF FUNDS TO HAITI — the United States, Canada, France, the European Union — have all blocked their aid in an effort to force a negotiated solution to the crisis. According to some sources, these funds amount to more than \$500 million. The international community demands a reform of the electoral process and an opening by the government to the opposition parties. "Haiti will receive American aid only when the crisis is resolved," declared the U.S. ambassador to Port-au-Prince, Brian Dean Cohen. The diplomat is exhorting Haitian political leaders to undertake serious negotiations to unblock the country. "It is not up to the international community to impose a solution on the Haitians, it is up to them to resolve the problems of their country," Cohen affirmed. While awaiting this solution, the American authorities have decided to use non-governmental organizations to channel their "humanitarian aid."

For its part, the European Union announced officially last January the freezing of funds destined for Haiti within the framework of African-Caribbean-Pacific-EU (ACP/EU) cooperation. This decision was denounced by the ACP countries as premature. In an effort to loosen the vice, the Aristide government has made a new proposal. During a special OAS session on Haiti on March 14, the Haitian foreign minister, Joseph Phillipe Antonio, presented a plan that provides for a series of partial legislative elections from November 2002 to replace those whose elections were disputed and whose terms expire in 2004 and 2006.

While the two sides proclaim themselves ready to sit down for dialogue and negotiations to resolve the crisis, no concrete steps have been made in this direction since the collapse of negotiations in February. Recently the country has experienced a series of violent demonstrations organized by supporters of both sides. Pro-government elements demand the arrest of the “virtual president” and the other leaders of the opposition, while pro-opposition elements demand the resignation of Aristide and the organization of general elections. On March 20 some members of the Lavalas party attacked the office of the *Convergence* with rocks, bottles and firearms. This attack was repulsed by oppositionists who also used firearms. The confrontation resulted in one death and several wounded. There were similar situations at Petit-Goave (60 kilometers south of the capital), Cap-Haitien in the north, Hinche and several other provincial towns.

In all sectors of civil society signs of impatience are evident. Employers' organizations, such as the *Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie*, *Association des Industriels*, and *Centre pour la Libre Entreprise et la Démocratie*, complain of the degeneration of the socio-economic climate, which has a very negative impact on their business. The business community is pressuring both sides to end the stalemate in order to avoid a complete collapse of the economy. Because of the political climate, in particular because of the violence and the problems with the supply of electricity, several businessmen have left the country and established themselves in the Dominican Republic. “The political authorities must give the country a chance,” writes Maurice Lafortune, vice-president of the *Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie*.

An Alternative

IN THE POPULAR MILIEU, in certain organized sectors of society and among the intellectuals of the Left, the Lavalas regime continues to lose allies and sympathizers. These sectors refuse to be associated with the application of anti-popular, neo-liberal politics; neither are they implicated in the conflict between the traditional political parties battling for control of the government. The major trade unions have denounced all the protagonists, who, they say, “have no concern for the workers.” The *Centrale Autonome des Travailleurs Haitiens* (CATH) and the *Centrale Générale des Travailleurs* (CGT), among others, never cease demanding a rapid resolution to the crisis to unblock the country. Several hundred jobs have been lost during the crisis, and new jobs have not been created, according to union leaders.

Women's organizations, including *Solidarite Fanm Ayisyen* (*Solidarité des Femmes Haitiennes* — SOFA) and *Konbit Fanm SAJ* (*Rassemblement des Femmes de SAJ*), have criticized the politicians in power and in the opposition who defend only their interests and the interests of imperialism, to the detriment of

the interests of the majority of the people. "Women have had enough of this crisis; it is we and our children who pay the cost of this *querelle de chapelle*," writes Konbit Fanm SAJ in a press release.

The *Commission Nationale Episcopale Justice et Paix*, a Catholic human rights organization, has drawn attention to the consequences of the crisis for civil liberties. According to the commission, almost everywhere in the country "officials of Fanmi Lavalas, especially the mayors, have established a climate of repression, forbidding all meetings and public demonstrations. Several persons, members of grass-roots organizations close to the opposition, have been shot at or imprisoned for trying to organize demonstrations against the government," writes *Justice et Paix* in a recently published report. This situation was also denounced by the *Plate-Forme des Organisations Haititiennes des Droits Humains* and Amnesty International.

The *Mouvement Paysan National du Congrès de Papaye* (MPNKP), the oldest peasant organization in the country, was not able to have a peaceful march on March 21. The mayor of the city of Hinche, arms in hand, prohibited the march because the peasants were going to demonstrate against the government. In a resolution adopted at the end of its general assembly, the MPNKP drew up a negative balance sheet of the last ten years of Lavalas rule. According to this resolution the high cost of living, unemployment, insecurity, drug trafficking, rural exodus, have all worsened. The MPNKP, one of whose leaders is Chavannes Jean-Baptiste, a founder of the Lavalas movement, is now closer to the *Convergence Démocratique*.

Some popular organizations, linked together in the *Regroupement des Organisations Populaires Autonomes*, call on the masses to mobilize themselves in order to change the situation created by the traditional politicians. The view of these groups, among them the peasant organization *Tèt Kole Ti Peyizan* and some organizations in the poor neighborhoods, such as *Chandel*, *Solidarite Ant Jèn*, MUPAC, is that the solution to the problems of the masses will come neither from Aristide nor from the opposition because they are all in the service of the great powers.

"The traditional politicians have failed. We need a new way to rescue the country from underdevelopment." Such is the judgment of Jean William Jeanty on the occasion of the launching of a new political organization, the *Collectif Socialiste pour l'Identité et la Liberté*. It includes the economist Camille Chalmers, executive secretary of the *Plate-Forme Haitienne de Plaidoyer pour un Développement Alternatif*. For the *Collectif*, both Lavalas and the *Convergence* are lackeys who work to perpetuate the domination of imperialism over the Haitian people. "We need a different project that responds to the aspirations of the Haitian people, a project that envisages first of all changing the situation of the majority," declared Jean-Claude Cherubin, a member of this new organization of the Left.

"Lavalas and the *Convergence* are two sides of the same coin"; this is the opinion of the *Comité d'Initiative pour une Alternative Populaire et Révolutionnaire*. In a recently published bulletin, this committee called for an awakening of progressive forces to reconstruct the popular camp, the only viable means of combating Lavalas populism and the revival of the Right.

Translated from the French by Thomas Harrison

An Exchange On Philosophy and Politics, The Cold War, and the Left

Richard Rorty and Chronis Polychroniou

Chronis Polychroniou. In your book *Achieving our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth-Century America* (which has just been translated into Greek), you offer some very challenging insights into the contemporary state of the Left in America — some of which, I think, apply equally well to the current state of the Left in Europe. For instance, you are highly critical of the postmodern Left as it has retreated into the ivory tower of academia and is engaging itself into highly esoteric analyses of language and culture which bear very little relation to the problems confronting societies today. But isn't it the case, as Habermas pointed out in his review of your book in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, that you, more than any other philosopher, brought to the front the analyses of the mentors of the postmodern Left (Heidegger, Derrida, etc.)? So why now the critique of the postmodern Left?

Richard Rorty. I think that Heidegger and Derrida are interesting and original philosophers, who have a novel story to tell about the Western philosophical tradition — the Plato-to-Nietzsche sequence. But such a story has no great relevance, as far as I can see, to politics — to questions about what is to be done to remedy various evils. More generally, I do not think that philosophy and politics intersect very frequently, much less that deliberation about political matters requires one to have views on philosophical topics. Philosophy is not a prerequisite for such deliberation, and has often been merely a distraction therefrom.

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CHRONIS POLYCHRONIOU *has taught at several universities, both in the United States and in Greece. He is the author of Marxist Perspectives on Imperialism: A Theoretical Analysis (1991), editor of Socialism: Crisis and Renewal (1992), and of Perspectives and Issues in International Political Economy (1993), and co-editor of Marxism Today: Essays in Capitalism, Socialism, and Strategies for Social Change (1996).*

Although Popper's criticisms of Plato, Hegel and Marx in his book *The Open Society* were careless and overstated, he had a point: viz., that one can consult with one's fellow-citizens about how to use the social product and improve the common lot without having large views about the nature of man and the universe.

I regard it as unfortunate that the Marxists took Marx seriously not just as a political economist but as a philosopher. The specifically philosophical ideas in Marx seem to me to be of little interest, whereas his historico-economic analysis of how the strong were succeeding once again in enforcing their will on the weak was of the highest importance. In parts of the world where Marxism has been taken seriously, it seems natural to ask "If not Marx's philosophy, then whose?" or "If we give up Marx, what big philosophical view can we adopt in order to give a foundation to our political decisions and projects?" Both questions seem to me misguided.

So I have no apologies to make for paying attention to Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida and Foucault. Doing so seems to me quite compatible with saying that one should not waste one's time trying to make the thought of these figures relevant to political deliberation. Nietzsche and Heidegger were stupidly prejudiced against democracy. Foucault had no interest in suggesting concrete political initiatives, and disdained the task. Derrida is, as far as I can see, a good social democrat, but his views on justice do not help one figure out whom to vote for or what laws to pass. The "cultural left" that I criticize in my book seems to think these figures help us achieve an understanding of something called "modernity" or "postmodernity," an understanding that helps us think through our political choices. I do not believe that either "modernity" or "postmodernity" are useful concepts.

CP. Putting it this way, I must say then that I rather agree with you on the whole issue of the lack of concrete relevance of postmodern thought to politics, but the notion that philosophy and politics do not intersect is a bit problematic to me. A strong case can be made, indeed, of politics turning a blind eye to philosophy (Socrates's lifelong complaint) but philosophical discourse and politics share a common inheritance in the evolution of human history — the formulation of moral and political principles upon the basis of a social order, a project which is predominantly a question of language and Reason, of the antinomies in the relationship between thought and praxis. In this context, practical answers to problems are necessary but not enough. The build-up of rational thought in the form of assumptions, presuppositions and generalizations (a nice mix of ideology, philosophy, and psychology) are necessary to satisfy action.

Philosophy, or philosophical discourse, as far as I understand this mode of inquiry, is in principle a search for a clear understanding of the meaning and essence of the human experience and the logic of governability. Philosophical ideas, perhaps even inadvertently, contribute to the emergence of a critique of received knowledge and as such are not inseparable from the domain of praxis — as the latter presupposes an epistemological foundation of one sort or another. In fact, politics capitalizes on philosophy and ideology as it forms the basis for the articulation of conjectural visions of action. Looked at this way, we might even say that the postmodernist project is in itself a political project by virtue of the fact that it has no concrete relevance to the political issues of our

times, thereby contributing to the increase of the domain of the private over the public. One may interpret “modernity” or “postmodernity” as lacking social usefulness, but it is something else to claim that they do not constitute in whatever form and shape political or ideological schemes of thought. It just may be that they are simply not very useful for our own desired social ends.

Or, to put this whole matter more directly, are you saying that the enterprises of domination developed by fascism and communism were not in themselves based on some “philosophical-ideological” conceptions of man and reality? And this is not to imply that Nietzsche or Marx were in themselves responsible for the emergence of the two totalitarian systems in question.

RR. Yes, I am saying that, as you put it, “the enterprises of domination developed by fascism and communism were not in themselves based on some ‘philosophical-ideological’ conceptions of man and reality.” To see them as so based seems to me like thinking that the product of a manufacturing concern is “based on” the advertising slogans for that product. The fact that Hitler, Lenin and Stalin may have believed they had something powerful behind them called “the movement of history” or “the proper understanding of German greatness” or “dialectical materialism” shows no more than that they were taken in by (or, as in Stalin’s case, pretended to be taken in by) their own slogans.

People buy the products of manufacturing concerns because they think that their lives will be better thanks to ownership of those products. People voted for the Nazis, or supported the Bolshevik (or Cuban, or Vietnamese) revolution, because they thought that their lives would be better if those causes won. After many of them had realized that this hope was false, they continued acting like loyal Nazis or Communists, and perhaps trying desperately to convince themselves that history was still on their side, because it would have been too dangerous to do anything else.

Nazi Germany and the USSR were ruled by bloody tyrants whose toadying intellectuals — men like Goebbels and Suslov — told the people that their transitory sufferings were as nothing when measured against the great goals promulgated in Nazi or Communist ideology. But these intellectuals were just hacks, not thinkers. We should not, out of misplaced loyalty to our fellow intellectuals, propagate the myth that what Goebbels and Suslov were expounding was a “philosophy.” The cruel nonsense they talked, like the cruel nonsense talked by Reagan and Thatcher, is no more an expression of a philosophical view than is the claim that our lives will be wonderful if we eat a certain breakfast cereal or buy a certain automobile. The rulers of Nazi Germany and of the USSR were greedy selfish thugs, not people guided by a mistaken philosophical outlook. Reagan and Thatcher were less greedy and less thuggish, but they were equally oblivious to philosophical reflection.

Plato thought that there was something called “philosophy” that was, as you put it, “a search for a clear understanding of the meaning and essence of the human experience.” But there is no such meaning or essence, and there should be no discipline devoted to seeking it. Rather, the history of philosophy should be understood as the history of utopian visions of a better human future, decked out with superfluous claims that these visions are more faithful to that meaning or essence. It would be better to put forward utopian visions without tacking on any essentialistic claims. The most attractive feature of John Dewey’s prag-

matism was his ability to do without such claims and his attempt (parallel to Marx's) to follow up on Hegel by saying that the point of philosophical reflection is to make the future different from the past, not to distill the past into an "essence of the human experience."

I do not believe there is anything like a "postmodernist project." There are just miscellaneous neo-Nietzschean thinkers whom journalists have lumped together in order to run stories about a supposedly new and exciting "philosophical movement." If intellectuals really had gathered together to foment a movement that, as you put it, has "no concrete relevance to the political issues of our times," then that movement should be ignored by the public. For there is no need to "increase the domain of the private over the public." The private domain is simply what we do with ourselves when we are not fulfilling our public responsibilities to our fellow human beings.

The more wealth and leisure and literacy we get, the more time we shall have for private projects. But the sorts of things of which we philosophy professors have special knowledge are of little help in producing more wealth and leisure and literacy. All that we can do for the public weal is try to drag some of the rubbish left over from the history of philosophy out of the way of social progress. We can, for instance, help people stop thinking that they have to know "the meaning and essence of the human experience" before they can join their fellow-citizens in measures to promote the general welfare. We can help them get Platonism out of their systems.

CP. A sore point in your book with some people might be the fact that you seem to give "thumbs up" to the Cold War system that had engulfed the world for some 45 years. I mean, this is pretty hard to justify given the damage the whole Cold War system caused to the progress of democracy inside the advanced liberal societies. By the same token, you applaud the struggle of the New Left to put an end to the horrible ordeal of the Vietnam War, which you recognize as a major setback to the American democratic ideals, but you seem not to be cognizant of the fact that it was that very Cold War system that you approve of that led the U.S. into the swamp known as the Vietnam War.

RR. The Cold War looks very different depending on what part of the world one is in. To the intellectuals of Poland, Hungary, the Ukraine, and the like it looks like a good thing. To those of Chile, El Salvador, Vietnam, and perhaps Greece it looks like a bad thing. It certainly had both good and bad effects. Historians are going to have to figure out whether the bad outweighed the good. My hunch is that it did not. I think that if the U.S. had not executed its Cold War policies a lot more of the world would have had governments like those of pre-1989 Eastern Europe than in fact did. Reagan was a very ignorant man and a very bad president, but he was right that the USSR was an "evil empire." Had the old democracies done nothing to stop the spread of that empire, the world would, I suspect, be much worse off now than it in fact is.

On the other hand, the U.S. could have conducted the Cold War in a way that would have sided with social democratic movements rather than assuming that the success of these movements would simply be a prelude to Communist takeovers. We did not have to arrange to replace Allende with Pinochet in Chile, nor to remove Arbenz in Guatemala, nor to prolong the war in Vietnam long

after it was clear that we could not win it. Doing what we did has cost us our good name in Latin America and in much of Asia. Intellectuals in those countries are quite right not to trust Washington for a second. Our government is still lying itself blue in the face about what we did in Latin America and Asia over the last fifty years.

Furthermore, the U.S. might have struggled against the Soviet evil empire without allowing the growth of what in the U.S. we have come to call “a national security state” — a state in which the federal government can get away with almost anything by pretending that there is a perpetual wartime emergency (just as in Orwell’s 1984). The tradition of free democratic government in the U.S. has been substantially weakened by the steadily increasing power of the CIA and of what President Eisenhower called “the military-industrial complex.” When historians calculate the balance of good and bad in the effects of the Cold War, the rise of the national security state, and the dangers it presents to democracy, will have to be taken into account.

A foreigner like myself is not entitled to an opinion on the question: would Greece be better off today if the U.S. and its allies had not intervened in Greek politics in the 1940s and 1950s? Would Greece have become another Moscow puppet as Hungary, Bulgaria, and the like did? Would this have been worse than what actually happened? I would not hazard an answer to these questions, but I assume that they are still topics of debate among Greeks who look back over the events of the last fifty years.

CP. Is it really merely a question of measuring pluses versus minuses in order to assess the impact of the Cold War? By the same token, I am sure one could certainly find some positive aspects of the Soviet system — especially when comparing it to the catastrophe of the Russian society and economy today under the neoliberal regime. Secondly, I am not sure at all that the collapse of the former Soviet-oriented regimes in Eastern Europe had in the final analysis much to do with the Cold War (and I do not mean that imperialism as an exogenous factor was of no relevance to the specific evolution of the form of social orders that came to constitute “actually existing socialism” as, in some ways, the struggle between East and West goes back to 1917 and not to 1946). They had reached a point of no return as they were suffocating under their own contradictions. Virtually no-one believed in that system any more. Indeed, don’t you find it interesting that with the exception of Rumania all other communist regimes in Eastern Europe, including of course the former Soviet Union itself, fell without a single shot having been fired? The Cold War system served more as a means of supporting the domestic economic, political, and social interests of the West rather than as a means of an international struggle between liberty and oppression. The U.S. always had the need to “discover” enemies to maintain the running of the military-industrial complex and to legitimize its struggle for global hegemony.

Finally, insofar as your comments about Greece are concerned, I don’t understand why, because you are a foreigner, you think you are not entitled to express your opinion. So in the interest of the exchange we are having, please make any comments on the subject you wish.

RR. Sure there were some positive aspects to the Soviet system, just as there

were some positive aspects to Nazi Germany. I'm sure that some of those who died at Thermopylae were open-minded enough to realize that there were positive aspects to the rule of the King of Persia; they just thought there weren't *enough* such aspects. But everything is a matter of measuring pluses versus minuses. Evil, as Dewey said, is a rejected good. Good is the lesser evil.

I suppose you could write a scenario in which the Cold War was never waged and in which Communism collapsed anyway, just as you could write one in which the Nazis won World War II and then, after a few decades or centuries, faded away. You could also write one in which Persia won at Marathon, but the ideals we associate with Athens nevertheless triumphed a few centuries later on. But would you really want the West to have stepped back and let Stalin seize Greece, Turkey, and a lot of other countries, in order to do to them what he did to the Balkans? If you had been a U.S. politician in 1948, would that have struck you as a good idea? If you had been a U.S. politician in 1940 would you have thought it best to step back from the conflict in Europe and see how things panned out? Many U.S. politicians in 1940 thought exactly that, but do we not now rejoice that Roosevelt circumvented them?

Certainly the Cold War served as a means of supporting the domestic, economic, political and social interests of the West, just as the struggle against the Nazis served U.S. domestic interests by reviving the American economy after the Great Depression. But I can see no reason why the latter fact shows that World War II was not, in your words, "a struggle between liberty and oppression," and the same goes for the Cold War. *All* struggles between liberty and oppression serve the domestic interests of those who fight on the side of liberty. No doubt that was one of the reasons the rich merchants of Athens were eager to empty their coffers to outfit the men who went off to fight at Marathon. But we are still grateful to Athens for having fought that fight, and I suspect that Europe will always be grateful to the U.S. for having waged the Cold War.

The story of all the vile things the Communists and the CIA did in Greece during the last fifty years is long and complicated, and I do not know much of this story. My ignorance makes me reluctant to say anything of the form "The Greeks should have Y." For all I know, what the CIA and those it employed did was worse than what the Communists would have done if they had seized power early on. I hope that this is not the case, but I do not know enough about recent Greek history to feel confident.

CP. The Cold War is an interesting story all in itself — and, incidentally, I did not claim that it was never waged. I will grant the point that the Cold War provided a sense of stability to the international system — even under the threat of nuclear obliteration — and it goes without saying that Stalinism as a specific form of a political system for a specific period of time (I think the prevailing analytical framework in the West which saw the former Soviet system as monolithic throughout its duration is essentially ahistorical in its approach and failed to pinpoint its internal contradictions, which probably explain why Sovietologists never saw the collapse of the system coming) was indeed a system based on totalitarian control, and, therefore, its mere existence eclipsed the possibility of other alternative projects for the realization of (democratic) socialism. But that is still a far cry from converting the Cold War history into some kind of a global struggle between "liberty and oppression" — even within the context of some

cost and benefit analysis. All historical records, furthermore, are revealing now what many in the West knew all along from the time of George Kennan — namely, that the Soviet Union never posed a threat to Western Europe and it did not have the ability to initiate a major war until the late 1960s. Thus, I see the strategy of containment within the very context of the interpretation of the Cold War I provided earlier in my comments

As you admitted yourself, the U.S. installed and supported an entire network of oppressive and bloody regimes throughout the Third World, engaged in a multitude of brutal acts of aggression (with Vietnam being the epitome of the Cold War mentality), and, frankly, it did not seem to care much about liberty and democracy in other parts of the world (I have always felt that the greatest contradiction of the United States lies between its fairly open democratic polity on the one hand and highly autocratic foreign policy on the other). In its anti-communist campaign, the only concerns that mattered were access to capitalist markets and geopolitical interests. Double-standards were methodically being used throughout the Cold War period (and in fact continue being practiced in the post-Cold War era — juxtapose the alleged humanitarian concerns over Kosovo with the apathy about the plight of the Kurds in the hands of the neofascists in Turkey or the East Timor massacre or those of the Tutsis): communist Poland was severely criticised for suppressing democracy and violating human rights (as is Cuba today), but there was complete government support for fascist and military regimes (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, Indonesia, Greece, Guatemala, Kenya, Turkey, etc., etc., etc.) that were friendly to U.S. interests.

With respect to your comments about the role of the CIA in Greece, I think that by placing emphasis on the activities of the CIA itself we distract in some important way from efforts to engage in a systematic understanding and critique of the Cold War system. The CIA was/is an agency under the direction of the executive office — a component of a huge military-industrial complex, an organ of an imperial power. On this note, Greek postwar political developments, including the military junta that came to power in 1967 were not affected by the CIA per se but rather by the policies that originated from the State Department and the White House as designed products of the Cold War strategic doctrine(s).

In sum, I believe this geopolitical struggle for supremacy (no holds barred) was the very essence of the Cold War, and in this struggle humanity paid a huge price. This is why I don't know how to assess the Cold War in any terms other than those based on simple moral condemnation.

RR. I don't think that things have essences, but only relations to other things. So I do not think that anything was "the very essence" of the Cold War. It's easy to morally condemn Washington for its crimes (who doesn't?), but there is still the question of whether its crimes were an evil lesser than the crimes of an unopposed USSR, free to threaten the rest of Europe into submission, would have been. The USSR was an evil empire, even though Reagan said it was, and the U.S. is, in my judgment a somewhat less evil empire. In this world, we have to settle for the lesser evil.

I think that you should ask yourself how the matter looks in the eyes of Poles, Hungarians and Bulgarians before going in for "simple moral condemnation." They think the Cold War was a terrific idea, and they should be allowed

some say in the matter, just as should the Chileans and Guatemalans and Vietnamese who think it was a terrible idea. Whatever one thinks about the Cold War, it should not be anything “simple.”

If I thought that there were “internal contradictions” within Stalinism, or more generally within bloody tyrannies, I might be more sympathetic to your view. But I don’t believe in internal contradictions. I think that whether such tyrannies perish or endure is largely a matter of chance. I see no reason why the other members of the Politburo should not have deposed Gorbachev and sent tanks into Leipzig, Berlin, and Prague in 1989-90. They didn’t, but I don’t think that was because history was on Gorbachev’s side, or because Gorbachev was using a better analytic framework than his enemies. I don’t know why they didn’t, but I suspect that it had to do with very particular and contingent personalities and power arrangements (like whose brother-in-law commanded the troops in the barracks outside of Moscow).

I don’t see that we need any fancy “analytic framework,” ahistorical or historicist, to understand how people like Stalin and Hitler, Thatcher and Bush, the 1967 junta and Papandreou, came to power and lost power. Such frameworks are never any use for predictive or strategic purposes. Shifts in political control are just not the kind of thing that gets explained by great big general theories. They get explained the way marriages and divorces get explained — by a narrative that pays close attention to the details of who did what to whom when.

CP. I am afraid the differences in our views about the Cold War cannot be bridged. I find very questionable the alternative of choosing “the lesser of two evils” because such an epistemic position can easily be used to justify our immoral policies and actions against the immoral actions of our enemies only because the latter’s actions are more immoral than ours. For that matter, representing what it is supposed to be representing, a democracy that uses the same standards of conduct as a dictatorship deserves to be judged on even harsher terms.

Let’s return to the discussion about the Left today. I read with interest in your book the distinction you made between the old Left and the New Left. By the old Left in America you mean the traditional social democratic Left of Howe, Galbraith, Harrington, among others — i.e., the tradition of the Left interested in the gradual reform of the capitalist system and its eventual transformation toward an egalitarian and classless society. By the New Left you mean the radical Left of the ‘60s whose ideas today have been taken up by the academic Left — even though I am not sure what sort of continuity you see between the radical Left and the postmodern Left. Having correctly, I think, derided the postmodern Left, you propose a return to the values of the old Left, calling in fact the followers of the postmodern Left to join in this project and going even further as to suggest that there should be no distinction any more between traditional liberals (in the American sense of the term) and leftists.

If the above interpretation is a correct reading of your position, what this means then is that you are essentially calling for the return of politics into the good old struggle between the traditional values of the Left and those of the Right. This is an interesting and exciting proposition, but do you really see the economic, social, and ideological conditions in place today for the realization of such a project? I would agree that in many essential respects the conditions are

ripe for social action: the market system reigns supreme and economic inequalities have reached unprecedented levels. You note as much in your discussion on America today, where economic insecurity, the (sub)proletarianization of the bourgeoisie, the collapse of the health care system, the diminishing opportunities for college education for the working class kids, the rise of social castes, etc., etc., — developments which have led to the virtual collapse of the hopes of the new generation of Americans for a better future — constitute much of the current social reality in the United States. But, on the other hand, the globalization process and the shrinking of the blue-collar working class in the industrialized countries have undermined the very base of support for traditional progressive politics. The class structure in advanced industrialized countries is highly complex today, no longer allowing for a downright old-fashioned antagonism between the working-class and the capitalist class and thus the enforcement of a progressive social agenda is probably more difficult than it was in the past. On top of that, the leftist intellectuals of today have shifted the focus from the economy to culture (which, personally, I see as being directly linked to the very structural changes that have occurred in advanced societies as well as the outcome of a successful process of co-optation) and have pretty much turned their backs away from the struggles of the poor and the weak and the promotion of social justice in general, converting themselves instead into “gatekeepers” of the new power elite.

I am afraid the picture doesn't get any brighter when looking at the political parties of the Left. The social democratic parties are very conservative in the politics they practice (refusing to accept that there is an ideological divide any more between Left and Right), have embraced the logic of the market with extreme zeal (they have become essentially doctrinaire practitioners of public choice analysis), and are almost invariably associated with the interests of “a new class of upwardly mobile professionals” whose power remains largely within the domain of the policies pursued by the “new socialists.” This is definitely the story of the European social democratic parties today — a story that doesn't hold much promise for the future of the European Left at the current juncture even though I am quite encouraged on the other hand by developments in parts of the non-Western world which are associated with the spread of grass-root movements and various cells of resistance to neoliberal globalization. Similarly, I think the differences between the Democrats and the Republicans in the United States have become less and less obvious on several key social issues, including welfare, crime, education, and so on. In fact, Democrats and Republicans compete among themselves as to who will best serve the interests of big business.

RR. I quite agree that there is little public support for Old Left policies. As you say, the “new class of upwardly mobile professionals” does seem less inclined to share the wealth, to worry about the poor, than their predecessors in this role in previous times. I have no good explanation of this increase in selfishness and greed. It is true that the old democracies have a smaller blue-collar class of manufacturing workers than in the past, but we have a huge class of underpaid service workers (janitors, waiters, etc. — mostly black and brown in the U.S., mostly immigrants from Southern Europe in Northern Europe) who are living lives without hope. I have no explanation of why this new class shows so little willingness to get organized and protest its condition. More generally, I have no

explanation of the kind of political lethargy which seems to overtake democratic countries for the duration of economic booms.

As I see it, centrists like Blair and Clinton have had to move to the center from the left in order to get elected. I do not know how to change the electorate's mind so as to enable such people — whose hearts I think are in the right place — to get elected on more left-looking platforms. I suspect that only a severe economic downturn, with widespread unemployment, foreclosures of mortgages, and the like, will change the political climate. Just as the U.S. left bounced back in the Great Depression, so it might revive if there is a Second Great Depression.

It is of course depressing to suggest that only bad times will produce a revived left. But I have no better suggestions. However, I see no need to predict the left's success in order to urge that intellectuals keep right on trying to change the electorate's mind, to convince the yuppies to be less selfish, to unionize the janitors and waiters, and so on. If we think there should be more social justice, we should just keep on saying so. History may not be on our side, and our voices may not have any effect, but that is no excuse for ceasing to advance our views.

So my answer to your initial question is: no, I do not see "the economic and social conditions in place today for the realization of such a project," but so what? We can still urge people to be less greedy and selfish, even if we doubt that they will heed our voices. What else should we be doing?

It seems to me that your line of questioning presupposes the old Marxist idea that we should first figure out where history is going and then climb on the bandwagon. That was OK when we thought history was going in the right direction. Now that we have no such illusions, however, we should cease to worry about what history is doing, or what conditions are in place, and just keep on reminding people of what the rich are doing to the poor. Maybe someday they will listen.

CP. I am glad to see we agree on some points about progressive politics today. I think the Left can be revitalized by going back to the fundamentals about equality and social justice. At the present juncture this means struggling to hold on to the gains made in the past and then pushing on to expand the sphere of democratic participation to the economy. "Back to Class Politics," to cite the title of one of your essays. I think this struggle is critically important. This should mean focusing on limiting the concentrations of ownership and control of the free market while developing simultaneously forms of direct citizen participation in and management of the system of production, guaranteed basic social rights, the enforcement of a genuine democratic political culture, and establishing strong links with international labor. All these are essential sites of contestation with the globalization of capital. Organizing the marginalized, service-oriented workers are important practical tasks. The social movements that struggle for radical changes should not engage in slanging matches between state and society. The distinction is highly artificial as is the separation of politics and economics. In all this, your notion of hope (a timeless asset for improving the lot of humanity and for constructing a classless society) is very pertinent in the effort to deal with contemporary problems.

There are so many blind spots among the leftist intelligentsia today: poli-

tics of identity and difference, “hyperglobalization,” and an infatuation with power, status and prestige. I am of the opinion that the movements representing the ideology of political identity and multiculturalism are phenomena more akin to contemporary capitalism rather than manifestations of challenge and resistance to the system. A utopian intellectualist nostalgia for alternative cultural lifestyles doesn’t impress me as a potent tool for progressive social change and all the postmodern and rational choice — oriented discussions about the “economy of the household” represent the metaphysics of politics and are as relevant for fighting for social justice and equality as Platonic dualisms (to use one of your own analytical metaphors) are for resisting evil.

I am in disagreement, however, with your version of the Clinton-Blair camp and the rest of the (center-right, center-left, center-center, no sense of direction) contemporary, in-power, social democrats. As I said I don’t think this variant of the Left is capable of bringing about the desired changes. Social democracy is no more viable today than is the Soviet model of socialism. It has lost its appeal and legitimacy as an alternative political framework and it is impossible to recover them. Social democracy reached the end of its life cycle when the post-war social structure accumulation collapsed and capital went on the offensive to constrain the tendencies of the rate of profit to fall by liberating itself from the “regulation” of the state and the corporatist arrangements that had been institutionalized during this period in time. Indeed, experience has shown that the expansion of social democracy was directly linked to the “consolidation of capitalism.” This latter point is important because it indicates the degree to which a stable and expanding regime of capital accumulation is a prerequisite for social democratic politics. Little surprise, therefore, that the social democratic parties took off and legitimized their project during the so-called Golden Age of capitalism — a period, that is, in which it was indeed possible to tame the market forces and to navigate among options and forms of social welfare policies without this being seen as having radical and subversive implications for the capitalist system.

In short, the “globalization of capital” signified the turn of the Left to the Right. Just as soon as the postwar social structure accumulation collapsed, all social democratic parties dropped all pretenses to the transformation of capitalism into socialism, rebaptized themselves as “new socialists” and “modernizers” and converted themselves into technocratic and cooptive mechanisms of political rule aimed at becoming part of the dominant class. The result is that today the socialist parties practice socialism for the rich. The in-power social democratic Left is deeply involved with the existing global neoliberal accumulation regime and to hope to change its politics from above is, I believe, a lost struggle. The renewal of the Left has to come from below, through political activism at the grassroots level and the intellectual energizing of a politico-economic critique of neoliberalism combined with real utopian alternatives, culminating hopefully in the derailing of the policies pursued by those above. I don’t see any other way around it.

RR. I agree with you about alternative life-styles but I think that “political activism at the grass-roots level” and “increased democratic participation” are just alternative ways of describing what I called, in my earlier response, “getting one’s fellow-citizens to vote for leftist candidates.” You seem to think that I

believe in change “from above,” but I’m not sure why you think this. We shall of course only replace centrists like Clinton and Blair with people who are further toward the left if these other people can get themselves elected — if the centrists are forced out from below. My rhetoric is reformist and yours vaguely revolutionary, but do we really want to do different things? I find the difference hard to pin down.

We already have lots of excellent “political-economic critiques of neo-liberalism,” so I’m not sure what further “intellectual energizing” is needed. I entirely agree that “the social democratic in-power Left is deeply involved . . . [etc.]” The problem is to get the voters to recognize this involvement and its consequences, and to get them to vote the rascals out. Maybe some leftists have blind spots, but by and large I think there is widespread agreement among leftist intellectuals about what is likely to happen if the Clinton-Blair policies continue. Whereas you see the intellectuals as lazy or blind, I see the voters as lazy — as throwing away their chance to change things by refusing to think things through. It isn’t always lack of intellectual energy that makes bad things happen. Sometimes it’s just inertia and indifference on the part of the broad masses.

CP. I am not a romantic about the role of the masses, and I do in fact agree with your point about “inertia and indifference on the part of the broad masses.” Capitalism makes people stupid and insensitive. But I think there is every reason to be critical toward intellectuals — a subject that deserves attention and analysis all in itself. At the same time I believe that a political struggle in the name of “getting one’s fellow citizens to vote leftist candidates” is not enough to overcome the contingencies necessary for the realization of a just, classless society. From the point of view of radical social change, a complete break with the conceptual ordering of the liberal/capitalist economic, political, social, and cultural setting appears to me necessary. In any event, I trust we will have the chance to resume our dialogue sometime in the near future.

The Cultural Cold War: **Faust Not the Pied Piper**

Alan Johnson

I got hold of Sartre and asked him: "What would you say if in certain circumstances you were imprisoned in a city where there was a Communist government, and I, knowing you were innocent, started a campaign against the communists on your account?" "Ah," said Sartre, "that is an extremely difficult question. It all depends. But it is just possible that I in my prison might nevertheless think it better that I should be condemned than that my case should be made the occasion for an accusation against the cause which in the long run is that of the proletariat." I said: "It seems to me that the only good cause has always been that of one person unjustly imprisoned — whether this has resulted in habeas corpus or a furious campaign conducted by Voltaire in pamphlets." Sartre: "That's the whole drama. That perhaps we live in a situation in which the injustice against one person no longer seems to apply."

(extract from the journal of Stephen Spender, March 30, 1956,
in *The Thirties and After: Poetry, Politics, People 1933-75*)

At certain times and in respects to certain crucial issues, instead of saying "neither-nor" and looking for viable alternatives, we must recognize an "either-or" and take one stand or the other.

(Sidney Hook, *Out of Step. An Unquiet Life in the 20th Century*)

IN THE COLD WAR PROGRESSIVE POLITICS WERE DESTROYED because much of the left entered one or other Faustian pact of the mind. Two "lefts" took the view that "the times" or "the situation" dictated their temporary, knowing, intellectual and practical subordination to state power in Russia or the United States. The result was that both ended up no sort of left at all. Both, like Goethe's *Faust*, lost their souls. Both discovered that state power, like Mephistopheles, strikes a hard bargain: "The Devil is an egoist/And is not apt, without a why or a wherefore/'For God's sake', others to assist."

The first left stretched well beyond card-carrying Communists. It developed, as William Phillips has put it, a Stalinist Unconscious. Viewing anti-Stalinism as quixotic or, worse, "objectively pro-Imperialist," this left broke the bonds between reason, socialism, liberty, and democracy and put power-worship, "lesser-evilism" and sophistry in their place. Unable to rouse itself to op-

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pose widespread slave labor and political murder in “its camp” it could be moved to paroxysms of anger by the fate of the Rosenbergs or the fact that the Congress of Cultural Freedom received some of its money from the Central Intelligence Agency. Paul Sweezy, editor of *Monthly Review*, wrote “The restrictions of liberty which are characteristic of Soviet Russia [i.e. torture, mass judicial murder, slave labor camps —AJ] are far less symptomatic of the time than the crisis of liberty in the United States.”¹ This left — its ranks swelled by the Maoists of the New Left — has not gone away. Its mental habits (in particular “campism,” i.e. the disastrous idea that “my enemy’s enemy is my friend”) its sensibility (power-worship, pseudo-realism, arm-chair militarism) and its poverty-stricken idea of what socialism is (Sweezy famously defined socialism as “a system which disallows private property”) are largely intact and morphing into new forms. It can be found on the Internet raving that Milosovic is the Castro of the Balkans.

The second postwar “left,” stretching well beyond groups like the Congress for Cultural Freedom, was a social-democratic and liberal left that entered a Faustian Pact with the “the West” as a bulwark against Stalinism. Some, like Sidney Hook, began by speaking eloquently of truth and beauty but ended up receiving the Medal of Honor from Ronald Reagan as a reward for dressing up the Contra butchers as freedom fighters.

*Who Paid The Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War** by Frances Saunders is the fullest account yet of the CIA’s penetration, funding and manipulation of this liberal and social-democratic left during the Cold War. The basic story is well known. The CIA realized that psychological or political warfare was as important as military capability in the Cold War. C.D. Jackson, special advisor to President Eisenhower, played a pivotal role in forcing this understanding on the U.S. political class. Secretary of State Edward Barrett said: “a highly skilful and substantial campaign of truth is as indispensable as an air force.” Truman, urged on by George Kennan, had already set up the Psychological Strategy Board on April 4, 1952. The PSB operating statement PSB D-33/2 remains classified though it is known to have called for lavishly funded worldwide “political warfare” on Russia. The psychological warfare budget, \$34 million in 1950, was quadrupled. Saunders speculates that James Burnham was the author of PSB D-33/2, pointing to its resemblance to Burnham’s book *The Machiavellians*. One might also mention, more plausibly, Burnham’s 1947 *The Struggle for the World*. The CIA aimed to fund an intellectual and cultural war in order to create, in Saunders phrase, “a beachhead in western Europe from which the advance of Communist ideas could be halted.”

Once this course had been decided the CIA soon realized that pretty much the only people with both the practical knowledge to conduct such a war against Stalinism, and a popular base in Europe, was the non-Communist Left, tagged the “NCL” by the CIA. According to Michael Warner, a historian working for the CIA’s history staff, the NCL was “the theoretical foundation of the Agency’s political operations against Communism over the next two decades.”

The CIA supported, covertly, the establishment of the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF) in 1950. The CCF linked ex-communists, ex-Trotskyists, social-democrats and liberal artists, writers and intellectuals. Well-funded na-

**Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* by Frances Stonor Saunders, London; Granta Books, 1999, 509 pp.

tional sections were created in many European and many non-European countries. Ostensibly opposed to all state restraint of cultural freedom and intellectual expression, the CCF concentrated its fire on Communism. A new CIA Division, the International Organizations Division (IOD) ran agents, Michael Josselson and Lawrence de Neufville, at the heart of the CCF, sanctioned by National Security Directive, NSC-68. Tom Braden, IOD Chief, fought for the establishment of the Division. "I was more interested in the ideas which were under fire from the Communists than I was in blowing up Guatemala." To protect his assets, Braden issued these instructions to IOD posts: "Limit the money to amounts private organizations can credibly spend; disguise the extent of American interest; protect the integrity of the organization by not requiring it to support every aspect of official American policy."

As Saunders points out, "Cultural Freedom did not come cheap." In fact, "Over the next seventeen years, the CIA was to pump tens of millions of dollars into the Congress for Cultural Freedom and related projects. With this kind of commitment, the CIA was in effect acting as America's Ministry of Culture." It was Allen Dulles' idea to organize most of this funding at arms length, through a "consortium" of "philanthropic foundations, business corporations, and other institutions and individuals, who worked hand in hand with the CIA to provide the cover." Dulles had moved to the CIA in 1950 as the case officer of the National Committee for a Free Europe, whose fund-raising wing was helped by a young actor, Ronald Reagan. The CIA role increased in 1954 when Cord Meyer replaced Tom Braden bringing fresh ideas and agents and stepping up the cultural war. The truth about the CIA's role in the CCF broke with the Patman revelations in 1964, the *New York Times* investigation of 1966 and the famous *Ramparts* expose of 1967.

SAUNDERS BOOK HAS FIVE GREAT STRENGTHS. First, it does not use the sins of the CCF to exculpate the crimes of Stalinism. Whatever perversion of "freedom" was involved in CCF intellectuals accepting CIA money Saunders is clear that "Freedom of any kind certainly wasn't on the agenda in the Soviet Union, where the writers and intellectuals who were not sent to the gulags were lassoed into serving the interests of the state." She acidly points out "None of the Communist-backed lobbies formed to defend the Rosenberg's publicized the fact that on the same day the Rosenberg Defense Committee was founded in France, eleven former leaders of the Czech Communist Party were executed in Prague."

Second, the book is a very impressive research effort. Though she leans on previous investigations, she has also conducted her own interviews with many of the key players and tracked down new documents "scattered across the dusty recesses of a number of archives." The narrative is fast-paced and easy to read (though it did feel in places like a 500-page magazine article). And she has a sense of humor, alive to the many absurdities of the tale, such as Arthur Koestler's enrichment by the French Communist Party which bought up every copy of his anti-communist novel *Darkness at Noon*, ensuring reprint after reprint rolled off the press.

Several CIA operations are revealed in detail. Her account of the CIA's Hollywood operation, "Militant Liberty" is well handled. We learn of Carleton Alsop, the CIA agent at Paramount persuading casting directors to place "well-dressed Negroes" in movies, part of the CIA's "Hollywood Formula" on how movies should

depict to the world a free, equal and democratic America. The CIA financed the animation of Orwell's anti-Stalinist novel *Animal Farm*, but tailored its ending to cut its Third Camp message reversing Orwell's own intent. The efforts of CIA agent Sol Stein to doctor *1984* to the ideological needs of the USA are also carefully documented.

Saunders traces the CIA's role in funding the European Youth campaign, and those European political factions — such as the British “revisionists” around Gaitskill — who were moving closer to the idea of a united Europe linked to a democratic capitalist America. Jay Lovestone's role at the heart of this European operation is made clear. The smoking gun that shows the CIA funded the British Fabian Society journal, *Venture*, is here, alongside the claim that Denis Healy fed information about Labor Party members and trade unionists to the Information Research Department at the British Foreign Office. When the Labor Party beat the Conservatives in the 1964 general election, Michael Josselson, the CIA agent in the CCF wrote to Daniel Bell, “We are all pleased to have so many of our friends in the new government.”

Third, the book demolishes the idea that the core CCF members did not know about the CIA's role in the CCF. Mind you this is hardly a scoop. Sidney Hook admitted in his 1987 memoir that those in the CCF who did not know “did not want to know.” More interestingly, Saunders makes an intriguing argument about the CIA role in deliberately breaking its connection to the “NCL” in the late 1960s. Tom Braden, CIA chief controller of the CCF until 1954, wrote an article for the *Saturday Evening Post* in May 1967 (“I'm Glad the CIA is Immoral”), which gave solid proof of the CIA-CCF link complete with names, dates and places. Josselson was devastated. Saunders speculates that Braden, ostensibly retired, was still acting for the CIA, possibly for President Lyndon Johnson. Her thesis is that the CIA broke the link to the non-communist left not just because *Ramparts* had blown its cover but also because the “NCL” — under the impact of the war in Vietnam — was proving unreliable. James Burnham wrote an article in *The National Review* in 1967 which Saunders quotes at length. She speculates that Burnham was either in touch with, or was the author of, or had divined the thinking behind, the calculated cutting loose of the CCF by Braden and the CIA. Burnham wrote:

The CIA mounted most of these activities in the perspective of “the non-Communist Left.” The CIA estimated the NCL as a reliably anti-Communist force [but] this political estimate is mistaken. The NCL is not reliable. Under the pressure of critical events the NCL loosened. A large portion — in this country as in others — swung toward an anti-American position, and nearly all the NCL softened its attitude toward Communism and the Communist nations. Thus the organizational collapse is derivative from the political error. The political error is the doctrine that the global struggle against Communism must be based on the NCL — a doctrine fastened on the CIA by Allen Dulles. Cuba, the Dominican Republic and above all Vietnam have put the NCL doctrine and practice to a decisive test. A large part of the organizations and individuals nurtured by the CIA under the NCL prescription end up undermining the nation's security. (401)

Saunders quotes CIA agent Jack Thompson, the longest serving Executive Director of the Fairfield Foundation, which was used by the CIA to channel funds to the CCF. “I have an imaginary scenario: President Johnson is sitting at his desk in the Oval office, and he's shuffling through some papers. He finds a

copy of *Encounter* magazine. And he says 'Hey, what's this?' And someone says, 'It's your magazine, Mr President.' And he says, 'My magazine? *My* magazine! These are guys who think *my* war is wrong and they're writing in *my* magazine?' And that's it."

The fourth strength of Saunders book is the insight it provides into the world-view and sensibility of the early CIA and CCF. Both, it seems, possessed that self-image akin to Harry and his men at Agincourt: "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers," the last defenders of culture and civilization against the Goths and philistines. This was no simple cloak and dagger affair. Many, especially in the early days of the CIA, possessed an almost Eliotic, modernist, even cerebral sensibility. This elitism helped to bond those witting and unwitting figures in the CIA-CCF nexus, from James Jesus Angleton to Irving Kristol to Lionel Trilling. Saunders depicts the CCF as a mix of crusading politics and gravy-train. The zeal of the CCF in its early days is compared by Diana Josselson to "the first hundred days of the Kennedy administration . . . It was electric. You felt you were in touch with everything going on everywhere. Things were blossoming, it was vital . . . it was like the French Revolution or the Oxford Movement. That's what it felt like."

But the scale of the largesse, claims Saunders, meant "scores of western intellectuals were now roped to the CIA by an "umbilical cord of gold." She takes her reader to the Villa Serbelloni in Bellagio, northern Italy, "available to the Congress as an informal retreat for its more eminent members — a kind of officers mess where frontliners in the *Kulterkampf* could recover their energies." The awe-struck Hannah Arendt [who had experienced the inside of a Nazi detention camp], writes to her friend Mary McCarthy that "You feel as if you are lodged in a kind of Versailles. The place has 53 servants, including men who take care of the gardens. The staff is presided over by a kind of headwaiter who dates from the time of the 'principessa' and has face and manner of a great gentleman of fifteenth-century Florence." Top-table CCF stars were housed at the Connaught in London, the Inghilterra in Rome, or, if calling on Irving Brown in Paris, the Royal Suite at the Hotel Baltimore. A fight for freedom paid for by the Central Intelligence Agency.

Fifth, the book shows that the choice "for the West" corroded political and intellectual independence. The phenomenon of Stalinophobia does not refer to being "too anti-Stalinist." One can no more be "too anti-Stalinist" than one can be "too anti-Nazi." Stalinophobia is the loss of political bearings because, in one's mind, the crimes of Stalinism have overwhelmed all else, most importantly the crimes of capitalism and imperialism. Saunders quotes Phillip Rahv on the nature of Stalinophobia when he warned, "Anti-Stalinism has become almost a professional stance. It has come to mean so much that it excludes nearly all other concerns and ideas, with the result that they are trying to turn anti-Stalinism into something which it can never be: a total outlook on life, no less, or even a philosophy of history." The *feel* of Stalinophobia was captured by Mary McCarthy when writing to Hannah Arendt in March 1952 about the mindset of some of her fellow CCF members:

They live in terror of a revival of the situation that prevailed in the thirties, when the fellow travellers were powerful in teaching, publishing, the theatre etc., when Stalinism was the gravy train and these people were off it. These people were . . .

really traumatized by the brief Stalinist apogee of the thirties . . . In their dreams, this period is always recurring; it is “realler” than today. Hence they scarcely notice the deteriorating actuality and minimize Senator McCarthy as not relevant.

In his 1969 essay, “The Cultural Cold War: A Short History of the Congress for Cultural Freedom,” Christopher Lasch argued that choosing the demigod ‘the West’ stilled the criticism of the men who presided over the West. In the ensuing silence grew a murmuring and then a clamor of celebration. Lasch was right that *Encounter* magazine “consistently approved the broad lines and even the details of American policy.” When Dwight Macdonald, in 1958, submitted an article to *Encounter*, wittily titled “America! America!” — a critique of the celebratory discourse about the U.S. then popular among intellectuals — it was rejected. Melvin Lasky’s original dream of a CIA-backed journal with an “unafraid self-critical tone . . . a living demonstration of how the democratic mind works” was simply ridiculous. That’s not how Faustian pacts work. Goethe had Mephistopheles set out very clearly the nature of the pact Faust was entering: “Here, an unwearied slave, I’ll wear thy tether/ And to thine every nod obedient be:/ When *There* again we come together/ Then shalt thou do the same for me.” Macdonald commented that for the editors of *Encounter*, “the publication of my article might embarrass the Congress [for Cultural Freedom] in its relations with the America foundations which support it.” The rejection of Macdonald’s article gives the lie to Sidney Hook’s claim that “there is not a single action that the Congress took or failed to take that could be attributed to the fact that it was subsidized in part indirectly by United States funds.” More obvious still, if the CCF had been committed to civil liberties *in the U.S.* it would have energetically opposed McCarthyism from the outset.² In fact, as Saunders shows, detail piled on detail, “the American Congress of Cultural Freedom (ACCF) like *Encounter*, sought to deny or minimize the risks to culture of McCarthyism.”

Lasch was also right that choosing “the West” led, over time, to self-censorship by those who had “so completely assimilated the official point of view that they were no longer aware of the way in which their writing had come to serve as rationalizations of American world power.” Lasch related this self-censorship to the changing social function and status of the intellectual. The Leviathan state needed to absorb intellectuals on a larger scale than ever before and few intellectuals were complaining. “As a group, intellectuals had achieved a semi-official status which assigned them professional responsibility for the machinery of education and for cultural affairs in general. Within this sphere — within the schools, the universities, the theatre, the concert hall and the politico-literary magazines — they had achieved both autonomy and affluence, as the social value of their services became apparent to the government, to corporations and to the foundations.” Saunders cites *Time* magazine, “The man of Protest has given way to the man of Affirmation.” Far from the intellectual “speaking the truth to power” *Partisan Review*’s Lionel Trilling summed up the new relationship: “Intellect has associated itself with power, perhaps as never before in History.” Saunders main charge against the CCF is precisely that “the natural procedures of intellectual enquiry” were distorted by this new relationship to the state.

Yes, despite these strengths, the framework adopted by Saunders — the CIA calling the tunes played by its bought piper, the CCF — is too limiting. The

fundamentally political and ideological nature of the choices made by the CCF intellectuals during this extreme moment of the twentieth century are missed amid the tales of 'secret agents' and 'assets.' There is a heavy price to pay for telling the story of the CCF as a conspiracy story.

A CIA Wurlitzer?

THE CCF WAS NOT GROTESQUE AND RIDICULOUS PEOPLE stuffing their faces with CIA food and talking pompously about "freedom" while shadowy "operatives" run their prize "assets." The CIA did not call tunes nor pay "pipers" to play them. Saunders accepts the CIA's narcissistic description of the CCF as a "Wurlitzer" the CIA could play at will. But this is no better than telling the story of the corruption of the Communist Parties in terms of "Moscow Gold."³ A richer understanding of the tragedy of the CCF — and real understanding will be the best guarantee that the tragedy is not repeated — would require, first, an empathetic understanding of the motivation of its partisans, grasping the political complexity of the historical moment in which so many intellectuals "chose the West" and, second, holding up the alternative of those anti-Stalinists who maintained an equally coruscating critique of U.S. imperialism.

That moment was marked by three catastrophes. First, the rolling across Europe, and Asia, of the Stalinist armies and the imposition of totalitarianism wherever they conquered. The politically conscious "third-campers" aside, those who did not make the choice for the West usually persuaded themselves this represented some kind of progress. In other words most indulged what Julian Symons called the "selfish refusal to face disillusionment." The second catastrophe was what Orwell called the "intellectual and moral disgrace on a massive scale" of the fellow traveller. This was a world in which "socialists" wrote odes to Stalin (Neruda) and painted portraits of Stalin (Picasso). It was a world in which Stalinized French doctors backed Stalin's ravings about a [Jewish] "Doctors Plot" in Russia in 1953. (The "Doctors Plot" was the signal for a pogrom of the Jews but mercifully Stalin died first.) In other words this was a period of intense political warfare that the Stalinists seemed to be winning and in which large chunks of the left were debasing themselves.⁴ The third catastrophe, and the most crucial, was the collapse of hope in the prospects of a democratic socialist Third Camp emerging in Europe, opposed to both Moscow and Washington and led by the working class.

In his memoirs, Irving Howe, a severe critic of the CCF who called its partisans "not even free men," sought to recreate for his reader that extreme moment in 20th century history when he deserted the Third Camp and "chose the West":

The fear of World War was real. It was a warranted fear . . . Wherever Stalinism conquered, freedom vanished. It was necessary, therefore, to strengthen resistance among the bourgeois democratic states in Europe, as they existed at that moment, and not wait for some presumed perfection in the future. This meant to support the Marshall Plan . . . to help, if possible, the liberal anticommunist forces . . . It was an uncomfortable politics . . . but I think it was a correct politics. That the Communists in France and Italy never came close to taking power is by no means evidence that we overestimated the danger: I would say it is evidence of how necessary it had been to put barriers in their path. And real barriers — power, money, politics —not just articles in intellectual journals.

To this Sidney Hook added:

Our conviction was that we were already in fact if not *de jure*, engaged in a defensive war with Communism — the war was actually raging in Korea — and our fears that its flames would spread and engulf Western Europe. We were in daily contact with a stream of refugee intellectuals, whose harrowing tales of persecution not only moved us deeply but gave us a sense of guilt. Yes, there was an element of deception in not making public what we knew or suspected [about the CIA funding — AJ]. In war even more deplorable deceptions are accepted even by the most honorable. (. . .) Our conviction that in all likelihood we would soon be involved in a European war, triggered by the advance of the Red Army or an attempt by the Communist party in France or Italy to take power, accounted for the stilling of uneasiness about our funding.⁵

These memoirs, as I read them, describe a tragic Faustian Pact with Mephistopheles/“the West.” They do not amount to “pipers” bought and paid for and “playing” CIA tunes.

“Cold War Rhetoric”?

ANOTHER TROUBLESOME ASPECT OF THE BOOK is that it coquettes, perhaps unwittingly, in places, with some mental reflexes and ways of thinking that sustained the old pro-Russian left and which still threaten the intellectual health of the left today.

Stalinism dissolved the left as an independent force not only by torture, murder and the Gulag but also by forcing on it mental reflexes which destroyed its capacity for independent thinking. Truth and justice were held at a distance, arrived at cautiously, instrumentally, once the consequences for your favored “camp” — one state power or another — had been worked out. Left-wingers schooled in this way became inveterate self-deceivers and pollutants of the culture of the left. Sartre’s convoluted apologia for tyranny, which began this review, would be a case in point. The shameful response of much of the left to Solidarnosc would be another. Why did many socialists eulogize Pablo Neruda (composer of Ode to Stalin) but say nothing — scared of being accused of “Cold War rhetoric” perhaps — about Osip Mandelstam (the great poet who perished in the Gulag because he wrote a poem with the line “His cockroach whiskers leer/And his boot tops gleam”)? Do not such “socialists” bear responsibility for Mandelstam’s fate? And how many Osip Mandelstam’s were there?

We have to broach these questions, painful as they are. We have to plumb the gists of what — in our theory and practice, our ethics, our conception of socialism — made such disastrous accommodation to totalitarian power possible. In the absence of our comprehensive democratic socialist account the gap is being filled by the “Red Genocide” framework of the 800 page *Black Book on Communism* produced by the *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* in Paris, which traces an unbroken line of criminal continuity from Marx to Pol Pot.

A simplistic *ex cathedra* dismissal of those socialist and social-democratic intellectuals who “chose the West” in the 1940’s and 1950’s will prevent us *critically* reappropriating what remains valuable in their legacy. Elements of that legacy might yet contribute to clearing up the theoretical and normative confusion about what socialism *is and has been*. This confusion predated Stalinism and can be traced back to the fact that socialism has *always* meant two very

different things — the authoritarian imposition by an elite of a blueprint for a planned society, necessarily anti-democratic, illiberal and doomed to stagnation, and popular democratic control of society, “of the immense majority in the interests of the immense majority”: the two “souls of socialism.” But Stalinism made that chronic historic confusion about the meaning of socialism into an acute, full-blown, near-fatal crisis. The majority of “socialists” throughout the world became exactly what the liberals said they were: authoritarians.

Our retrieval of liberty and democracy as *constitutive* of socialism — a necessary condition for the future viability of socialism as a political project — has a long way to go. It will not be helped by a mental reflex, which Saunders book might unwittingly strengthen: the fear of giving succor to “the” enemy that stops us speaking the truth. For example Saunders routinely labels as “Cold War rhetoric” the statement of Alfred Barr that “The modern artist’s non-conformity and love of freedom cannot be tolerated within a monolithic tyranny and modern art is useless for the dictator’s propaganda.” But what Barr said was *true*. Another example of this mental reflex is Jason Epstein’s view, invoked by Saunders, that, “Come Vietnam and . . . anti-Stalinism gets used to justify our own aggression. These people get into a real bind now. They’re caught with their pants down: they *have* to defend Vietnam because they’ve toed the anti-Communist line.” We have to realize just how disastrous this argument has been for the left. Its “logic” (which the example of Mary McCarthy, to mention only her, refutes) is that anti-Stalinism=anti-Communism=support for the Vietnam War. The argument relegates the left to the status of satellite, destined to revolve in the orbit of one state power or another.

Saunders book unwittingly chimes in with this mental reflex because its piper/tune framework suggests militant opposition to Russia was the antechamber to the CIA check-book and neo-conservatism. For example, Saunders tells us Malcolm Muggeridge’s truthful account of the Soviet Union, *Winter in Moscow* (1933), “marked the beginning of his political transformation into an agent for MI6.” Despite Saunders intentions, such statements might be read as saying that it was the very *fact* of his militant truth-telling about Russia which led him into the arms of MI6, the British spying organization. I think this matters, today, because the mental reflex itself is alive and well and as damaging as ever. How many failed to face the truth about murderous Serbian sub-imperialism, or to rouse opposition to it, because their overriding concern was to “give no comfort to NATO”? How many effectively became critical supporters of NATO, refusing to oppose the bombing of Serbia, because their overriding concern was to “give no comfort to Milosovic”?

This “campist” mentality is unwittingly indulged by Saunders. For instance she quotes approvingly the cold contempt of Deutscher for George Orwell (“a Freudian sublimation of persecution mania”) while what we really need is a sober realization that Deutscher — still near-universally eulogized on the left — was a man who opposed all the popular uprisings in Eastern Europe and said “Eastern Europe (Hungary, Poland and East Germany) found itself on the brink of bourgeois restoration at the end of the Stalin era; and only Soviet armed power (or its threat) stopped it there.”

Another example is Saunders’s treatment of the famous 1948 Russian backed and fellow-traveller-organized Waldorf Astoria “Peace Conference.” A small ad hoc group, Americans for Intellectual Freedom, led by the still youngish Sidney

Hook, disrupted the Waldorf conference by raising in session after session the question of Stalinist abuses of human rights, exposing the hypocrisy of the sponsors and the fellow-travellers who attended, and pointing out that the real purpose of the event was political warfare for the Soviet state. Yet Saunders seeks to enlist us, emotionally, to the side of the conference organizers and supporters such as Arthur Miller. She sneers at the Hook group and finds their behavior “appalling” for embarrassing the Russian visitors. The faux naïf words of Arthur Miller are passed on a good coin, “The conference was an effort to continue a good tradition.” What good tradition can he mean? The power-worship of the intellectual? The selfish refusal to face disillusionment? Apologetics for “Uncle Joe”? One has such a choice.

When one considers the actual exchanges at the Waldorf conference it becomes odder and odder that sympathy should be extended to its organizers and contempt poured on those who tried to challenge them (I suspect Saunders is here following the lead of Garry Wills’ dreadful introduction to Lillian Hellman’s book, *Scoundrel Time*). A typical exchange went thus. An AIF supporter stands up at the panel on “Planning and Building” and proposes a resolution calling on Russia to rehabilitate eighteen architect-victims of the purges. The Chair dismisses this as unconstructive and moves on. A left that finds it hard to take sides when it looks back at this exchange does not deserve a 21st century future.

Anti-Stalinism Was Not Quixotic

SAUNDERS BOOK COULD THEREFORE BE READ AS DENYING the very possibility of an anti-Stalinism independent of the U.S. government’s patronage or political orbit. Yet this “Third Camp” tradition did exist.⁶ Political warfare was waged against Stalinism in ways that gave no succour to Washington. Orwell in 1946 proposed a democratic international and a new “League for the Rights of Man” to defend human rights and intellectual freedom. There is the noble failure of the Europe-America Groups led by Dwight Macdonald. It can be found in the collaboration between the U.S. Workers Party — which coined the slogan “Neither Washington Nor Moscow but the Third Camp of Independent Socialism” — and French anti-Stalinists organized in the *Rassemblement Democratique Revolutionnaire* (RDR). It can be seen in the International Day Against Dictatorship and War, organized by David Rousset. Even in Berlin in 1950, at the launch of the CCF, there were still those who said political warfare meant first a fight for social justice, prosperity and, probably, European federation. These forces tended to think, with varying degrees of consistency and sophistication, in terms of a two-front fight by a Third Camp. It was the *collapse* of the EAG, the RDR, *Politics* and *Horizon*, and the marginalization of the revolutionary socialist Third Camp voice in Europe and America, which made it easier for the CIA to move in and yoke the non-Communist left “to Washington’s version of political warfare against Moscow, transfer the operation to Paris, dump Lasky, bring in Josselson, and gradually increase the CIA influence.”⁷

Yankee Doodles?

SAUNDERS CLAIMS THAT THERE WAS A “really deep connection between abstract expressionism and the cultural Cold War.” Again, though the connection is un-

deniable, her too-small “piper/tune” framework is incapable of grasping the tragedy and pathos of the story.

The facts are well known. Despite a philistine assault on the abstract expressionists in the U.S. Congress, led by George Dondero, the CIA realized the potential of abstraction to be manipulated as a tool in the cultural Cold War as an embodiment of western freedom contrasted sharply against grey Stalinist conformity. Bypassing the U.S. Congress, the CIA worked with the Museum of Modern Art to promote the abstract expressionists, funding touring exhibitions in Europe. President Eisenhower himself, no fan of Still, Rothko, Newman or Pollock one suspects, endorsed MoMA, and its modern art programme, as “a pillar of liberty.”

According to Saunders it was for political — not aesthetic — reasons that abstract expressionism was promoted by MoMA. She *reduces* abstract expressionism to its Cold War context. She writes, of Jackson Pollock, “In his splurgy, random knot of lines which threaded their way across the canvas and over the edges, [Pollock] seemed to be engaged in the act of rediscovering America,” and upholding “the Great American myth of the Lone Voice.” Saunders finds “eerily prophetic” a yahoo-philistine attack on the abstract expressionists carried in the Stalinist magazine *Masses and Mainstream* in 1952 titled “Dollars, Doodles and Death.” This is all in line with the “art criticism” of Serge Guilbaut, the author of *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art* (the anti-Americanism and Gallic nationalism of sections of the French left is beyond parody). This book crudely reduced abstract expressionism to a tool of U.S. foreign policy. (Of course, Guilbaut promoted the Stalinist socialist-realist tool Andre Fougeron, a true Zhdanovist who attacked Picasso for the lack of reverence in his portrait of Stalin.) Saunders’ sneer at Pollock’s “splurgy, random knot of lines” appears in a chapter titled “Yankee Doodles.” She also passes on as a penetrating insight Ad Reinhardt’s jibe that Pollock was just a “Harpers Bazaar bum,” and implies abstract expressionism was a giant fraud played out on the public. We are told, via the voice of Jason Epstein, “this stuff is rubbish.”

There are political, aesthetic and historiographical problems with all this. First, why is it so hard to admit that abstract expressionism *was* proof of the greater cultural freedom of “the West”? Take the year 1948. In Russia, Zhdanov, Stalin’s cultural policeman, gathered together composers and critics and issued his cultural edicts and orders and banishments. In response, Shostakovitch, criticized for his Ninth Symphony, duly composed a piece in praise of Stalin’s forestry plan as an apology.⁸ In the same year Clyfford Still painted *1948-D*, Philip Guston *The Tormentors*, Barnett Newman, *Onement 1*, Robert Motherwell’s magnificent *Spanish Elegies* series was underway, and Jackson Pollock painted his masterpiece *Number 1A*. It was a moment of remarkable human artistic power and creativity. *That’s what the CIA saw! That’s why they could use it!*

Saunders reduces all this to “random,” “splurgy,” “doodles” and CIA cash. We are, thankfully, spared the cliché, “a five year old could do it.” The best antidote to anyone infected with this philistinism is to get him or her to spend five minutes in front of Pollock’s masterpiece *Lavender Mist*. Those lines are not random. I suspect that lurking in Saunders account is a sheer disbelief that the USA (of all places!) could produce the greatest art movement of the mid-twentieth century.

The tragedy of abstract expressionism lay in the political impossibility of

that aesthetic project at that historical moment, and here is the real parallel to the CCF intellectuals, I think. They were driven, said the late Peter Fuller — listen to the echo of the Howe and Hook memoirs quoted earlier — “by what they felt as the necessity of bearing witness to their experience of that terrible moment of history through which they lived.” The real connections between the abstract expressionist artists and CCF intellectuals lie here, first, in the impulse to take a stand for individual personality and freedom in an age of tyranny and conformity. This impulse was absorbed into the “official” culture via the fatal embrace of state patronage, prestige, wealth and success. They failed to maintain their independence. Second, both were isolated from a social agency or a political project that consistently stood for freedom and was able to sustain a movement, artistic or intellectual, not dependent on one form or other of state patronage. Unable to see any alternative to a spiritually bankrupt consumer-capitalism and a totalitarian “socialism” both *retreated*: the artists to the “ancient” the “timeless” the “mythical” and the private cultivation of the “self,” and to alcohol (not to the “rediscovery of America” as Saunders says), the intellectuals to a notion of “freedom,” which shut its eyes to the un-freedom of corporate power, American imperialism and McCarthyism. Their respective Faustian pacts with Power — theorized by Clement Greenberg for the abstract expressionists, for the CCF by Hook and others — produced over time a descent into, respectively, “art officiel” and “house intellectual” and a decline into mere mannerism.

All this is rather more complicated than a piper playing a tune. In fact what David Anfam has said — in irritated response to Guilbaut’s notion that New York “stole” modern art and turned it into a weapon of the Cold War — could stand as a criticism of Saunders’ notion that the CIA played the intellectual opposition to Stalinism like a Wurlitzer. Pointing out the “unrelenting narrowness” of Guilbaut’s thesis Anfam asked “What might Marx himself have made of these foreclosed horizons whereon bad faith masquerades as acuity. Firstly, the art [or, here, the ideas of the CCF — AJ] is turned into a cipher because it receives little serious attention. Once effaced, its features then mirror solely those of the original Cold War climate and its ambient political strategies.”⁹

Brightlier, Build It Again

THIS REVIEW BEGAN WITH GOETHE’S *FAUST* AND HIS FATEFUL PACT with a demigod and there it can end. Phyllis Jacobson, writing in *New Politics* in 1976, reviewing Lillian Hellmann’s book about McCarthyism, *Scoundrel Time*, pointed out the baleful consequences for the left when it opts for one demigod or another:

Lillian Hellman has more in common with her reactionary anti-Stalinist enemies than she realizes. Irving Kristol, Sidney Hook and friends practice the kind of politics dear to Hellman’s heart. Having opted for “the West” they are loud and clear in their defence of the victims of Stalinism with barely a word about those persecuted by U.S. imperialism and its client countries. They have not “come forward” to defend Smith Act or McCarthy victims. We hear nothing from them today about those persecuted by the CIA and the FBI. Lillian Hellman having chosen “Stalin Communism” never came forward to defend or support the victims of Stalinism. On the contrary, in her Stalinist zeal she attacked them. She defended and supported only the victims of Western imperialism. Both practiced the vulgar politics dictated by the notion that the enemies of my enemy are my friends. As camp followers they

were mirror images of each other.”¹⁰

Indeed. And one way to read *Faust* is as a morality tale about the importance of self-reliance and the dangers of putting faith in demigods. Goethe has a Chorus of Spirits observe Faust strike his pact with the Devil. They warn Faust: “Woe! Woe! Thou hast it destroyed/ The beautiful world/With powerful fist/ In ruin tis hurled/By the blow of a demigod shattered!” But then, in words I find relevant for the left today — as we stand amid the rubble of the “workers states” but with the glorious green shoots of a global anti-capitalist movement poking up around our feet — the Chorus of Spirits urges on Faust the possibility of an alternative based on self-reliance: “Brightlier/Build it again/In thine own bosom build it anew/ Bid the new career/ Commence, / With clearer sense/ And the new songs of cheer/Be sung thereto!”

NOTES

1. Sweezy is quoted in Irving Howe, “Authoritarians of the Left,” in his *Steady Work. Essays in the Politics of Democratic Radicalism, 1953-1966*, Harcourt, Brace and World, New York, 1966, p. 300.

2. For an argument that “Sidney Hook’s assault on civil liberties and academic freedom represented a force for McCarthyism, freed of the liabilities of McCarthy,” and that “The American Congress for Cultural Freedom as a whole, along with most of its leading personalities were apologists for McCarthyism, some promoting it more aggressively than others,” see Julius Jacobson, “Revising the History of Cold War Liberals,” *New Politics*, (New Series) No. 28, 2000.

3. Saunders’ reductive treatment of the Congress is reinforced by a tendency to treat her CIA sources rather uncritically. Surely CIA operatives, when reporting to their superiors, have an interest in overstating their influence and control over “assets”?

4. See David Caute, *The Fellow Travellers*, Quartet Books, London, 1977; Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims, Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China and Cuba*, Harper Colophon Books, New York, 1983; Czeslaw Milosz, *The Captive Mind*, Penguin, London, 1980 (1953).

5. And it is not just a question of 1948. The brute fact is that when Sidney Hook called Christopher Lasch’s 1969 essay on the Congress for Cultural Freedom “profoundly ignorant” about the realities of life inside the Soviet Union *he was right*. Such ignorance played a role in the sudden collapse of “French Marxism,” in the late 1970’s, one reading of *The Gulag Archipelago* washing much of it away overnight.

6. Alan Johnson, “The Third Camp as History and a Living Legacy,” *New Politics* (New Series) No. 27, 1999.

7. See S. A. Longstaff, “Dwight Macdonald and the Anti-Stalinist Left,” in *New Politics* (New Series), No. 18, 1995.

8. Leszek Kolakowski, *The Main Currents of Marxism Volume III: The Breakdown*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1978, p.123.

9. David Anfam, “Of War, Demons, and Negation,” *Art History*, Vol. 16. No. 3., 1993, p. 480.

10. Phyllis Jacobson, “A Time of Assorted Scoundrels,” *New Politics* (First Series) Vol. XI, No. 4, 1976. p. 24.

Marx and Nature

Paul Burkett

MANY INFLUENTIAL INVESTIGATIONS OF MARX AND NATURE have focused on one particular element of Marx's thought as the "magic key" to its ecological (or anti-ecological) significance. For some, the key is Marx's analysis of use value (wealth) and productive forces, especially as these are developed under capitalism (Schmidt, 1971; Grundmann, 1991). For others, it is the intense antagonism of Marx (and Engels) toward Malthusianism (Benton, 1989). Other accounts find the kernel of Marx's approach to nature in his early discussion of human "species-being" in the Paris Manuscripts of 1844 (Lee, 1980, pp. 14-16; Benton, 1993). Still others find it in the purportedly limited valuation of nature built into Marx's labor theory of value (Skirbekk, 1996; Deléage, 1994).

One difficulty with such interpretations is that in focusing on particular dimensions of Marx's thought as more or less ecologically resonant than others, the holistic character of this thought may be lost. Marx's analyses of such issues as the production of wealth, Malthusianism, human nature, and value are all deeply and jointly infused with his uncompromisingly holistic, materialist, historical, and practical-revolutionary approach to human-social questions. To treat any one of these analyses in isolation from the others (especially if the treatment is based on a small, selective number of passages in Marx's writings) is to invite partial, one-sided, and even flatly mistaken conceptions of Marx's ecological significance.¹

A related, and equally important, problem with the "magic key" approaches to Marx and nature is their general lack of historical depth. The fixation with particular elements of Marx's thought is often maintained at the expense of any serious attempt to contextualize that thought in terms of the whole prior history of natural and social philosophy as critically appropriated by Marx. In this way, the non-holistic interpretations wind up charging Marx with various crimes against nature, without adequately considering whether these crimes actually represent residues of pre-Marxian thinking that Marx was in the process of critically transcending (cf. Sartre, 1963, p. 7).

With John Bellamy Foster's new book, *Marx's Ecology*,* all such non-holistic, ahistorical approaches to Marx and nature should be laid to rest. Foster provides precisely the kind of organic historical analysis that is required to understand the real ecological significance of Marx's materialism. *Marx's Ecology* explains where the non-holistic interpretations go wrong, and *why*. It does so by locating Marx in the context of the entire history of human attempts to move

*John Bellamy Foster, *Marx's Ecology: Materialism and Nature* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000).

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beyond teleological explanations (and justifications) of natural and social phenomena in terms of exogenously given “final causes” such as divine mystery, “human nature,” or (in the last several centuries) the “natural order” of the market and capitalist property. The end result is not only a systematic rebuttal of Marx’s ecological critics, but also a powerful challenge to the one-sidedly normative (spiritualist and naturist) thinking characteristic of contemporary Green movements in theory and practice.

Foster’s narrative begins with the deep roots of Marx’s materialism in his early (1841) doctoral study of the ancient Greek philosopher Epicurus. What drew Marx to Epicurean natural philosophy was its non-mechanistic materialism which, while rejecting all explanations in terms of divine “final causes,” still allowed for contingency in the development of natural (and by implication human-social) phenomena. Such contingency immediately suggests a role for human and other species interventions, or *practice*, in determining historical patterns of development in material reality. Foster argues that Epicurus’s relatively contingent and practical materialism was at least as great an influence on Marx as was Feuerbach’s humanist-materialist critiques of religion and of Hegel’s philosophy of nature.

Ultimately, however, even Epicurean and Feuerbachian materialism were too mechanical and abstract to provide adequate ontological and epistemological underpinnings for the kind of practical-revolutionary *and* materialist worldview that Marx increasingly had in mind; in the former case due to Epicurus’s strong ties to atomism, in the latter to Feuerbach’s abstract, ahistorical conceptions of human species-being and of nature. Hegel’s vision of historical alienation (even if its central focus was alienation of the divine Idea, not of human labor in its natural and social context) provided Marx with the more dynamic, dialectical perspective and tools needed to understand natural and social history as a transformative process — especially once Hegel’s idealistic conception of social history was brought down to earth with the help of Marx’s critical appropriation of classical political economy.

Overall, Foster’s analysis of the role of Epicurean materialism in the shaping of Marx’s thought shows that, despite Marx’s apparent use of a relatively generic concept of human species-being in the Paris Manuscripts of 1844 (that is, prior to his critique of Feuerbach), he had already explicitly rejected all teleological explanations of natural and social history *prior to* 1844. Yet Marx proceeded to critically appropriate Hegel’s dialectics in order to transcend the mechanistic and deterministic limits of prior materialisms. This analysis does serious damage to the notion (made famous by Louis Althusser) that Marx underwent a materialist “epistemological break” with Hegel only after 1844; it places equally serious doubt on the companion notion of a transition from a more ecologically correct and philosophical young Marx to an ecologically incorrect and economistic older Marx.² Perhaps more importantly, Foster’s narrative establishes that from his doctoral thesis onward, Marx explicitly rejected and waged bitter struggles against all conceptions of nature as a passive, static, and/or teleologically (“divinely planned”) backdrop of human history and human development. In fact, the basic conception of nature as a self-developing, internally variegated entity whose contingent evolutionary path did not require religious explanation was a primary feature attracting Marx to Epicurean materialism.

The Epicurean roots of Marx’s materialism also run counter to the charge

that Marx's early definition of human species-being is anti-ecological because it contains "a fundamental opposition between human and animal nature" (Benton, 1993, p. 23).³ Insofar as the 1844 Marx's conception of human species-being was formed under the influence of Epicurus, it embodies the classical non-anthropocentric view of nature emphasizing the basic similarity and co-evolution of human beings and animals. Hence, when Marx condemns capitalism "for its tendency to reduce humans to the condition of animals" (Benton, 1993, p. 23), his conceptions of animal nature, animal conditions, and animal functions do not refer to actually existing non-human species but rather to the basic material conditions and functions that all (human and non-human) species have in common. They refer, as Foster puts it, to the lowest common denominator of human and non-human animate existence as "objectively delimited suffering beings, insofar as they [find] their objects outside of themselves and [are] finite . . . circumscribed by nature" (p. 78). More generally, Marx's prior rejection of any abstract-dualistic treatment of human beings and the rest of nature was central to his critique of Feuerbach. Marx's goal was to replace "the purely contemplative materialism, naturalism, and humanism of Feuerbach . . . with a practical materialism, naturalism, and humanism," and this required a holistic, co-evolutionary view of natural and human-social history (p. 114).

The Ecological Dimension

DESPITE AN INCREASING CONCERN WITH HUMAN PRACTICE in and through specific socio-economic relations as the primary motive force in history (Foster argues), Marx never lost sight of the "ontological priority" of nature in human development (p. 113). In Foster's view the persistence of a naturalistic element in Marx's thought applies even to the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) which, with its paeans to the bourgeoisie's development of industry, has been a favorite target for those detecting an anti-naturalist "Promethean" world-view in Marx. Foster shows that the *Manifesto* appears much less anti-ecological when read in the context of Marx's prior critique of "Proudhon's mechanistic Prometheanism," specifically Proudhon's teleological treatment of the development of "machinery and modernity . . . as the working out of a 'providential aim'" (pp. 131, 135). Moreover, when interpreted holistically and dialectically, "the *Manifesto*, despite its popular, polemical intent," is shown to have "already contained within it an understanding of the relationship between the materialist conception of nature and the materialist conception of history, as well as important ingredients of an ecological perspective . . . that recognized the necessary unity of human and natural existence" (p. 136). For instance, it noted the dependence of capitalist development on natural productive forces whose usefulness was not itself a product of human labor. It was also critical of capitalism's accentuation of the division between town and country, pointing out the adverse effects of this division on the health and intellectual development of the working class. The *Manifesto's* projection of "the abolition of the antagonistic division between town and country" implicitly reflects, according to Foster, a more general call for an end to capitalism's alienation of the producers from nature (p. 137).

Nonetheless, the full development of the ecological dimension in Marx's thinking, Foster suggests, hinged on his critical appropriation of the concept of "metabolism." This element of Marx's theoretical practice seems to have been a

joint product of Marx's mature critique of political economy, his ongoing critique of Malthusianism, and his close engagement with the work of the great German agricultural chemist Justus von Liebig. Marx's use of "metabolism," understood as the active material interchange of humanity and nature, can also be seen as a development of his earlier conception of human species-being and the intrinsic unity of this species-being with nature. However, "with its attendant notions of material exchanges and regulatory action," the concept of metabolism allowed for a more precise expression of "the human relation to nature as one that encompassed both 'nature-imposed conditions' and the capacity of human beings to affect this process" (p. 158). It thus enabled Marx to deal with people-nature relations in both practical and naturalistic fashion while recognizing the role of historically specific social (including economic) relations in shaping human practice and the accompanying co-evolution of natural and social "regulatory actions."

According to Foster, "Marx utilized the concept of metabolism throughout his mature works, though the context varied" (p. 157). It was a central element in Marx's conception of human labor as "a process in which both man and Nature participate," and of human labor power as a specific (human-social and subjective) natural force (Marx, 1967, p. 177).⁴ It also allowed Marx to analyze the development of tools and machinery in non-technological determinist fashion, as mediating the human relation to nature in ways jointly shaped by nature's material forms and laws as well as by specific socio-economic relations and forms of regulation. Foster argues that it is impossible to fully comprehend Marx's references to nature as the "inorganic body" of humanity, and to tools and machinery as "organs" of human labor, outside this simultaneously naturalistic and socio-historical context of metabolic interaction between human beings and their material conditions (pp. 72-73, 200-202).

Foster's analysis of the role of "metabolism" in Marx's mature thought leads into a discussion of capitalism's specific form of environmental crisis: the "metabolic rift." "Marx employed the concept of a 'rift' in the metabolic relation between human beings and the earth," Foster suggests, "to capture the material estrangement of human beings within capitalist society from the natural conditions which form the basis for their existence" (p. 163). This estrangement is built into the core class relation of capitalism, wage labor, whose genesis involved the forcible severing of workers' social ties to necessary conditions of production including the land. Indeed, "Marx continually insists that the alienation from the earth is *sine qua non* of the capitalist system" (p. 174). Capitalism does develop the combined productive powers of labor and nature, but only through forms of ownership and control that maintain and even worsen the social separation of labor and nature. Capitalism develops and socializes nature as much as it develops and socializes labor, but only in the pursuit of maximum exchange value or profit.

Unfortunately, the conditions required for maximum profit run directly counter to the "naturally imposed conditions of human production and existence," especially a healthy circulation of matter between human civilization and its natural environment (p. 176). To make this point, Marx built some basic insights from Liebig's study of capitalist agriculture into *Capital's* broader analysis of capitalist exploitation and accumulation. Here, Marx argued that capitalist development takes the form of an extreme concentration of both population

and non-agricultural productive forces in urban areas, whose material effluvia (human bodily waste and other forms of refuse), rather than being reproductively returned to the soil, instead poison urban, regional, and nowadays global environments. Meanwhile, agriculture, when likewise harnessed to the quantitatively unlimited goal of monetary accumulation, becomes a system of organized plunder of the soil and destruction of rural environments using the anti-ecological farm technologies provided by urban industry — including manufactured fertilizers imported into rural areas as temporary “fixes” for the destruction of soil fertility. In this way, the capitalist division between town and country “completely tears asunder the old bond of union which held together agriculture and manufacture in their infancy,” and “develops technology, and the combining together of various processes into a social whole,” only by “upsetting the naturally grown conditions for the maintenance of [a] circulation of matter” consistent with a healthy co-evolution of human civilization and its natural conditions. It thus winds up “sapping the original sources of all wealth — the soil and the labourer” (Marx, 1967, pp. 505-507).⁵

The Metabolism of Communism and Darwin

HAVING ESTABLISHED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE “METABOLIC FACTOR” in Marx’s analysis of capitalism, Foster goes on to show its centrality in Marx’s conception of communism. Foster demonstrates how in Marx’s view, the “revolution against capitalism required not only the overturning of its specific relations of exploitation of labor, but also the transcendence — through the rational regulation of the metabolic relations between human beings and nature by means of modern science and industry — of the alienation from the earth: the ultimate foundation/precondition of capitalism” (p. 177). At various points the mature Marx and Engels recognized the need for advance planning of communist production to prevent it from having adverse environmental effects, and to allow for uncontrollable changes in natural conditions with their inevitable impacts on production itself. And, as in their earlier works such as *The German Ideology* and the *Manifesto*, they “insisted on the need to transcend . . . the antagonistic relation between town and country through the integration of agriculture and industry [and] the dispersal of population”; but now this was more clearly expressed in terms of “what Marx referred to as ‘the restoration’ of the metabolic relation between human beings and the earth” (p. 175).

As a necessary conduit to the fate of Marx’s ecology post-Marx, Foster returns to the relation between Marx’s materialism and the history of anti-teleological thinking in natural philosophy, picking up the strands of this narrative with the 1859 publication of Darwin’s *The Origin of Species*. This work, as the first really systematic attack on essentialism and teleology in natural science since “the ancient materialists Empedocles, Epicurus, and Lucretius,” immediately drew keen interest from the founders of Marxism (p. 180). Marx’s interpretation of *The Origin* (in a letter to Engels) as “the basis in natural history for our view” was due not only to its firm rejection of “divine intervention in nature” but also to its “questioning [of] the supposedly fixed, exalted position of human beings and the permanence of ‘human nature’” (pp. 184, 191).

Nonetheless, while applauding *The Origin*’s “annihilation of the ‘doctrine of final causes’” in natural and by extension social history (their materialism hav-

ing seen these two histories as a dialectical unity at least since *The German Ideology*), Marx and Engels also recognized the retrogressions that Darwinist thinking fell prey to under pressures from religious-establishment representatives within the scientific community and from those finding in nature's "struggle for existence" a new justification for the class structure of capitalism (p. 192). They noted "the irony of Darwin's discovery of Malthusian/Hobbesian relations in the plant and animal kingdom (as well as Darwin's failure to understand that Malthusian theory demanded that the plant and animal kingdom not evolve)" (pp. 199-200). In addition, Darwin did not do enough to discourage interpretations of "natural selection" as an inexorable evolution from "lower" to "higher" life forms, i.e., as a continuous progress "toward ever greater perfection" — a conception which, while "opposed to Darwin's decidedly materialist views," was highly convenient to bourgeois ideologists (p. 188). As a result, although *The Origin* did usher in a series of materialist victories over teleology within natural science (and even here resistance continued), it did not have the same kind of impact on social science where teleology still reigned at least in mainstream circles (albeit with the invisible hand of the market and the natural correctness of private property increasingly displacing the visible hand of God).

Much of Marx and Engels' later work can thus be read as an attempt to push forward the incomplete "defeat of teleology" accomplished by Darwin and his followers (p. 189). One side of this project is represented by Marx's engagement, near the end of his life, with materialist anthropology, especially the work of Lewis Henry Morgan. Marx apparently "tried to construct a massive chronology of world history" in terms (like Morgan) of the development of "the arts of subsistence," but (unlike Morgan) integrated with analysis of the metabolic interaction of the different social forms of human production with their natural conditions of existence considered as conditions of sustainability (pp. 214, 219). Meanwhile, in addition to documenting and extending Marx's anthropological studies in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884), Engels was striving to complete the "defeat of teleology" through a new investigation into the laws of natural history and natural science. This project, publicly initiated in *Anti-Dühring* (1878) and continued in the ultimately unfinished *Dialectics of Nature*, was largely oriented toward relieving the "plight of the materialists" (such as Thomas Huxley and John Tyndall) who, although advanced in terms of their "intuitive understanding of the material world as evolving out of chaos, as developing, coming into being," were still "philosophically weak, and surrounded at every point by philosophical and theological opponents" (p. 212). Engels felt that a short course in dialectics and the history of the struggle between materialist and teleological philosophy could be of great assistance to contemporary materialists within the scientific community.

At the same time, Engels was trying to come to grips with the difficult and sensitive issue of an immanent dialectic in nature. Is the dialectic simply a useful tool of analysis or is it to be found in nature itself? Foster documents Engels's wavering on this question, and suggests that Engels's failure to clearly set out an adequate answer was at least partly due to his insufficient "understanding of the philosophical bases of Marx's own materialist conception of nature as this had emerged through his confrontation with Epicurus and Hegel." Unfortunately, it was only in the last few years of his life that Engels became

acutely aware of “the importance of Marx’s doctoral thesis on Epicurus, and its relation to the development of a materialist dialectic” (p. 230). The Engels of the *Dialectics of Nature* (like Plekhanov and many other later Marxists) thus overestimated the role of the mechanistic French materialists in the development of Marx’s materialist conception of nature.

Armed with his analysis of the Marx-Epicurus connection, and drawing upon some of Marx’s comments on materialist dialectical method as well as Engels’s engagement with Kant, Foster is able to formulate a sensible position on the nature-dialectic issue. Specifically, he suggests that the dialectic is “a necessary heuristic device for human reasoning with regard to nature” precisely because the actual material circumstances of the human species make it “a necessary element of our cognition.” Given the limited vantage point of human perception both spatially and chronologically, human beings can only know the world “in the context of its emergence.” That is, “we perceive nature through our senses only as it ‘passes away,’ . . . in a temporal process; hence the ‘free movement of matter’ is part of our cognition, inasmuch as we are part of nature and perceive it sensuously, and in accordance with the concepts that we abstract from this sensuous perception” (p. 232). Hence, it would be a mistake to interpret Foster’s position as a straightforward endorsement of a “strong dialectics of nature” according to which the dialectic is simply “an ontological property of nature itself.” Rather, for Foster the nature-dialectic is “rooted in a *materialist ontology of emergence* — one that encompasses human beings themselves” (pp. 232-233; emphasis in original).⁶

After Engels

THE FINAL CONTRIBUTION OF *MARX’S ECOLOGY* is its exploratory discussion of ecological thinking within Marxism after the death of Engels. This is, unfortunately, a largely unhappy history. Although Marx’s “metabolic” and other naturalistic themes were taken up and expanded by such influential Marxists as William Morris, Lenin, Luxemburg, Kautsky, and Bukharin, they were smothered by the rise of Stalinism beginning in the late 1920s. With the consolidation of bureaucratic dictatorship in the USSR, official Communist philosophy came to be dominated by a crudely determinist and positivist materialism. All dissent from this mechanistic materialism *within* the international Communist movement was quickly suppressed. The non-Soviet currents of “Western Marxism” — especially Lukács and the Frankfurt School — reacted with a relatively dematerialized social constructionism denying all applicability of dialectics to natural (as juxtaposed to social) phenomena. In this way, Western Marxism basically wound up rejecting materialism “as inherently mechanical in favor of a dialectical approach that was essentially idealist” (p. 249).

As Foster explains, this dualism within Marxism between crude materialism and anti-materialism helps explain the current rift among ecologically minded Marxists — between those working mainly from a materialist natural scientific perspective and those working from less materialist, and more social scientific, angles.⁷ Of course, the rift in “eco-Marxism” has also been overdetermined by the relative success of materialist thought within natural science compared to social science stemming from the incomplete victory of the Darwinian revolution discussed above. And all such dualisms and rifts ulti-

mately reflect the specifically capitalist rift in material reality, between human society and nature (based on capitalism's alienation of the producers from necessary conditions of production) that was initially analyzed by Marx.

Marx's Ecology immediately renders incredible the plethora of facile ecological criticisms of Marx that have been such a rage (on both the left and the right) over the last two decades. It also provides an alternative to the fashionable conception of Green theory (and other forms of "radical social science") as basically a normative reconstruction of mainstream social science. Foster shows that those favoring radical social change need not cede the "positive" ground to the academic establishment — that is, if they are willing to buck the "end of history" by accepting the challenge of a naturalistic, practical, *and* historical materialism.

NOTES

1. For an attempt at a more holistic ecological interpretation, see Burkett (1999).
2. Interestingly, the latter notion is common even among those taking a relatively sympathetic stance on the mature Marx's approach to nature. In these cases, it leads Marx's "supporters" to embrace precisely the kinds of anti-ecological interpretations asserted by Marx's ecological critics. See, for example, Schmidt (1971, pp. 76, 128-129, 133, 139, 155). For a critique of Schmidt's interpretation, see Burkett (1997).
3. Ironically, Benton's criticism hinges on a single quotation from Marx's doctoral study of Epicurus, taken completely out of the context discussed in the present text. For a systematic response to the charge that Marx posits an antagonistic opposition between human beings and animals, see Wilde (2000).
4. For details on the ecological significance of Marx's conception of human labor, see Burkett (1998a; 1999, Chapters 2-4).
5. Marx's conception of metabolic rift has been rendered all the more relevant by the subsequent development of artificial pesticides and non-biodegradable products in general, gigantic "feedlot"-type systems for the production of livestock and poultry, and by the potential global climactic impacts of rising material and energy throughput. For analyses incorporating these logical extensions of Marx's framework, see Mayumi (1991), Foster (1994), Foster and Magdoff (1998), and Burkett (1998b).
6. Foster's interpretation of the nature-dialectic will be subject to further debate, but it appears similar to the position developed in Garaudy (1970).
7. An influential representative of the former group is Levins and Lewontin (1985). For an example of the latter, more social constructionist approach, see Harvey (1996).

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Red Dreams and the New Millennium: **Notes on the Legacy of Rosa Luxemburg**

Stephen Eric Bronner

ROSA LUXEMBURG ALWAYS SEEMED LARGER THAN LIFE. An intellectual and a social activist, possessed of enormous charisma, she exacted tremendous loyalty from her friends and often a grudging admiration from her enemies. Many of you undoubtedly know about her struggles as a woman and a Jew in the socialist labor movement and her martyr's death at the hands of the *Freikorps* during the Spartacus Revolt of 1919. Her letters published following these events, and the castigation of her legacy during the "bolshevization" of the KPD during the 1920s, provide abundant evidence of her courage, her sensitivity, and her humanism. None of this, however, gives her any particular salience for the present. Luxemburg disliked turning personal issues into political ones. She would probably have noted that there were many less heralded men and women — just as sensitive and just as brave — who died just as tragically. Luxemburg would have said: "look to my work."

Especially in our neoliberal culture, however, her form of political commitment is as unfashionable as the values she held dear. Luxemburg was consistent in criticizing a strategy based purely on the quest for economic reform and unwavering in her contempt for authoritarianism. She was a Marxist with a romantic vision of revolution and an economistic belief in the ultimate "break-down" of capitalism. She remains the most important representative of a libertarian socialist tradition inspired by internationalism, economic justice, and a radical belief in democracy.

Appropriating her legacy, however, involves more than regurgitating the old slogans or finding the appropriate citations from her pamphlets and speeches. Luxemburg knew things had changed from the time of Marx and she worried publicly over the "stagnation of Marxism": the outmoded claims about political events inherited by the party regulars, including the independence of Poland, no less than the unresolved questions about the workings of capitalism. Since her death, even more profound changes have taken place. And what is good for the goose is good for the gander. The same critical method Luxemburg employed

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against Marx must now be turned against what appears inadequate about her own views. It is indeed a matter of freeing her thinking from an outmoded teleology and drawing the political consequences. Perhaps the following will offer some steps in the right direction.

LUXEMBURG WAS NO SLAVE OF MARX. But she too believed that capitalism would create its own gravediggers. And if she liked to quote the famous line from Engels that the future hinged on the choice between “socialism or barbarism,” no less than most of her contemporaries, she felt confident about which would ultimately prove victorious. Everything about her politics derived from her dialectical understanding of capitalism and the revolutionary mission of the proletariat. Indeed, from the very beginning, she intuited that the political power of capital rested on the degree of organizational and ideological disunity among workers.

Luxemburg’s concern with internationalism followed from this insight, and her dissertation written at the University of Zurich, *The Industrial Development of Poland* (1898), already provided the outline for her distinctive critique of “national self-determination.” Polish independence had been a demand of the left for generations and, it was echoed by Marx and most of his followers. In this work, however, Luxemburg argued that Polish independence would only slow the progress of capitalist development and thus the growth of the proletariat within the Russian empire as a whole. Unqualified support for Polish nationalism would privilege symbolism over the need for a constitutional republic to replace the imperial regime. The arguments of Marx and his followers, she maintained, were actually anti-Marxist and self-defeating.

Luxemburg saw any endorsement of nationalism as a breach of proletarian principle. Her work highlighted the way this ideology strengthens capitalism by dividing workers, justifies the wars in which they will fight, and inhibits their ability to deal with what she correctly considered an international economic system. She would develop these themes further in her major economic work, *The Accumulation of Capital* (1911). It, too, would prove critical of views taken for granted in the labor movement.

Marx had claimed that capitalism is based on investment and that without it the system will collapse. But he had also maintained that production always outstrips demand. If this is indeed the case, however, then no logical reason exists why capitalists should continue to invest and reinvest. Something within the very structure of capitalism must, Luxemburg reasoned, allow for the consumption of its surplus and thereby offer an incentive for ongoing investment. Imperialism was her answer.

New markets and cheap resources, the prospect of modernizing pre-capitalist territories both within the nation-state and abroad, seemed to provide the safety valve for capitalism. She indeed viewed the existence of such territories as the condition for the survival of capitalism. Should they ever become capitalist in their own right, which the dynamics of economic production guaranteed, then the international system would suffer an immediate “breakdown.” But that remained for the future. In the meantime, spurred by their own self-interest, capitalist states would have no other choice than to compete with one another frantically for a steadily diminishing set of colonies. Militarism and nationalism subsequently become intrinsic elements of imperialist strategies generated

by capitalism: war is built into the system and incapable of reform. Thus, Luxemburg called for revolution.

NO LESS THAN MOST SOCIAL DEMOCRATS OF HER GENERATION, Luxemburg longed for a republic. Such was the general understanding of a “dictatorship of the proletariat” in the decades between the fall of the Paris Commune in 1871 and the triumph of the Bolsheviks in 1917. The European labor movement prior to World War I functioned on a continent still dominated by monarchies, and the commitment to a republic was the political dividing line between right and left. Conservative programs everywhere called for authoritarian institutions and restraints on “the masses.” Social democracy provided the alternative vision. Insisting that the working class would expand with the expansion of capitalism, assuming that its parties embodied the proletarian class interest, it only made sense to call for the creation of political institutions in which the labor movement could organize freely and ultimately rule as the majority. Therein lies the connection between Marxism and republicanism.

Luxemburg was a romantic, but never a utopian: the new socialist society was always identified with a certain institutional arrangement for the practice of politics. Her critique of “revisionism” in *Reform or Revolution* (1899), which made her famous throughout the labor movement, was based far less upon contempt for reform *tout court* than on her contention that an unqualified “economism” undermined the revolutionary commitment necessary for instituting a republic. Luxemburg herself worked in various electoral campaigns and fought for numerous reforms including the forty-hour week. She did not reject reform out of hand, but believed that it should only be employed to whet the appetite of the masses for more radical political demands. Luxemburg was no different than Kautsky or Lenin or most other members of the socialist left regarding the connection between reform and revolution. She was unique only in her understanding of what was necessary to bring the revolution about and the purpose it should serve. This was what she sought to articulate in *Mass Strike, Party, and Trade Unions* (1906).

The Russian Revolution of 1905, what Trotsky called the “dress rehearsal” for 1917, was the pamphlet’s inspiration. A series of spontaneous strikes beginning in Baku in 1902 gradually engulfed the Russian Empire. These seemingly spontaneous actions were, of course, indirectly influenced by years of underground party activity. Luxemburg extrapolated from these events in order to develop her general political theory. She believed that the party should now preoccupy itself less with immediate organizational interests than with forming the requisite consciousness required for the political struggle. Thus, the relation between party and base should retain a certain “creative tension” in order to mitigate the bureaucratic tendencies of the former and the adventurist experiments of the latter.

This tension was exemplified, according to Luxemburg, in the mass strike, and herein is the core of her notion regarding the “self-administration” of the working class. Deriving from a tradition reaching back past the Paris Commune to Rousseau, the idea of democracy would be seen as demanding the practical exercise of democracy. Socialism must logically involve the extension of democracy rather than its constriction. The purpose of the enterprise could now be understood as the creation of an institutional arrangement wherein workers

might administer their own affairs without alienation or the impediments of bureaucracy. Her beautiful letters, written amid the factory takeovers in Warsaw during 1905, evidence her enthusiasm for the burgeoning “soviet” or “council” movement and the introduction of democracy into everyday life.

But this new enthusiasm never fully supplanted her original goal. Luxemburg intuited that only a republic could guarantee the maintenance of civil liberties. Genuine democracy is not simply equivalent with the will of the majority, she realized, but also with the ability to protect the minority. Her famous line from *The Russian Revolution* (1918) was not merely an *aperçu*. There is a sense in which her entire political project rested on the belief that “freedom is only and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently.”

Luxemburg foresaw how the communist suppression of bourgeois democracy in 1917 would unleash a dynamic of terror ultimately paralyzing the soviets and undermining public life in the nation as a whole. Even in 1919, while the Spartacus Revolt was brewing in Germany, Luxemburg vacillated between her traditional commitment to a republic and the new popularity of workers’ councils. Only when she was out-voted would she completely identify with the “soviet republic” (*Räterepublik*) and the policy of her less sober followers intent on emulating the events in Russia.

The Russian Revolution indeed inspired revolutions all over Europe and the formation of communist parties around the world. Luxemburg was skeptical about the plans for a Communist International. She was fearful about its domination by the fledgling USSR and the identification of socialism with its national interests. Neither authoritarianism nor nationalism was understood by her as some historical “deviation” demanded by the present which the dialectic would set right in the future. Instead she considered both as infringements upon that future. In the same vein, neither the party nor the revolution should serve as an end unto itself. It was the freedom of working people with which Rosa Luxemburg was concerned. This ultimately made her a rebel in both major camps of the labor movement. It is also what makes her salient for the present.

ROSA LUXEMBURG LIVED IN WHAT HAS appropriately been called the “golden age of Marxism.” The years between 1889-1914 witnessed a growing labor movement with a thriving public sphere whose political parties were everywhere making ever greater claims to power. It was a time when each could see the socialist future appearing as present. That time is over. Marxism can no longer be construed as a “science;” the industrial proletariat is on the wane; and the labor movement is obviously no longer what it once was.

“Actually existing socialism” had its chance and little from history suggests that workers’ councils can either deal with a complex economy or guarantee civil liberties. New utopian speculations, moreover, cannot compensate for the lack of any serious alternative to the liberal republican state. The institutional goal of the revolution initially sought by Luxemburg has, in short, been realized. Presenting socialism as the *other*, the emancipated society, no longer makes sense. It is necessary to approach the matter in a different way.

Modern capitalism is no longer the system described by Charles Dickens. Its liberal state has been used to improve the economic lives of workers, foster participation, and provide the *realistic* hope for a redress of grievances. Luxemburg was wrong: the choice is not between socialism and barbarism. Not only

has history shown that the two are not mutually exclusive, it has also shown there is much room in between. The issue is no longer “capitalism” in the abstract, or the future erection of socialism, but the pressing need for a response to neo-liberal elites intent upon rolling back the gains made by the labor movement in the name of market imperatives.

Or putting it another way: the contemporary problem is not the prevalent commitment to reform, which concerned Rosa Luxemburg, but the lack of such a commitment. Revolution is no longer the issue in the western democracies and this, in turn, has general implications for the meaning of socialism under modern conditions: whatever else the term might imply, it must initially be understood as a practice intent upon mitigating the whip of the market *through* the state and abolishing the exercise of arbitrary power *by* the state.

Such an economic and political enterprise is now, furthermore, predicated on little more than an ethical commitment. Teleology, if not ideology, has lost its allure. Capitalism can survive and, more importantly, most people believe it will. Luxemburg was mistaken in maintaining that imperialism is the only way of dealing with overproduction. Capitalist governments can ward off disaster by subsidizing industries, manipulating fiscal policies, and introducing welfare legislation. Capital can reorganize itself and, if necessary, intensify exploitation. There is a sense in which the very success of neo-liberalism may, ironically, attest to the validity of Luxemburg’s claim that the fight for economic reform is a “labor of Sisyphus.”

Without an articulated alternative and a meaningful form of revolutionary agency, however, it is still necessary to roll the rock of reform back up the hill. This cannot be left in the hands of social democratic, or ex-communist parties, intoxicated by neo-liberalism and the unprincipled compromises associated with the “third way” or what is now being called “progressive governance.” Indeed, without forgetting the institutional arrangements in which real politics takes place, those with a more radical commitment to social justice must now increasingly seek new forms of alliance between workers and members of the new social movements.

Justice is a river with many tributaries. Most women and gays, minorities and environmentalists, have a stake in protecting the gains made by labor in the past as surely as labor has a stake in furthering many of their concerns in the future. The mass demonstrations in Seattle and Washington during 1999 and 2000 provide a case in point: they not only exerted real pressure on the Democratic Party, and momentarily united competing groups in a spirit of internationalism, but raised precisely those calls for international labor standards and environmental protection repressed in the mainstream discourse.

The genuinely progressive response to globalization still requires formulation. But nothing so demeans the internationalist spirit cherished by Rosa Luxemburg like the current insistence of some leftists upon the primacy of ethnic aspirations or national sovereignty over the international obligations of states to the planetary community. The proletarian internationals of the past have collapsed. The only institutions capable of furthering internationalism are now intertwined with capitalist interests and they tend to privilege strong states over their weaker brethren. But I think Luxemburg would have realized that the choice between furthering relatively progressive ends through imperfect institutions and not intervening in order to forestall genocide in Rwanda or

Sierra Leone is self-evident. She was never fooled into believing that insistence upon national sovereignty would align her with the masses of the formerly colonized world rather than the corrupt elites who still rule them in the most brutal fashion.

Luxemburg may not have anticipated the rise of national liberation movements. She was surely mistaken in believing that World War I had put an end to purely national conflicts and she ignored questions concerning the right to resist when one nation is invaded by another. But there was a way in which she understood nationalism far better than her opponents did. Luxemburg realized that nationalism like authoritarianism has its own dynamic and that it cannot simply be manipulated for socialist purposes or by the prospect of economic gain. Instead of relying upon historical "laws," or dialectical sophistry, Luxemburg always correctly insisted on establishing a plausible relation between means and ends.

Diseases like cholera, dysentery, and AIDS are ravaging continents. Entire species are disappearing, global warming is taking place, pollution is intensifying, garbage is littering the planet. All this while a global society is taking shape in which wealth and resources are ever more inequitably distributed, political power is ever more surely devolving into the hands of transnational corporations, and petty ideologues are ever more confidently whipping up atavistic passions with the most barbaric consequences. The nation state is incapable of dealing with most of these developments and the usual invocations of national sovereignty, or the disclaimer on any form of international intervention under any circumstances, is simply an abdication of responsibility.

NO LESS THAN MACHIAVELLI AND KANT, in this vein, Luxemburg would have agreed with the dictum: "he who wills the end also wills the means thereto." Either planetary issues of this sort will have the *possibility* of being dealt with in the international arena through existing international institutions with the powers of sanctioning transgressors or they will *assuredly* not be dealt with at all. Human rights and new forms of transnational welfare policy constitute the only concrete *prospects* for a livable planet. The slogan of "the worse the better" has always been a losing proposition: the belief that intensified repression or exploitation will somehow automatically produce a progressive response is an illusion. The question facing the left is whether to embrace outmoded forms of thinking or provide new meaning for an old vision.

Internationalist, socialist, and democratic principles must be adapted to meet new historical conditions without surrendering their bite. This is no easy undertaking and the possibilities for opportunism are enormous. But then Rosa Luxemburg never walked away from a challenge: I don't think she would walk away from this one either.

Michael Harrington's Pilgrimage: Third Camp to Democratic Party

Barry Finger

WERE IT NOT FOR HIS UNTIMELY DEATH AT AGE 61 IN 1989, Michael Harrington was sure to become this generation's "grand old man of socialism." At least this is Maurice Isserman's conjecture in his biography of Harrington.* Intended, no doubt, to summarize the almost worshipful tone of this biography, this phrase, like "respectable rebel" which was also used to describe Norman Thomas — the last generation's socialist celebrity — conjures forth not merely the image of a venerated idealist but that of a once fierce but now toothless political animal, harmlessly gumming over the chewed up issues of a bygone era. Indeed, this would be a grim, if unintended, irony for Harrington to be celebrated in terms suggesting such ethereal irrelevancy. For it was Harrington who, perhaps more than any other would-be insurgent leader, was consumed by the desire to avoid the nether world fate to which Daniel Bell consigned socialists — of being "in the world, but not of it."

Michael Harrington was a political phenomenon. Few could sift so incisively through the data of modern society, draw such visionary conclusions and combine this analysis with a sense of moral, even revolutionary, urgency. Few could take on the big guns of academic liberalism and activist conservatism and best them so consistently in debate without the least resort to demagoguery. Harrington, like Norman Thomas, posed a moral critique of society. Yet he did more than that as well. For at his best — and one might refer to the *Accidental Century*, sadly considered among his least successful writings — Harrington succeeded in integrating into his vision of socialism the complex historical process in which such moral values could find incarnation. That is why he was so successful in tapping the deep roots of idealism in American life and could become in his time a recruiting agency for socialism without peer.

But as a tactician and strategist all the frailties that continually beset and revisit the socialist movement in America came to permeate his perspective and undermine his potential impact. For in the end, the relentless search for relevancy meant sacrificing the prospects for a militant, independent socialist movement in exchange for legitimacy in Democratic Party reform politics as a minor left pressure group.

HARRINGTON WAS RECRUITED TO "THE MOVEMENT," that is to the Third Camp socialism associated with Max Shachtman and his comrades, after a brief sojourn in Dorothy Day's Catholic Worker group and the Young People's Socialist League,

**The Other American*, Maurice Isserman, Public Affairs; New York, 2000, 449pp., \$28.50. Now in paperback for \$14.

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youth group to the Socialist Party. The Shachtmanites, a dissident outgrowth of Trotskyism, unflinchingly faced the political consequences of the failed experiences of social democracy and of the degeneration of the Russian revolution. They insisted that social democracy demoralized and derailed the movement for radical social change by subordinating socialism to the interests of the “progressive” wing of capitalism, while Stalinism betrayed socialism by preaching that the key to liberation lay in perpetual servility to the interests of the totalitarian Russian state. Against this symmetrical perspective of reconciliation to one of the two camps of big power politics, independent socialism insisted on the self-reliance of the working class movement and its allies, and therefore of movements for social change democratically organized from the bottom up. For it is only through the accumulation of power based on self-reliance, of organization and grassroots coalitions among society’s rank and file, that movements of the oppressed and exploited become truly alive to the power inherent in their social condition to refashion society along socialist lines. Third Camp socialism insisted on the inseparability of socialism and democracy and everywhere counterposed democracy to the impediments of bureaucratic control from above which such movements must, in the course of struggle, liberate themselves from as a precondition for larger social conquests.

For the Shachtmanite perspective of the early 1950s, the impossibility of the emerging welfare state to solve the fundamental problems of poverty, racism, unemployment and war imposed upon them the need to grapple with the kind of organization that could give guidance to the forces of social change. Clearly the Shachtmanites could not regard themselves as the alternative to the two major parties. Recognizing that they were not a revolutionary *party* in microcosm but an educational grouping, they raised the call for a “Labor Party” as an instructive device to focus attention on the inability of society’s existing political structure to address basic social problems in a fundamentally progressive manner. As Harrington crisscrossed the nation’s campuses throughout this period championing civil rights and attacking American foreign policy, recruiting activists and initiating chapters of the Shachtmanite youth group, he did so in defense of this revolutionary perspective.

IT IS A PERSPECTIVE THAT ISSERMAN HAS LITTLE PATIENCE WITH, an experience that he, in effect, largely dismisses as a descent into the swamp of sectarianism. That Harrington helped deliver the merger of the Shachtmanite and Socialist Party youth groups with left leaning members of the Students for Democratic Action into a combined Third Camp democratic socialist movement was, however, no mean feat in this decade. It helped keep the delicate flame of democratic, revolutionary socialism kindled during a period of mass political conformity and Cold War hysteria. It was the foreshadowing of a larger impulse toward left regroupment that was to dominate, in a more ominous and in an as yet unimagined reactionary form, the transformation of Shachtman and his diminished following, including Michael Harrington, within the course of the next decade.

But it is, of course, Shachtman “*ism*,” in whatever form, that Isserman has an allergy to. Still, at the end of the ‘50s the prospects for a breakthrough on the part of the Third Camp perspective seemed immeasurably improved. The Communist Party, which had organizationally dominated what had passed for an

American left, imploded under the impact of Khrushchev's revelations at the 20th Party Congress. McCarthyism, having done its job of purging, marginalizing and harassing every form of leftism, was finally dismissed by an Establishment no longer in urgent need of its services. And the emerging civil rights movement, with its new forms of struggle, began to awaken the consciousness of the nation from its long slumber. It was against this revival in the intellectual climate that Harrington made his mark on the larger political world as the man who "discovered" domestic poverty, with the publication of *The Other America*. By this time the Shachtmanites had merged with the Socialist Party of Norman Thomas in preparation of a proposed "neutral" ground — untainted, that is, by the aura of Trotskyism — needed to capture the expected membership fallout from the wreckage of the Communist Party.

This never materialized. Yet in a larger, though twisted and inverted, sense it was the Communist Party that, paradoxically, was to imprison the Shachtmanites. And Harrington's influence in this was not negligible. That is not to say that the Shachtmanite fringe began to rethink its opposition to totalitarianism. On the contrary, their opposition began to submerge into an all-consuming Stalinophobia, whereby the struggle for socialism and consistent democracy was to become ever more detached and remote from an obsessive struggle against bureaucratic collectivism. Shachtman's cautious endorsement of the Bay of Pigs fiasco and Harrington's peevish objections to the founding documents of the Students for a Democratic Society notwithstanding, this political "paradigm shift" was signaled not by an immediate change in the movement's opposition to the system of Cold War brinkmanship or in their insistence that a democratic foreign policy was inconsistent with the needs of capitalism and imperialism. It rather emerged with the decision of the right-drifting wing of the Shachtmanites to immerse themselves in domestic capitalist politics, to insist — against their entire history, tradition, program and instincts — that the working class and its allies could make transformative gains while locked into the political power structure of the capitalist class. It is from here that the entire Third Camp position was abandoned.

This tectonic ideological collision began with the search for relevance. For in this quest to lift, as it were, the dead hand of dogmatism, as Harrington now saw it, from socialism, the Shachtmanites rediscovered Browderism and the Popular Front, amputated it from its subordination to Moscow and recast it as a "realignment" or "coalition" strategy. The Popular Front, after all, had marked that singular period in American life wherein an anti-capitalist sect emerged as an influential mass movement. That the Communist Party, by its purpose and nature, never intended and never could intend the Popular Front as a revolutionary strategy was of no particular concern to Harrington. The CP employed this strategy solely to maneuver an alliance between the Moscow bureaucracy and a section of the Western Establishment to thwart the threat of fascism against the Soviet Union.

Harrington had different plans. It was his contention that the American democratic Left, as represented primarily by the labor and civil rights movements was committed to the liberal wing of the Democratic Party and that socialists must take a page from the history of Browderism. Rather than spin its wheels continuing an historically vain attempt to break these forces from the Democratic Party, socialists should work to aid these forces to become the "mas-

ter in their own house,” by purging the Dixiecrats and realigning the two major parties. This, however, introduced an implicit and irreconcilable tension between the continued existence of any independent radical activity and the need to appear as a legitimate and respectable pressure group on the Democratic Party and on the government, when controlled by the Democrats. It would therefore become prejudicial to the continued efforts of socialists in the Democratic Party to engage in activities of a too radical cast lest such activities raise suspicions concerning fundamental Democratic Party loyalties. Moderation would be essential if socialists were to take more than an episodic part in reform Democratic politics or enter the Administration, when such opportunities presented themselves. This also translated into a parallel logic of forbearance with respect to socialist activities in the mass movements. Where socialists, for instance, had once seen as their purpose to drive a wedge between the mass base of the labor movement and the temporizing bureaucracies which represent a conduit to Democratic Party patronage, socialists now had to first assess the potential damage militant rank and files activities might cause to the electoral prospects of the Democrats. Once inside the Democratic Party, it was the labor bureaucracy, the George Meanys — America’s invisible socialist in Harrington’s bizarre formulation — and not the trade union base that were to become Harrington’s coalition partners.

THE ENTIRE LOGIC OF CUTTING AND TRIMMING WAS CAPTURED in the sellout of the Mississippi Freedom Democrats at the 1964 Democratic convention, stage managed by the Democratic Left. This was a movement squandering its last shreds of credibility in the Civil Rights community for the cause of the “greater good,” namely the election of Lyndon Johnson. To which one might not unreasonably infer that Black aspirations were evidently approachable by means of a measured compromise with racism. And this compromise with racism did not stop there. A measured compromise with racism rampant in the operations of AFL-CIO was similarly unavoidable if the Democratic Left was to retain its credibility with “labor.” Opposition to affirmative action, a route Harrington was not consistently comfortable with, might also be necessary if the Democratic Left was to remain relevant to white working class Democrats. Opposition to community control as evidenced by the unequivocal support lent to Albert Shanker’s tactics during the 1968 New York City teachers’ strike was yet again unavoidable, lest Black power threaten the fragile balance of liberal coalition forces.

Harrington, like his mentor Max Shachtman, was now forced to repudiate an entire political tradition. But if Shachtman remained reticent, Harrington assumed the mantle, with the publication of *Towards a Democratic Left*, of principal full-time ideologue for this reorientation. By that time (1968), remnants of a once revolutionary movement had long been reduced to the single task of providing their colleagues, now deeply ensconced in the world of Democratic Party intrigue, with a respectable organizational forum; one capable of getting them a hearing before the labor bureaucracy without the threat of embarrassing left-wing outbursts. What had been initially touted as a tactic designed to bring the left into contact with those forces that were progressive in character and in motion, quickly became a wholesale capitulation by socialists to liberal capitalism. Far from capturing the Democratic Party, the Socialist Party was itself captured by it.

And with the escalation of the War in Vietnam, it became also increasingly clear that the hard core around Shachtman would shy away from any attack on the Johnson Administration. Their Stalinophobia catapulted them to the right wing of the Democratic establishment, where, in an infernal irony, the former Communist left oppositionists were reunited with the Lovestonite ex-right oppositionists. It was a commitment to coalition politics that had rapidly degenerated into support of the less than liberal wing of the Democratic Party centered on Henry "Scoop" Jackson.

This finally proved too much for Harrington, who took seriously — and may have been the only one to take seriously — the position of "Negotiations Now," the Socialist Party's button-down alternative to the growing street ferment for immediate withdrawal of troops from Vietnam. It was a sham operation, as Harrington was later to acknowledge. The demands it raised were merely eye-wash justifying an unlimited presence in Vietnam. The Shachtmanites, who insisted that radical anti-war demonstrations and militant actions would incite a massive wave of reaction that would alienate the peace forces from mainstream liberalism — a prospect not entirely discomfiting to Shachtman's comrades — found, much to their dismay, that such actions instead aroused the American people and drove Johnson out of the reelection campaign. It also began to drive Harrington and his followers out of the Socialist Party, whose continued presence was finally terminated, when, in 1972, his former comrades declared themselves in effect pro-Nixon and "consciously and enthusiastically" scrambled for McGovern's defeat. Isserman's harrowing account of Harrington's break with the Shachtmanites and his inability to fully come to grips with the deep rooted imperialist causes of the war is graphically laid out and is certainly one of the high points of his narrative. It was a war which Harrington could never bring himself to condemn except in terms by which any sane person condemns carnage — "evil," "tragic," an "abomination." Never, however, did Harrington ever really come to see the war as criminal.

Harrington remained an unrepentant true believer in realignment politics to the end, transforming multitudes of "lesser evils" into positive goods; convincing himself and his followers that the 1976 Carter program deserved support and that Humphrey-Hawkins could insure full employment under capitalism. If the futility of the Carter administration would compel Harrington to finally declare his neutrality in the 1980 elections, he still cherished the conviction that the impending Carter defeat would rip open the internal structure of the Democratic Party and prepare a propitious opening for the left.

Harrington spent his mature years vainly attempting to disprove Bell's thesis. In this he had been cruelly misled by his onetime mentor. But Shachtman, when he still had something meaningful to say to the left, once sagely opined that what America needed is not a socialist movement which is respectable, but a socialist movement which is respected. Harrington labored in vain for the former, and regrettably achieved neither.

DANIEL SINGER – 1926-2001

Daniel Singer, a comrade and friend, died on December 2, 2000.

At the time of this writing (late March 2001), much has been said and written about Daniel reflecting his wide influence and impact as a revolutionary socialist, internationalist, democrat and excellent journalist and writer. These are all true and faithful descriptions of Daniel.

For me, Daniel also constituted a role model (a much-abused term which has nevertheless managed to retain a substantial amount of precise meaning). He was a writer in the classical Marxist tradition who at the same time successfully managed to write for a broad liberal and left audience. The end of the century was marked by a neoliberal hegemony and the cynicism, if not betrayal, by many who had previously claimed to be on the Left. Singer, in sharp contrast, consistently spoke from a radical left perspective with a well-reasoned optimism while avoiding both sectarian triumphalism and a “responsible” accommodation to the powers that be.

Daniel had an enormous ability to engage in the political art of “intelligent persuasion.” His confidence and security in his own point of view allowed him to relate and build bridges to the readers without “hitting them on the head.” He was magnificent in relating to the reader by showing in a sober, reasoning manner, a way of looking at politics from below; he concretely affirmed and demonstrated people’s capacity to liberate themselves without the slightest romanticism or sentimentality.

Daniel was a self-declared “Luxemburgist socialist,” a libertarian and anti-Stalinist socialist, who in 1980-1981, became a strong defender of the Solidarity workers movement in his native Poland. At the same time, he remained until his death a sharp critic of international social democracy. Yet, he had another quality that I would call “principled flexibility,” which allowed Daniel to function in a variety of environments within the broad left and even liberal milieu. While his “Luxemburgist Socialism” was by any politically objective standard closer to that of smaller left journals such as *Against the Current* and *New Politics*, Singer more frequently wrote for larger journals with different political traditions, mainly *The Nation* and *Monthly Review*.

Some admirers have spoken about Daniel as a civilized person, referring to his gracious manners and the wonderful hospitality that he and his wife Jeanne showered on those who visited their Paris apartment. While I benefited from both, I think there was an important political dimension to Daniel’s civility. He could be a very harsh critic (witness, for example, his well-deserved attacks on the so-called New Philosophers in France), but his political arguments always appealed to rea-

son and to what was best in people. It is frequently forgotten that one of the characteristics of antidemocratic ideologies such as Fascism and Stalinism is the attempt to instill and cultivate base instincts. Thus demagoguery, pseudo-populist flattery, character assassination, rhetorical cheap shots, conspiratorial and Manichean views of the world have been convenient ways of mobilizing and manipulating people's anger and insecurities without helping them to intellectually and practically empower themselves to become masters of their own fate.

I believe that Daniel's approach to these sorts of issues was clearly expressed in his last book *Whose Millennium?*

We . . . look at people and society in a historical perspective. They are neither saints nor sinners, neither noble savages nor greedy monsters. They are the products of circumstances, but also, within the limits set by their physical and social conditions, products of their own action. The "associated producers," on whom we rely to forge a different kind of society, will not be proletarian heroes, red knights in shining armor, with a purity and political consciousness out of hagiographic tales. They will be ordinary people, like you and me, with all our quirks and imperfections, our habits conditioned by the world we live in, our tastes distorted by television and advertising. As these ordinary people search to gain control over their work and their fate, they will begin to reshape society, they will be affected in the process, and, so transformed, will resume their task. (269)

SAMUEL FARBER

Book Reviews

What Is Civil Society?

CIVIL SOCIETY: THE CRITICAL HISTORY OF AN IDEA by John Ehrenberg. New York: New York University Press, 1999.

Reviewed by Eric R. Boehme

STUNNING IN ITS BREADTH YET TIGHTLY FOCUSED IN ITS CRITIQUE, John Ehrenberg's new book *Civil Society* speaks directly to the debates and assumptions of the literature in democratic theory and civil society. Grounding various theories of civil society in and through the changing political and economic institutions of the ancient Greek *polis*, the medieval Christian commonwealth, and the modern national state, Ehrenberg situates the theoretical debates of Western political philosophy within specific historical and institutional horizons. Ultimately, Ehrenberg uses this lens to engage the contemporary debates on civil society by questioning the assumptions of liberal scholars working within the tradition of Tocqueville. Ehrenberg's critique of this tradition rests on the continuing historical and institutional ties between civil society and the market, a history that belies liberal faith in the ability of antistatist and local institutions to mitigate the worst excesses of both the state and the market.

Ehrenberg traces the idea of civil society through three historical epochs: the classical period, the medieval/Christian period, and the modern/contemporary period (to which the bulk of the book is devoted). In each period, a distinctive set of ideas and institutions generated an understanding of how individuals were connected in their continuing relationships to both society and the state. Ehrenberg's main lesson taught through the historical comparisons is that as distinct from the modern notions of civil society, during the classical and medieval periods, "social life was made possible by public power"(236).

Ehrenberg develops the distinctions between Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero on the proper role of civil society in generating the "good life," along with the similarities in their use of state power to actualize these varying notions. For Ehrenberg, Plato's attempt to force unity onto civil society misses the deeper lesson of the division of labor and the importance of private interest to societies.

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Aristotle's civil society, however, was based on multiplicity, where the difference and private interest of individuals could mix in the political search for the good life. Cicero, responding to the historical and institutional contexts of his time, then took Aristotle's civil society further by separating the public and the private through a legal structure of formal institutional mechanisms administered by the state.

The medieval Christian Commonwealths also looked to state capacity to protect and enrich the lives of individuals. Augustine's pessimistic view of the state saw it as integral to regulating a rapacious civil society. Justifying coercion in the name of God's will, the Church and the state worked together to generate imperfect human connections lost by man in Original Sin and the fall out of the City of God. Working through the investiture controversy, Aquinas' rehabilitation of Aristotelian reason and natural law under Catholic morality, Dante's response and reinforcement of the "two powers" theory of Gelasius, on through to the early breakdown of the institutions and ideas that supported the two spheres and two powers of the pope and the emperor, Ehrenberg traces the pull and tug of the Church and the state on the organization of the everyday lives of subjects. Even through the eras which inaugurated the separation of Church and state, reflected in the transitional figures and theories of Marsilius of Padua, Machiavelli, Luther, and Hobbes, the organization and enrichment of social life were generated and protected by the political power of the state.

With the advent of the modern era this all changes. Spurred on by political, economic, and social change, modern theorists like John Locke, Adam Ferguson and Adam Smith begin to think of civil society as prior, in time and importance, to the state: "all three men articulated the characteristically modern claim that the material processes of social life were fast becoming the constitutive forces of civil society"(83). Here Ehrenberg enumerates the development of, and responses to the ideology of *homo economicus* through the traditions of liberalism, German idealism, and Marxism. All three traditions defined civil society as organized by the market out of a sphere of necessity in conjunction with (as liberalism argued) or in conflict with (as Idealism and Marxism argued) the sphere of freedom. Accordingly, the way each tradition focused on the role of the state was a response to protecting or regulating the organization of civil society around a market-based model.

Ehrenberg identifies a second strand of modern thought on civil society as less (if at all) concerned with economics. Following from a critique of the royalist centralized state, this strand of thought defines civil society as "an intermediate sphere of voluntary association and activity standing between the individual and the state"(144). Ehrenberg addresses the thought of Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Burke in terms of French history and institutions, ending the chapter with an analysis of Tocqueville's work on America. Setting the stage for his critique of the way both Eastern European theorists and contemporary American democratic theorists appropriate the assumptions of Tocqueville, Ehrenberg argues that Tocqueville's focus on the effects of culture in the constitution of civil society come at the expense of a continuing analysis of the economy. This leads to an unwarranted fear of central power and a focus on locality and particularity where "civil society could protect freedom with inequality"(168).

The final third of Ehrenberg's book engages the contemporary debates on civil society. Ehrenberg challenges the scholarly hegemony of work on civil soci-

ety which assumes the autonomy of intermediate bodies in Tocquevillian terms. Working through the literature on communism, totalitarianism, and civil society, he argues that dissident critiques of “actually existing socialism” took a deeply anti-political and anti-state turn. Using Hayek’s critique of central planning and Arendt’s fear of “mass society” in totalitarian states as intellectual precursors, Ehrenberg argues that the notions of civil society and democracy which dissident movements developed, ultimately could not help but embrace the market. The critique of state power and communism became so all-encompassing that democracy came to be seen in terms of free-market choice. The ultimate collapse of communism created an anti-state consensus which in turn generated a sweeping attack on state power and the ability of the state to regulate civil society not only under communism, but also more decisively, in Western countries. Yet curiously (and tragically for Ehrenberg), the institutions of civil society so instrumental to the overthrow of state power in Eastern Europe, were swept away by the introduction of markets.

At the same time as the discourse and institutions of civil society were disappearing in the mid-1990’s in Eastern Europe, America saw a resurgence in pluralist notions of interest-group politics and the intermediate associations of civil society. Ostensibly neutral and open to all, interest-group politics relies on the idea of aggregated individual interests — the *homo economicus* of Locke, now fully assumed as members of civil society yet without any ongoing connection to economic processes. Ehrenberg looks at various critiques of pluralism, from Gramsci, Adorno and Horkheimer, Marcuse, Arendt, Sennett, and Habermas to examine the relationships between ideology, commodities, consciousness, and the changing roles of the public and the private in exacerbating disconnection and impeding political action in capitalist countries. Ehrenberg also looks to communitarian critiques of pluralism in Bellah, Sandel, and Putnam to try to find some source for relevant public, political action.

Yet in most of these theorists, Ehrenberg sees too narrow a focus on culture. By defining civil society culturally, these theories cannot account for the inequalities and problems generated by the market’s deep interpenetration of all intermediate associations. Putnam’s work is paradigmatic. It suffers from a lack of attention to political and economic factors and instead offers more of the “moralizing neo-Tocquevillian theories of civil society”(230). Neither attentive to the role of the state in the decline of social capital in civic institutions nor attuned to trends in the economy, Ehrenberg argues that Putnam suffers from reifying cultural norms as a “result of a vaguely defined history”(230). Ultimately, the “intimacy, localism, and moralism”(232) which neo-Tocquevillians look to for a resurgence of democracy pale in comparison to the power of states and deeply invasive markets.

Using the critique of the short-sighted focus on culture as a foundation for his own normative claims, Ehrenberg’s work on democratic theory and civil society comes full circle by addressing how rampant inequality can be so overlooked in cultural analysis. Surfacing by and by, above the waves of detail and analysis of history, institutions, and ideas, his subtle challenge to theorists to reintegrate the market into any work on civil society becomes a broad-side attack on those who would support neo-liberal policies that dismantle the power of the state to organize and enrich the lives of its citizens. Arguing that civil society is more deeply intertwined with the market than ever, Ehrenberg’s analy-

sis suggests that the current conservative climate is in part a result of, in part conducive to, democratic theory's reliance on the cultural assumptions of Tocqueville. Focus on locality generates a hatred of state power. For Ehrenberg, the result of this is a shallow theory where "good feelings, volunteerism, nostalgia, and community constitute civil society in an antipolitical period"(233).

Yet this critique has already been advanced, writes Ehrenberg. The work of Grant McConnell, Jane Mansbridge, and Verba, Scholzman and Brady show how decentralization, localism, and community institutions can support rampant inequality and coercion while framing the ways both elites and average Americans participate in politics. Power to reform the system cannot come from the institutions of civil society because they cannot overcome "already-existing distributions of power" generated from "the effects of structural economic inequity"(244). Without returning to ancient notions of the interconnections between civil society and the commonwealth, we have a tradition to look to, in Marxism's attention to both the economy and the state. "Coercion, exclusion, and inequality can be as constitutive of any civil society as self-determination, inclusion and freedom" (249). It is a "political" choice that must be made based on abstract principles and broad ideals, where supervision of the market by the state co-exists with voluntary organizations which serve to maintain state accountability.

EHRENBURG'S BOOK OFFERS A MUCH-NEEDED COUNTERPOINT to recent work on civil society and democratic theory. It brilliantly folds institutional and historical analysis into theoretical positions, poking, prodding and challenging scholars to incorporate all aspects of the totality of political, economic and social relationships in their work on civil society. But it is almost as if he has written two books here: a history of the idea of civil society and a trenchant critique of contemporary theorizing on civil society. For this reviewer at least, the fireworks come in the last third of the book.

While tracing the historical and institutional paths of the idea of the civil society is important, an entire book could have been written engaging the contemporary debates. I would have liked to see Ehrenberg address civil society in terms of an issue such as globalization. In a time when the scope and power of the state dwindles in relation to multinational corporations and supranational organizations, is it anachronistic to call on the state to alleviate the worst excesses of the market? Or is this precisely what we should be doing, strengthening the state to fight corporate power and to challenge inequality in the private sphere?

Certainly much of contemporary democratic theory involves the debate on globalization as well as an assessment of the resources mustered by institutions of civil society to fight corporate power. Would Ehrenberg see the protest movements against globalization as developing out of autonomous Tocquevillian intermediate associations, locally organized but globally connected? What about the roles that changing technologies and the internet play in the institutions of civil society? Has the internet generated organizations autonomous from both the state and the market? What about the continuing place of social movements in generating reform and change in both the state and the market?

Ehrenberg refers to the Civil Rights movement as a prime example of using the state to alleviate problems in civil society caused by culture and the market. Yet the literature on black politics is divided on this question: was elite and state movement on civil rights the impetus for change, or did elites only re-

spond after years of protracted struggle generated from building the institutions and associations of civil society? This also seems to be one of the conflicting messages of Verba, Schlotzman and Brady's *Voice and Equality*. In spite of the fact that political participation in America "has long been heavily biased toward the top"(245), the authors stress the fact that especially for black communities, the institutions of civil society (in this case the black church) serve as resources for information and political participation. Other authors, such as Michael Dawson, point toward race consciousness and group identity as particularly powerful resources for participation.

Granted, given the scope of this book, Ehrenberg could not specifically address these issues. Yet I am curious if looking at these issues would strengthen his argument that "maybe revitalizing civil society requires heightened levels of political struggle over state policy rather than good manners and 'civil discourse'"(249). I wonder what the book would have looked like had it been entirely a critique of the contemporary idea of civil society rather than "a critical history of the idea."

Irrespective of these minor points, this is still a rigorous and well-timed contribution to our understanding of civil society. Offering a perspective increasingly silent in the post-Communist era of neo-liberal consensus, Ehrenberg challenges us to accurately analyze the myriad interconnections and relationships between the state, the market and civil society. Along with this challenge, he encourages us to maintain a place in our historical memory for the three strands of thought on civil society that look to the state as the place for the regulation and protection of social life: the ancient, the medieval, and the Marxist. Indeed, it is the state which should remain the focus for Ehrenberg, because any struggle over freedom and inequality remains a deeply *political* struggle.

Working for Wages: The Roots of Insurgency

By Martin Gliberman & Seymour Faber

"This book is designed to fill a gap in studies of the American working class—to examine the sources of insurgency.... We try to seek out those elements of work in capitalist society that induce resistance to the society in one form or another."

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The Best Citizens of New Haven

BLACK POLITICS/WHITE POWER, CIVIL RIGHTS, BLACK POWER, AND THE BLACK PANTHERS IN NEW HAVEN By Yohuru Williams. Brandywine Press, 2000.

Reviewed by John Halle

THOSE WHO HAVE NEVER VISITED NEW HAVEN tend to assume that as a college town, well stocked with coffeehouses, bookstores, and upscale boutiques, it might offer a refuge from the third world conditions which are a conspicuous feature of most large cities in Connecticut. Connecticut, after all, is the state notorious for having the richest county, Fairfield and within it, the city with the lowest per capita income, Bridgeport. Bastions of white suburban privilege surround pockets of black urban desperation which might reasonably be described without too much exaggeration as bantustans.

Still, the illusion persists that a humane, liberal spirit flourishes in New Haven, albeit one combined with an invigorating post-industrial grit. That New Haven is not North Hampton, Ann Arbor or La Jolla is a fact that needs to be impressed on visitors to the city. Yale students, in particular, do not encounter "the other New Haven" in Yale's glossy publicity materials, or in their carefully monitored visits to the campus. For this reason, they must be hastily educated upon their arrival here that much of the city harbors considerable ill-will towards the University and, by extension, towards them, its charges.

Among the many startling revelations of a new book by Yohuru Williams, a professor of Political Science at Delaware State University, is that misconceptions pitting the public face of the university town against its day-to-day reality are nothing new. Indeed they go back nearly two centuries. For example, in 1831, Williams writes:

A white Congregationalist minister and pastor of a black church, Simeon Jocelyn, proposed the creation of a college for blacks in New Haven. Describing the citizens as "friendly, pious, generous, and humane," Jocelyn and his supporters assumed that cosmopolitan New Haven, home to Yale College, would embrace the humanitarian gesture. Instead, his proposition was greeted with public outrage. . . The controversy led to numerous assaults on white abolitionists, black people and their property. Tensions came to a head in September of 1831 after "the best citizens in New Haven, led by the mayor and a number of Yale professors staged a riot before the homes of the supporters of the college."

Since 1831, the tactics of the "best citizens of New Haven" would become more sophisticated but the essential goal remained: to politically neutralize an increasingly non-white working class providing a low-wage labor force for New Haven's affluent households, the university and what are now only a few re-

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maining industries.

Most of Williams' book is concerned with the divide and conquer strategies implemented by successive Democratic administrations following the Second World War. An influx of immigration from the South drawn by the defense industries had by the fifties begun to significantly alter the racial composition of the city from predominantly ethnic white to majority non-white. The calls for racial and economic justice were now backed by numbers which had the potential, if mobilized, to achieve real as opposed to the largely cosmetic gains which the African-American community had resigned itself to for most of its history.

Richard Lee, Mayor of New Haven from 1954 through 1969 would emerge as the most effective practitioner of policies designed to insure that these calls would be muted when they could not be ignored altogether. Williams shows in detail how the Great Society icon Lee selectively distributed public and private grants to grassroots organizations beholden to him. Control of these purse-strings combined subtly but no less powerfully with Lee's proffering to black leadership access to the local business elites and connections to national political figures. The two-pronged strategy would consolidate Lee's control of the black community to the extent that no organized opposition to his policies would emerge until the end of his tenure, well after the peak of the civil rights movement.

THE LEADERSHIP OF THE NAACP WOULD PROVE TO BE particularly vulnerable to Lee's blandishments. The NAACP branch president, John Barber, for example, can only be described as the mayor's "vassal" since this is precisely the word Barber uses to describe himself. His letters to Lee, which Williams, in a scholarly tour de force, has discovered housed in Yale's Beinecke library make for embarrassing readings in their abject expressions of fealty to the Mayor. Due to Barber's deliberate sabotage, the NAACP would repeatedly fail to act in favor of school desegregation and would boycott protests at the mayor's office demanding community representation on the school board and improved housing. These failures would result in the NAACP's near total loss of influence in the African American community, eclipsed first by the more radical CORE, and eventually by a series of grassroots community movements. The most notable of these, the Hill Parents Association, would be initially formed to address dilapidated conditions in one community school, but would branch out to become a powerful force for community organizing around a range of issues including police brutality, rent gouging and inadequate welfare payments.

By the time of the emergence of the HPA, the glove of co-optation would be removed to reveal the fist of repression. Lee and his police force would be innovators in the use of illegal electronic surveillance for which the city would later be forced to pay stiff civil penalties. HPA parents doing nothing more radical than attempting to secure for their children safe buildings and new textbooks would find their phones tapped and infiltrators placed within their midst. The New Haven police force would also work in close contact with the FBI, transmitting to Washington files on the lead activists in the organization. Based on this information, the FBI would wage a smear campaign against the association and would attempt to prosecute the leadership of the HPA on trumped-up charges.

When the New Haven chapter of the Black Panther Party was formed in 1970, relatively late in the Panther's short life-span, it would be in position to

take advantage of and build on the activist foundations which the HPA and other organizations in New Haven had laid down. However, it would be the BPP's wholistic approach of a political and educational message reinforced and reinforcing neighborhood community service which would gain the trust and admiration of the community. The BPP's serve the people initiatives in New Haven included the children's breakfast program, based on a highly successful national BPP program, political education programs, and the People's Free Health Care Clinic. The latter would function effectively for many years after its founding in 1971. Less tangible, but equally important was the confidence, sense of purpose and critical political awareness the Panthers inculcated among its followers and to the community at large. Williams provides many examples of a community mobilized and ready to take action in its defense of its own interests against what the BPP accurately characterized as a "racist power structure." One of the more inspiring involves a BPP-led delegation of welfare mothers to Hartford to confront the state welfare commissioner with a series of clearly articulated grievances backed up by impressive statistical documentation. Not surprisingly, according to a Panther report cited by Williams, "rather than having to face the mothers, their children, and have to deal with their needs (the commissioner) had his flunkies report that he had received a hay fever attack."

It is unfortunate that the BPP in New Haven is now less well known for its highly effective community service, educational and local political programs than for the dramatic circumstances of its demise. While the causes of the collapse will probably never be fully understood, contributing factors include a volatile mixture of personal jealousy, internal disorganization many of which were provoked or exacerbated by the FBI's counter-intelligence program (COINTELPRO) personally presided over by J. Edgar Hoover. After castigating the New Haven office for failing to submit "concrete recommendations," Hoover requested bi-weekly reports detailing agents efforts to "disrupt the BPP" specifically requesting agents to "make allegations" in the form of "anonymous mailings" accusing the BPP leadership of acts of "violence, lack of morals, and drug addiction."

The intensive campaign of dirty tricks, sabotage, and violence directed against the BPP would culminate in the cause celebre of the Alex Rackley murder trial of 1971 in which four Panthers, including BPP president Bobby Seale, would be charged with the murder of a presumed police informant. By this point, the fact, if not the extent, of police infiltration and provocations against the BPP would become publicly known and deplored in most quarters. Indeed, even Yale President Kingman Brewster would express doubt as to whether the leadership of the party could receive a fair trial and would endorse the now legendary Mayday protests by opening the doors of Yale to the demonstrators. Williams, in the light of new evidence provided by his research, demonstrates that the extent of the repression goes beyond not only what liberals at the times were willing to grant but even beyond the most paranoid fantasies of contemporary observers.

Taking his cue from an off-hand remark of the Dallas police department in 1992 to the effect that "there were eight people who belonged to the Black Panther Party and two of those worked for us and told us what was happening every day," Williams' reconstruction of the events of the Rackley murder makes clear who was pulling the strings. Rackely was tortured and murdered by two

Panthers, Warren Kimbro and Lonnie MacLucas, acting on the immediate orders of George Sams, described by Williams as “a clinically diagnosed moron with a reputation for violence.” According to Williams, both Kimbro, now a respected community leader in New Haven, and Sams were probably police informants, and both would consequently receive extremely light sentences for their crimes. After serving four years during which he would graduate from Eastern Connecticut State University, Kimbro would receive immediate admission to the Harvard Graduate School of Education. MacLucas, on the other hand would, according to Williams, “find unforgiving the system that had embraced Kimbro” and became “the fall guy” for an operation in which he was the only participant not under the control of the authorities. Despite his having neither given nor implemented the order to kill Rackley, MacLucas would serve a significantly longer prison sentence than the others and would receive little help on his release. Finally, Williams reveals that the undoubtedly grisly details of the operation, which took place in the basement of Kimbro's house, would be monitored electronically by the New Haven Police who listened in and took no action while Rackley was tortured.

THE ULTIMATE LESSONS OF WILLIAMS' HISTORY for a new generation of activists now having its own encounter with state sponsored repression are various and urgent, if somewhat problematic. Among these is the frequently unrecognized fact that the facade of a seemingly innocuous practice of democracy in the United States underwritten by the constitutional protections outlined in the Bill of Rights will be quickly dropped should a real challenge to objective authority emerge. What will replace state protections are forms of state sanctioned violence bearing a striking resemblance to those practiced in third world dictatorships. It should be also recognized that rather than constituting a mere comical annoyance as they are commonly portrayed, if Williams' version of events is correct, police and FBI infiltration were probably as decisive in the demise in the BPP. Furthermore, Williams' collection of data, while narrowly focussed on the BPP in New Haven, is so compelling that it forces us to consider whether other instances of COINTELPRO infiltration were (and possibly at this moment are) equally decisive.

Another lesson derives from the sequence of betrayals of the rank and file by organizational leadership. While John Barber emerges as the most flamboyantly craven in his willingness to sell out, he is only the first in a series of Black leaders in New Haven to have made the interests of their community a hostage to their personal ambitions and failings. Williams' text offers repeated instances of leadership which would fail to take to heart the probably cynically intended, but indisputably correct advice of Lee aide Richard Dowdy. Black leadership, Dowdy would remark in 1962, “cannot afford the luxury of involving their personal lives in ways that do damage to the causes they claim to advance.” CORE President's Blyden Jackson's shooting by his wife in a domestic dispute and his filing of a false police report of the incident would, Williams shows, do serious damage to the CORE organization. HPA president Fred Harris' politically motivated prosecution for narcotics possession which would serve as a wedge for police infiltration resulted from his being caught with the goods, as would, slightly later, the prosecution of Huey Newton for cocaine possession. Finally, Eldridge Cleaver's later cavortings with Watergate felon Charles Colson and his advo-

cacy of the codpiece as a fashion statement would conclude the tragedy of Panther leadership with an element of farce.

Williams' text can in no way be read as an indictment of all leadership from this period. Bobby Seale, in particular, emerges as disciplined, responsible, serious, and cagey, exactly the qualities which were required from those in an executive positions of any organization issuing a serious challenge to the ruling bipartisan plutocracy, then and now. However the real inspiration of Williams's remarkable book comes from the legions of sometimes named, but usually anonymous individuals who for a brief time were able to organize a real challenge to the distinctly illiberal agenda of the "best citizens of New Haven."

A Readable But Flawed Book

PARTISANS: MARRIAGE, POLITICS, AND BETRAYAL AMONG THE NEW YORK INTELLECTUALS by David Laskin. New York, Simon and Schuster, 2000. 320pp., \$26 cloth.

Reviewed by Michael Wreszin

THIS BOOK PROMISES sex, sexual abuse, infidelity, adultery, betrayal, back biting careerism, destroyed friendships, marriages, families and communities, violence, mayhem, alcoholism, madness, brutality, depression, selfishness, childlike behavior, rampant delusions, total misperceptions — in short the gambit of human frailty — and it delivers. All of this human tragedy is found by David Laskin in the lives of a handful of poets and writers centered around the literary magazine, *Partisan Review*, from the late 1930s to the late 1960s. They were an eloquent part of what has become known as "The New York Intellectuals." Mr. Laskin is a facile and eclectic writer, his previous subject matter ranges from books on stormy weather, the raising of little girls, a career guide to advertising and a book devoted to famous literary friendships and the *Esquire Guide to Wines and Liquor*. He is obviously on the lookout for an idea that might capture an audience. Studies of the New York Intellectuals have become a cottage industry. Many of them have written their own memoirs and autobiographies and biographers have mined their ranks, including this reviewer, who in full disclosure admits to being irritated by the sometimes superficial references to Dwight Macdonald.

Laskin's focus is on the marital relations of six women, Mary McCarthy, Carolyn Gordon, Elizabeth Hardwick, Jean Stafford, Hannah Arendt and Diana Trilling, although Gordon and Trilling receive rather short shrift. The men in their lives respectively were Phillip Rahv, Edmund Wilson, Alan Tate, Robert Lowell, Heinrich Blucher, Arendt's husband, a thinker and conversationalist

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rather than a writer, and Lionel Trilling. But again, Trilling is almost an afterthought. If there is any point to this book, other than the deft exploitation of the sensational domestic difficulties, or an analytical thesis, it is that the talented women, whom Laskin feels were the equals of their husbands as writers, were pre-feminist women who gladly shouldered the obligations of marriage and family in addition to pursuing their professional lives as writers. They took marriage seriously, in some instances obsessively. Mary McCarthy could not stand not being married. As such they were resistant, even hostile, to any expression of feminism, as degrading and not worthy of their talent and stature as professional writers and accomplished homemakers.

Laskin contends that their repudiation of “the only revolution that survived the 60s” was emblematic of their rapid loss of influence and subsequent derision by the new young radicals of the sixties who saw them as living in a smug elitist past with nothing to say to the next generation and wrong about the important things in their own time. Laskin makes much of this argument in his lengthy introduction and in his concluding chapters, but it would appear that their influence declined as they grew older and found themselves in a world increasingly not to their liking, hardly an unusual phenomenon. Mary McCarthy’s trip to Vietnam, North and South, may have been derided by the increasingly conservative members of her own generation but she was respected by activists in the anti-war movement at the time. Laskin quotes an unnamed younger member of the group: “Thank heaven their political influence is gone — what little they had. They didn’t know any more about politics than anyone else. What they knew from reading books did not equip them to deal with large public questions. Having read Keats carefully does not qualify you for anything.” How would such a statement apply to Hannah Arendt? Laskin doesn’t say. Laskin remains convinced that despite their decline they are worth writing about and what makes them so is the passion of their convictions, the intensity of their commitments and the exhilaration of their intellectual involvement with the life of their times. But his account in the histories of their marriages is a horrendous record of “bad choices, wrong turns, betrayals, lies, drunken shouting matches, slapped faces, hideous divorces.” His listing of disasters is literally endless, it takes on an almost Whitmanesque quality in reverse.

THERE IS VERY LITTLE THAT IS NEW IN THIS COMPILATION. Contrary to jacket blurbs and book promotions touting enormous research it is clear that Laskin has not spent much time in archival research. Nor has he conducted many extensive interviews. He has read widely in the relevant published material—biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, published collections of letters and mined them for sensational anecdotal material. He has produced a group version of what Joyce Carol Oates described as “bio-pathology” — biographies that focus on “dysfunction and disaster, illnesses and pratfalls, failed marriages and failed careers, alcoholism and breakdowns and outrageous conduct,” which in turn overwhelms their intellectual accomplishments. The subjects are well known for their artistic reputations as writers, critics and poets. But the focus is on their human frailties. Laskin’s critical evaluation of their work is frequently insightful and persuasive. I found the chapter on Hannah Arendt and Heinrich Blucher rewarding. But they are infrequent and overwhelmed by the details of disastrous personal relations.

What is one to make of this? Is this evidence to support Edmund Wilson's theory in *The Wound and the Bow* that art is often the consequence of deep psychological wounds? The original title of Wilson's essays had been "Studies in the Literature of Trauma." Laskin's discussion of Lowell, who was literally a monstrous mad man for several months out of nearly every year, lends weight to the speculation. Wilson knew Lowell and, of course, Mary McCarthy, and he once told Lionel Trilling that he had encountered a good deal of the "wound and bow combinations." Laskin does make the obvious connections between Lowell's work and his traumatic life. But only insofar as the confessional poetry reveals the dimensions of his insanity. One can't help but recall Eileen Simpson's *Poets in their Youth*, a splendid study of John Berryman, Delmore Schwartz, Lowell and Stafford among others. Ms. Simpson's sympathetic account suggested to some that this was a particularly vulnerable generation of poets driven by mental illness and self-destruction to early deaths and that the horrendous times in which they had become poets was responsible. Delmore Schwartz's tragic life confirmed Dwight Macdonald's belief that those of inordinate insight and sensitivity were vulnerable in American society, particularly during the post-war years: "Poetry is a dangerous occupation in this country" he wrote in his eulogy to Schwartz. John Berryman, at the time of Schwartz's death, wrote in his *Dream Songs* :

I'm cross with god who has wrecked this generation
First he seized Ted [Roethke], then Richard [Blackmur], then
Randall [Jarrell]
And now Delmore.

At one point Laskin does ask his readers to

consider the times these people lived through. Wilson fought in the First World War; McCarthy, Hardwick, Lowell and Stafford went to college during the depression and graduated in the tense, uncertain period before World War II; Blucher and Arendt escaped Hitler's Germany during the first wave of crackdowns on Jews and Communists and were among the fortunate few to find asylum in the United States. Totalitarianism in Germany and the Soviet Union, genocide in Europe, political purges in the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc, world war followed by Cold War, and then the threat of all-out nuclear Armageddon: calamity shadowed these lives relentlessly . . . It was an embattled, scarred generation.

But he uses this only to explain their political intensity compared to the blandness of a later generation.

His account is for the most part anecdotal rather than analytical and he has focused primarily on the women as victims of their famous husbands, except Hannah Arendt, but Blucher too was hardly a faithful husband. In any case the kinds of domestic turmoil he describes cannot be seen as unique to this group. There is plenty to suggest, as Faulkner has, that the family, rather than the nurturer of values, can be, indeed, the pit of illness.

Most of the stories have been told before but here you have them clumped together and it does present a dismal portrait of thoughtless brutality, often brought on by drunkenness and despair. Lowell's willingness to exploit his wife, Elizabeth Hardwick's angst ridden letters, in his own poetry seems beyond the pale but then this is life for art's sake. In short this was a time when, as Alfred Kazin put it, "writing was everything." But, as Laskin points out even Elizabeth

Bishop, a loving admirer of Lowell and his poetry, felt that to use “anguished letters that way it’s cruel . . . art just isn’t worth that much.”

WHAT A BOOK LIKE THIS DOES, despite the author best intentions, because there is evidence that he does admire his subjects, is take away the aura of artistic achievement and reduce these people of extraordinary ability and talent to the mundane, even banal world of quiet, and in this account, not so quiet, desperation. The New York Intellectuals were enormously confident, they could speak with assurance on almost any subject at the drop of a hat and yet they often acted like spoiled children, they treated one another with contempt and betrayed one another’s trust. They were human. That may be the message.

From Laskin’s angle these particular women were a unique group of high achievers who attained a measure of equality in a man’s world prior to the rise of feminism. But McCarthy, Arendt, Hardwick and Stafford were not “one of the boys” as Laskin claims. Jason Epstein was more on the mark when he said there were two things about the women in the crowd that interested the men: Could they be slept with, and could they write “like a man.” “If they could write like a man that was enough.” In the case of McCarthy and Hardwick and Stafford too, the answer was yes on both counts. That hardly makes them one of the boys.

Laskin is not a political person, as he readily concedes. He writes in his lengthy introduction that the politics of his generation has none of the passionate intensity that characterized the views of his subjects. He gives away his unfamiliarity when he includes Dwight Macdonald as an advocate of liberalism in the 40s and 50s when, on the contrary, he held the “liblabs,” as he called them, in utter contempt. Laskin is also unfamiliar with the distinction between the uses of the pejorative and supportive use of the terms Trotskyite and Trotskyist. He lists Marlon Brando as a participant in the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace at the Waldorf Astoria in 1949, which is doubtful; he may have meant Norman Mailer. On that score the scholarly apparatus is frustrating. For each chapter he lists books that informed him but footnotes only what he considers the most important quotations. Often very significant quotations are not cited, the speaker not identified and this is a book dependent on the apt use of quoted material. Finally, it must be said that Laskin, as a professional writer, offers a readable book that contains a lot of compelling gossip and retraces some interesting cultural history, but sheds little new light on the subject matter.

An Engaging Memoir

GIRL IN MOVEMENT by Eva Kollisch. Vermont: Glad Day Books, 2000, 262 pp. \$16.95 paper.

Reviewed by Marvin Mandell

"You will wake, and remember, and understand."

ROBERT BROWNING, EVELYN HOPE

TWO AUSTRIAN REFUGEES — a fifteen-year-old girl and her younger brother — go to a Tarzan movie on Staten Island in 1941 and, at the bingo game that the theater offers after it, meet a young woman who happens to belong to a dissident Trotskyist organization, the Workers Party, and who leads the girl into it. A long swing from Johnny Weissmuller to Max Shachtman.

Eva Kollisch has written a moving, honest, and insightful memoir of her involvement in the Workers Party during World War II.

"It's just a stupid, sad story like yours and mine," says a character in Marcel Carné's *Les Enfants du Paradis*, but that is what art is made of, and Kollisch has fashioned her memoir into just that — art.

A young refugee, then, joins the Workers Party, makes friends, and falls under the spell of "Walter," a party leader who tutors her in Marxism, and before being drafted, marries her. She takes difficult, menial jobs, eventually goes to Detroit and finds work on an assembly line fastening jeep windshield wipers. She subsequently cuts loose and hitchhikes to California, finally returning to Detroit, faces trial by fellow Workers Party members for her AWOL, receives slight punishment (loss of voting rights for a few months), leaves the Party and leaves her husband newly returned from the war.

Ten years her senior, Walter instructs Eva in the theory and history of Marxism. He was not a Svengali, since his purpose was by no means evil, but he was surely more than a match for Shaw's Pygmalion, Henry Higgins, who gave Liza a little breathing room.

This skillfully constructed memoir has affinity to the *bildungsroman*, a novel concerning the youthful life and psychological development of a major character. Kollisch is candid about the young girl's romantic fantasizing (at times, when younger, she pretended that she had a lover in the Dutch Resistance). Throughout the memoir, Eva is torn in many ways: between Trotskyism and pacifism, between Eastern Jewry and German assimilation, between conventional life and revolutionary activism (e. g. college vs. factory), between youthful innocence and adult experience.

Kollisch's clarity seems amazing to me. Sixty years later she is able to call up precise details of her work as a punch press operator in a belt assembly line.

The men don't come off very well — Eva's bad luck. There is Joe whose voice was like a bugle or a cannon. (Even when she agreed with him, she shuddered

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when he bellowed.) There is tutor Walter who often doesn't look at her when he talks to her. And there is Max — our Max! — who brushes off a critic of the Trotskyist position on the crushing of the Kronstadt rebellion with "Krosnikov . . . you haven't got a dialectical mind." Later in the memoir, Max, in a dispute with "Taylor" on the question of supporting national resistance movements, tells him that he has revealed his failure to think dialectically. Young Eva, by the way, decides her position on this national question not on the basis of the issues, but on the basis of her relationship with men she trusted. So much for Walter's tutelage.

In my view the Workers Party was absolutely correct in its understanding of the nature of both capitalism and bureaucratic collectivism. Kollisch doesn't dispute this — she remains an independent socialist after leaving the Workers Party — but she does have some reservations.

Years later, when I thought back on this episode of my life, I asked myself whether Miss Fine (a Stalinist teacher) had really been as awful, as crude and demagogic as I remembered her. Or did I attribute those qualities to her because I had absorbed the Trotskyist view of Stalinism — a Manichean view which divides the "left" into the pure and impure. After I joined the Movement, I too saw in Stalinists and their fellow-travelers the betrayers of the socialist dream. But was it all as simple as that? (p. 24)

Yes, I believe it was. Whatever Kollisch's personal relationship to her teacher, the Stalinist betrayal of socialism and the world revolution was clear-cut, black and white; any gray is due to myopia.

There is perhaps a more cogent reservation about the Workers Party. When we talked about the rise of Hitler . . . much was said about the economic depression and the betrayal of the German working class by the Communists, little about the emotional side of fascism, the spellbinding powers of its leaders, the intoxication of abandoning one's individual will and becoming part of the mass. (p.133)

Hitler himself, in *Mein Kampf*, repeatedly said that the only correct mass-psychological technique was that of avoiding arguments. Wilhelm Reich, in his *Mass Psychology of Fascism*, reveals the emotional appeal of fascism, something I believe, with Kollisch, that the Workers Party neglected, despite its otherwise astute analysis.

Evidently Walter, Max, and the Party pressured Eva into going into factory work rather than college. I asked (Max) what he thought of college students. He looked disgusted. "Petty-bourgeois dreck. 4-F's, Yeshiva bochers, future welfare workers, studying to be crutches of the wobbling state. No, my dear Comrade Eva, the factory is the place for a young revolutionary." (p.107)

Things surely had changed by the time I entered the WP in the late 40's, a few years after Eva's departure. Max would have got a big horselaugh had he tried to keep us veterans from using our G. I. Bill to go to college. We were urged, not pressured, to industrialize, and I did for a year. Also, comrades would have spoken to Eva about her unannounced AWOL, but I can't imagine there being a trial when I was in the Movement. Finally, we were much freer to voice doubts about the smashing of the Kronstadt rebellion and other events. Again, probably due to the influx of veterans at the end of World War II.

However much the Workers Party set itself in opposition to the ruling order, it was still part of its time. Eva feels pressured to "put out" sexually in order

to recruit two factory workers (both married). One of the female members mentions “the role of screwing in recruiting.”

“I wouldn’t know about such things,” Dan (replied).

“No, you wouldn’t,” Laura suddenly turned on him. “Has it ever occurred to you that the women are under pressure to do double duty in the Movement?”

“They are every bit as free as the men are.”

Laura shook her head vehemently.

“A lot of the women in the Party . . . are less developed intellectually and more dependent emotionally than the men.”

“Whose fault is that?”

“The women’s, of course,” Laura said with a heavy note of sarcasm in her voice. (p.220-1)

As the feminist movement was later to discover, sexism pervaded throughout society and affected — infected— the radical movement.

IF KOLLISCH IS SOMEWHAT CRITICAL OF THE WORKERS PARTY, she is even more critical of herself. I have already mentioned her romanticizing in a context of yearning for love; but she also idealizes workers, especially black ones. The reader can see her shedding these illusions as she is growing up. She is aware that she often talked in clichés. Once she storms out of her parents’ apartment crying out, “I believe in free love and the class struggle. Down with bourgeois culture and hypocrisy.” (p.117) The family had to escape Hitler’s holocaust to put up with this! When Eva asks herself, “Am I ready to die for the revolution?” Kollisch shows us that she spares herself nothing, not even self-caricature.

Kollisch’s style is appropriate: simple, clear, and concrete. Occasionally it sparkles with imagery: Her preparation for her first sexual intercourse is likened to getting ready to jump off the 10-meter diving board in Austria. In reading Hegel, she “soar (s) up to where the air gets very thin; I hang from word-ladders, leap on to a transcendent trapeze. . . .” (p. 167) She sees a handshake and a patting on the back as a bear hug and a flapping of wings.

Eva Kollisch’s *Girl in Movement* is a thoroughly engaging memoir about a significant time in her life, as well as a vivid chronicle of the hopes, dedication, strengths and weaknesses of a small, but vital independent socialist movement during the critical moments of World War II.

Note: Copies of *Girl in Movement* can be ordered by calling Glad Day Books, Enfield Distribution Co., toll free at 1-888-874-6904.

Three Vietnam Documentaries: 25th Anniversary

Reviewed by Kurt Jacobsen

THE FINAL FRENETIC SCENES OF THE VIETNAM WAR (or, as the Vietnamese call it, the “American War”) were branded in public memory a quarter century ago when a daisy chain of helicopters ferried hordes of desperate refugees from roof tops in Saigon to aircraft carriers bobbing in the South China sea. On April 30, only a few hours after the last chopper left, North Vietnamese tanks battered down the Presidential Palace gates and seized what remained of a terribly mutilated but reunified country. Although President Nixon, after a notorious false start, signed peace accords and withdrew U.S. ground forces two years earlier here at last was the final ignominious act. So it was no surprise that the 25th anniversary of the fall of Saigon slipped by quietly, especially in official circles. Even President Clinton allowed a “decent interval” between the anniversary and his visit in December. The feeling was, the less fuss, the better. That attitude was hardly unanimous. Regarding Vietnam, nothing ever is.

Witness three recent documentaries which demonstrate that the motives, the meaning and the lessons of that long and gory fray remain as controversial as ever. *Return With Honor* recounts “in their own words” the agonies of prisoners of war (mostly downed pilots, including former presidential candidate Senator John McCain) imprisoned in North Vietnam. In *Regret To Inform* director Barbara Sonneborn embarks on a poignant pilgrimage to the barren site — the impact of Agent Orange still shows — where her husband thirty years before was killed in combat, and to meet her counterpart Vietnamese widows. *Vietnam — A Long Time Coming*, crafted by Kartemquin Films, the makers of *Hoop Dreams*, tracks a group of disabled American Vietnam veterans returning for a bicycle marathon and many reckonings with the grisly past.

These three documentaries ought to be bundled together for exhibition because each injects invaluable testimony into an unending debate. Was Vietnam a “noble cause,” as Ronald Reagan burred, or “a bright shining lie” or imperial overreach? Stubborn myths encase the whole ghastly enterprise. Despite media-fed beliefs that vicious antiwar activists abused returning servicemen the only proven “spitting” incident is of straw-hatted Republican stalwarts roughing up a shaggy trio of wheelchair-bound veterans who infiltrated the 1972 Republican convention to denounce the war (the trio included Ron Kovic, subject of *Born on the Fourth of July* and Loretta Smith’s forthcoming documentary *A Good American*) The Right cherishes the notion that the “Christmas bombings” of Hanoi that year achieved “peace with honor” when all that Nixon and Kissinger

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extracted were the same terms available four years — and 20 thousand American lives — earlier. “Gooks,” as Senator John McCain perhaps privately calls them these days, paid a far stiffer price.

The American military, which a proud former POW in *Return With Honor* insists fought with “two hands tied behind its back,” notched up a thirty to one kill ratio. Not bad, considering all the restraint. Noam Chomsky informs us that in North Vietnam our military mauled all six industrial cities (three razed), 28 of 30 provincial towns (twelve leveled), 96 of 111 district towns, 4,000 of 5,800 communes, 400,000 cattle were killed and over a million acres of farmland were blasted. The cumulative carnage was far worse in the incinerated, defoliated, interdicted South. For grunts it quickly became a “shoot and ask questions later” affair while jaunty flyboys saturated the land with 8 million tons of high explosives, napalm and white phosphorous (which burns right through anyone who touches it even decades afterward). Slackers, these aviators certainly were not.

Return With Honor, bankrolled by arms contractor Boeing-McDonnell, celebrates “top guns” who literally were above it all until a flak burst or a SAM missile picked them off. “We were flying Sir Lancelots,” one rueful pilot muses. “All of a sudden you’re not that anymore and you’re scared.” The filmmakers opted to relate the saga based on what “the POW’s mindset was at the time,” which was and apparently still is staunchly militaristic. Yet, *Return* reverberates with stunning little ironies. Navy pilot Ed Alvarez debunks the 1964 Tonkin Gulf incident (which triggered, or was the pretext for, ground force escalation), saying that he was in the air at the time of the second incident and spotted no torpedo boats attacking American vessels, as was claimed. Soon, in an escalating but undeclared war, Alvarez found himself captured, labeled a mere criminal, and suffering a host of agonies over eight and a half years of confinement.

Another POW reminds us that the “Hanoi Hilton” prison, festooned with a frighening array of manacles and torture devices, was built by the French colonizers to intimidate restless natives: “You could just look at this place and hear the screams of about 50 years.” There’s no pause to ponder the disturbing parallels between French and American interventions but, as film maker Terry Sanders says, captivity was hardly the time for macho American officers to reassess America’s role over there: “If the President said to do this or that then that was the thing to do.” So the pilots, who come across as brave and sincere, endured many cruelties calculated to compel them to say less, as one resentful flier remarked, than sceptical politicians were expressing in Congress. Some startled POWs, including Ed Alvarez, were to discover upon release that even their wives and children had joined the anti-war movement.

THE FILM MAKERS’ DECISION TO EMBRACE the POWs’ point of view pays off with a claustrophobically intense narrative. But another way of looking at their plight is that at least they were alive. Bombers and strafers aren’t popular anywhere. In just one hushed-up incident during the 1940 blitz a Polish Royal Air Force fighter pilot, who spoke very little English, parachuted into a ruined city district and was beaten to death by residents who mistook him for a Jerry. In the Greater Reich, civilians lynched several Allied airmen who fell into their hands.

Conduct was no daintier down South. Viet Cong captives routinely got shoved out of helicopters, without parachutes, and tens of thousands of political prison-

ers suffered at the hands of an incorrigibly corrupt regime. In *Regret to Inform* a Vietnamese civilian recalls that in the mangled multitude of free fire zones: "if you were not dead, you were not safe." A Vietnamese widow remembers her family home obliterated by bombs, a six-year-old cousin shot dead by a jumpy American GI (and that soldier's horrified expression), and the aimless and self-hating bar girl existence that she led afterward. Director Barbara Sonneborn on her mournful journey across Vietnam successfully set out to sift through "the point of view of Vietnam war widows from both sides of the conflict" in the hope of expanding her audience's awareness of the awful price exacted all around.

An American widow remembers her Navy pilot husband's misgivings about the morality of the war in which he died. Another reads a letter from her Navaho husband about how shaken he was at having to harm people who looked so much like himself. Vietnamese war widows recall not only husbands but children and parents slaughtered and maimed. Sonneborn is led by a local woman who had been a guerrilla leader to the spot where her husband Jeff, a platoon leader, was killed: "For all I knew she might have led the attack that killed Jeff." Sonneborn, spookily, plays a tape of her husband relating how he nearly fired at distant farmers carrying hoes that he at first mistook for weapons. What can be read between the lines is that not every soldier was so careful about using firepower — and that being scrupulous may even have cost her husband his life later.

VIETNAM IS NOT JUST A WAR BUT A COUNTRY and a beautiful one at that. In *Vietnam — Long Time Coming*, the daunting task that the film makers of *Hoop Dreams* posed for themselves is to show how a band of jittery veterans come to terms with this emotionally healing fact. The documentary tracks 65 Yank and Vietnamese war veterans pedaling bicycles (for the intact), hand cycles (for paraplegics) and tandem bikes (for the blind) twelve hundred miles from Hanoi down the snaking coastline to the city formerly known as Saigon. They average eighty miles a day through choking fumes, an infinity of pot holes and the sublimely rural hazard of buffalo dung spraying up from rear wheels. "It could have been worse," a grinning vet remarks. "Someone could have been shooting at us."

For Army nurse Diane Evans the airliner's descent into Hanoi evoked "the same gut-wrenching feeling as when I first flew into Tan Son Nhut thirty years ago. Vietnam was like a year-long hallucination." This time the apprehensive passengers were greeted by pretty girls offering them flowers. "It was the perfect gesture," said Jerry Stadtmiller, a blinded ex-Marine. "The [flower] gave me something to hold, other than my white cane. When you first came here you were handed an M-16." In 1968 Stadtmiller was deposited in Danang with other fresh replacements and "these dirty, deeply tanned Marine veterans started laughing at us. That is not the response I was expecting."

The cyclists visit a school, a hospital and Hanoi's tomb of the unknown soldier. "We discussed the wreath [for the unknown soldier's tomb] beforehand," said Wade Sanders, who commanded a Swift Boat on the Mekong River in 1968-69 and later was assistant secretary of the Navy. "We had no problem doing it in the spirit of veteran honouring veteran." Indeed, a North Vietnamese army delegation had laid a wreath at the Vietnam Veterans memorial in Washington too. The My Lai memorial ignited the most confused feelings. "The Vietnamese officials insisted that we veer off the route to go to the memorial," George Brummel, an army sergeant blinded in combat in 1966, told me. "That's the only

time we rode in the evening and we were very tired. It was just that we didn't volunteer to go on our own. Some of us were pissed off about that." All but a few visited the memorial but most of the vets believed atrocities were committed by all combatants and did not like to have it all pinned on them.

The official agenda did not go down well with vets who "didn't want to be pawns like we were thirty years earlier" and were hyper-alert to manipulative ploys. A subtle struggle emerged over the itinerary. The film makers slip in impromptu scenes — visiting a facility for blind Vietnamese veterans, sneaking into an old American base, and some chats with local people. Still, the vets found it liberating to return. A nurse recalls how she was unable to perform triage and instead did her best to save everyone, including a boy whose brains leaked into her hand. "I was scared," airborne vet Dan Jensen says. "I was glad when the mine blew my leg off. I was out of there. I was in hell." The film records Jensen's growing friendship with a Vietnamese Army veteran.

Vets sigh as the fleet reaches a 17th parallel bridge where a Vietnamese Army veteran recalls how lethal it once was here. The trek goes on "getting real" as they peddle over old battlegrounds — experiencing pungent smells, torrid temperatures and the eerily lush terrain now devoid of danger, except for the odd land mine or bit of unexploded ordnance. Crossing the 3,000-foot Hai Van pass they eventually scoot past a deserted US embassy to finish at the gates of the former presidential palace. One sardonic vet cannot help comparing riding beside police into Ho Chi Minh City to "touring Tel Aviv with a Schutz Staffel escort."

Pegging the vets, though, is a very perilous enterprise. In a seemingly strident moment Sanders declares that he wasn't ashamed of anything he did in Vietnam. So is he a rabid hawk? "I didn't approve of the war," explained Sanders. "I was saying that I didn't do anything I was ashamed of. Everyone I killed was trying to kill me." Nonetheless, the rampant assassinations of the Phoenix program "sickened" him so that, while in uniform, he spoke against the war in 1971 with the consequence that he was "hounded by the FBI and an internal Nixonian squad inside the Navy" until, luckily, a sympathetic Admiral inter

AS FOR THE LEGACY OF VIETNAM, Stadtmiller sounds almost wistful for Kennedyesque "good old days" but knows better: "There's a sense of entitlement now rather than of 'what can I do for my country?'" he told me. "But the authorities were trading on our naive trust. As it turned out, Camelot didn't just die, it never existed." The government, Diane Evans stated, "sent 18- and 19-year-olds to Vietnam and it mistreated them after the war. I'm a farm girl so I know what dioxin does to weeds — Agent Orange was 5000 times as powerful. I saw what the stuff we were dropping — napalm and white phosphorous — can do. I think it's unhealthy and harmful to trust your government. You should always question their agenda and their decisions. We were led like sheep in the 1960s."

The film makers hope their documentary will make the rounds in high schools and "open up space for students to ask their relatives who were Vietnam vets about how they felt. There is a certain way this society has processed this hero stuff so that the people, who are much more complex, felt constricted about how they expressed how they really felt about it," Gordon Quinn of Kartemquin Films says. "We go to war so lightly. Before Clinton bombs Iraq or Serbia or any place else he ought to stand in front of the Vietnam memorial wall in Washington. It's a very powerful place."