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Logos
a journal of modern society & culture

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Martin Glaberman, 1918-2001

We were saddened to learn that our friend Marty Glaberman passed away on December 16, 2001. A twenty-year veteran of Detroit auto plants, and a sixty-year veteran of the socialist movement, Marty Glaberman lived an unusually rich and full life. He was the author of *Wartime Strikes* (1980), and *Working for Wages* (1998, with Seymour Faber), as well as numerous pamphlets and articles on various aspects of industrial relations, labor history, and working-class life. He was also a poet, a small press publisher, and a specialist in Marx's *Das Kapital*. For many years he sought to promote the ideas and writings of C.L.R. James, and in 1999 the University Press of Mississippi published his collection of James's essays on politics and organization. At the time of his death he was a professor emeritus at Wayne State University. Marty Glaberman was a sponsor of *New Politics*, a sometime contributor, and a personal friend to several of its editors. He will be missed.

Confronting Terrorism and War

Stephen R. Shalom[1]

THANKFULLY AND ASTONISHINGLY, it now appears that the original death estimates for the World Trade Center attacks were too high; the actual toll may turn out to be in the neighborhood of three thousand rather than six thousand. But such is the enormity of what happened on September 11 that even if the original count is reduced by half, this was an atrocity of horrific proportions.

In terms of immediate deaths, September 11 was the worst terrorist attack ever to take place in peacetime anywhere in the world. It was the most devastating attack ever — in war or peace — on the U.S. national homeland. More lives were lost than in such disasters as the sinking of the Titanic or the Johnstown flood or the San Francisco earthquake or the great Chicago fire — and this time great tragedy was combined with deeply malicious intent.

Obviously, everyone will want to make sure that this sort of thing never occurs again.

How do we do that? And is war in Afghanistan — winding down as I write — the solution?

One place to start this inquiry is by asking ourselves, "Why did it happen?" Some, however, object to this sort of question, claiming that by trying to *explain* we are inevitably *justifying* what happened. Just because a murderer had a rough childhood, or saw too much violence on TV — they argue — should not *excuse* murder. And they're right that we need to protect ourselves from cold-blooded murderers, whatever the underlying source of their evil ways. Likewise, there is no doubt that *nothing* can excuse the mass murder that took place on September 11, that those who collaborated in planning it deserve punishment and should be brought to justice, as is true of all terrorists, and that the international community must take steps to protect itself from any recurrence. But *understanding* what happened is the first step to designing an appropriate response.

Consider an analogy. When two students killed some of their classmates at Columbine High School, we tried to understand what it was that had led to a spate of school violence. That didn't mean we excused the killings or justified the killings. Far from it. But we hoped that by understanding what happened we could take steps to reduce the likelihood of a recurrence — perhaps designing programs to reduce alien-

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ation among teenagers or to make students more tolerant of those who don't fit in, or making it more difficult for kids to obtain guns.

Sometimes when we examine terrorist acts — whether small-scale, like Columbine, or large-scale, like September 11 — we will find that the terror breeds on legitimate grievances. When this is the case, addressing those grievances will be the most sensible way to reduce the likelihood of a recurrence of the terrorism. Sometimes, of course, we will find that there are illegitimate grievances involved. In Columbine, the killers apparently targeted students of color, perhaps thinking there were too many of them in the school. Obviously, this is not a legitimate grievance, but it still requires our attention. In this case, we need to take steps to reduce racism — in schools and in the larger society — in order to stem racist killings.

So why did September 11 occur?

Sources of Terrorism

WE NEED TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN TWO GROUPS OF PEOPLE: (1) the immediate perpetrators — the hijackers and the terrorist network of which they are a part; and (2) the broader environment within which fanatic groups like al Qaeda thrive and from which they recruit members and supporters.

Let us assume that Osama bin Laden was responsible for orchestrating or setting in motion the September 11 attacks (a point to which I will return below). What were his motives? These are probably better discerned by a psychopathologist than a political analyst. His misogyny and anti-Semitism are evident, as is his megalomania. We can presume he is sincere in wanting to eject U.S. troops from the "holy lands" of Saudi Arabia. Does he care about Palestinians, Iraqis, and the poor and downtrodden more generally? Who knows? But given the pretty consistent historical pattern that terrorism provokes counter-terrorism rather than justice, he may well be totally indifferent to the well-being of oppressed or suffering people, Muslim or otherwise. In some of his interviews bin Laden seemed to be eager to provoke a major war between Islam and the West; if a massive U.S. over-reaction could set off a holy war across the Muslim world, this might lead to the collapse of all the illegitimate governments in the region and their replacement by governments like the Taliban. Even if one thought that Taliban-style regimes were desirable, to expect any human betterment to emerge from the rubble of such an all-consuming war is utterly depraved.

But for the broader Arab and Muslim populace — most of whom have little sympathy for bin Laden's tactics or even for his brand of Islamic fanaticism — there is a deep hostility to the policies of the West and especially the United States. Where George Bush declares that terrorists "hate our freedom," millions in the Middle East instead see a U.S. government that — despite its democratic rhetoric — backs deeply undemocratic regimes, like those of Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Likewise, despite Washington's professed commitment to human rights, it is the leading

supporter of the Israeli government which oppresses Palestinians. And the U.S. bears primary responsibility for economic sanctions against Iraq that have led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians. Even among Middle Easterners who despise Saddam Hussein (like the Shiites of southern Iraq), anger against the United States is intense.

In July 2001, an al Qaeda recruiting video was circulated in the Middle East, featuring footage of Israeli atrocities and accusing Washington of starving a million Iraqi children. On October 7, the day the U.S. bombing of Afghanistan began, bin Laden released a videotape to the media. David Hirst, who covered the Middle East for the *Guardian* for nearly four decades, noted, "What appealed to his Arab and Muslim audience was not his catechism — insofar as there was one — of the original, pristine Islam he claims to represent, but his enumeration of the injustices to which all Muslims, be they secular or devout, feel they have been subjected at western hands in modern times." Regardless of whether these issues mean anything to bin Laden himself, there is no denying that he has a keen knowledge of which issues resonate in the Arab and Muslim worlds, and can be used to rationalize terror.

If we want to dry up the reservoir of support that sustains terrorism and provides it with a constant supply of recruits, the United States has to change its foreign policy. Christopher Hitchens has argued that the case for changing U.S. policy is no stronger after September 11 than it was before. That's true. It was a moral imperative then; it's a moral imperative now. It's wrong to oppress Palestinians, whether or not Americans die as a result. But, when people ask us what can be done to stop terrorism — as they have been asking — we need to tell them the truth: terrorism feeds off anger and frustration, and a lot of that anger is directed at the United States for its unjust policies. Reducing the anger by addressing legitimate grievances is the most effective and appropriate way to reduce the incidence of terrorism.

Consider another analogy. Some people brought up in grueling poverty become anti-social criminals. Such criminals need to be brought to justice. But Leftists need to also point out that poverty continually breeds crime. That doesn't mean that criminals should be permitted to continue their crime sprees or that somehow they were justified in slitting the throat of this or that innocent victim. And, of course, poverty would be important to eradicate for reasons of basic justice, even if it had no connection to crime. But when our fellow citizens ask what we can do about the crime problem, and when pundits come up with all sorts of explanations that ignore the real underlying causes — inexplicable evil, random resentment of people who are happy, etc. — Leftists need to tell them the uncomfortable truth.

To be sure, not all the anger directed against the United States is the result of legitimate grievances. Anti-Semitism of the European variety has been spreading in the Middle East and many want to drive Israeli Jews into the sea. (Bin Laden's denunciation of "Jews" in his public state-

ments suggests that he doesn't expect anti-Semitism to lose him a lot of popular support in the region.) Clearly, we should not endorse any call for the destruction of Israel. We must support the equal recognition of national rights for Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs — a position backed by a wide international consensus, though not by some Islamist radicals, nor by Israel or the United States.[2]

Beyond specific U.S. policies — backing Israeli repression or enforcing murderous sanctions on Iraq — another factor that provides a breeding ground for terrorism is poverty and despair. It might seem odd to speak of material deprivation in the Middle East, given the tremendous petroleum resources of the region. But in fact from North Africa to Southwest Asia there is immense poverty, made all the more incendiary by the presence of oil wealth in the hands of the few. In Saudi Arabia, with the largest oil reserves in the world, 30 percent of the workforce is unemployed and average income has dropped by at least half over the last two decades, while the extended royal family engages in ever more massive corruption. The rulers, however, don't need to be responsive to the population because they are kept in power by a ruthless internal security apparatus, closely tied to the United States.[3]

Obviously, there is nothing inherent in Islam that favors terrorism. But intolerant forms of Islam, like intolerant forms of Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, and so on, give religious sanction to slaying non-believers. What accounts for the growth of Islamic extremism in recent years? Wherever people are poor, oppressed, and powerless, they seek some means of political participation. Sometimes the Left, through grassroots organizations, labor unions, political parties, and so on, can offer an opportunity for this participation, but unfortunately in so much of the Third World these do not exist. In many Arab and Muslim nations the Left has either been smashed by right wing forces (often backed by the major Western states) or discredited by ruthless dictatorships (as in Iraq) or by Soviet style parties. Various states have seen it in their interest to promote religious extremism. The United States backed reactionary fundamentalists, including Osama bin Laden, against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and aided mullahs against the Left in Iran; Israel gave early backing to Islamic radicals in an effort to provide a counter weight to the secular PLO. So in the absence of any Left alternative, religious fanaticism has spread, helped along by religious schools financed by Washington's close ally, Saudi Arabia.

Some have argued against the relevance of exploring the root causes of terrorism by using the analogy of Hitler: Nazism may have arisen from the unjust Treaty of Versailles, they note, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't have fought Hitler. But if the Treaty of Versailles helped Hitler come to power, then wouldn't it have been wise to have dealt with this grievance before it resulted in a World War with some fifty million deaths? September 11 was horrible, but far worse is possible if we allow the deep

anger against U.S.-backed injustice to fester among more than one billion Muslims. The time to address grievances is now. But, some might counter, "What if we failed to address the grievance. Shouldn't we still have fought Hitler? And likewise the September 11 terrorists?" Yes, just as we arrest murderers regardless of the root causes of their criminality, so too we should defend ourselves from bin Laden or Hitler. But in each case, the issue doesn't end here. *How* do we do it? Do we capture the murderer by obliterating his neighborhood? (Or Afghanistan or Dresden?) Under what auspices do we do it? Do we go out as vigilantes or do we abide by the law? I return to these questions below.

Does this mean that the September 11 attacks were somehow justified or that "we deserved it"? Leftists have been subject to all sorts of abuse for suggesting the need to redress legitimate grievances. But, in fact, the notion is not terribly radical. Consider the words of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in mid-November: "Years ago, Pope Paul VI declared, 'if you want peace, work for justice.' This wisdom should not be misunderstood. No injustice legitimizes the horror we have experienced. But a more just world will be a more peaceful world. There will still be people of hate and violence, but they will have fewer allies, supporters and resources to commit their heinous acts."

Does changing U.S. foreign policy mean that we are giving in to terrorism? If in the face of terrorism, we changed our policy to one that was wrong, that would be a tragic capitulation to evil. But if we have been pursuing wrong policies, we shouldn't be afraid to change them to right policies, even if the change is urged on us not only by people of goodwill but by terrorists as well. Certainly to take the position that we should continue, say, starving Iraqi civilians because Osama bin Laden wants us to stop would be grotesque.

Many may agree that redirecting U.S. foreign policy is crucial for reducing terrorism in the future. But they still may worry that this is a long-term solution. Even if U.S. policy changed dramatically tomorrow, there would still be some individuals whose rage has turned them into terrorists. And if any realistic change in U.S. foreign policy is going to take not days, but years, the obvious question is what can be done in the short run? Certainly no one wants to see further thousands of innocent people slaughtered as we await long-term solutions. So is the current "war on terrorism" — now drawing to a close in Afghanistan — the short-term answer?

What must be noted at the outset is that this is not at all a "war against terrorism," but at best a "war against a very selective subset of terrorism." It does not target the terrorism carried out by leading states or by their close allies — it has nothing to say about, and may in fact exacerbate, the terrorism of the Russians in Chechnya, India in Kashmir, China in Tibet, Indonesia in Aceh and Irian Jaya, and so on. And it ignores the ongoing terrorism of the United States-led sanctions on Iraq (terrorism because innocent civilians are being harmed so as to pressure

the government into changing its policy). Still, any reduction in the loss of innocent lives is worthwhile, so does the Afghan war accomplish that?

Civilian Casualties

ONE CONSIDERATION THAT MAKES THIS WAR MORALLY UNACCEPTABLE is the matter of harm to civilians. Why does this matter? Think back to September 11. Why was the attack on the World Trade Center so horrendous? Because so many innocent civilians were killed. Harming innocent civilians in order to attain some political end is the very definition of terrorism. Thus, any war on terrorism — if it is actually to reduce terrorism — must avoid civilian deaths. This the U.S. war in Afghanistan has not done.

Now of course only pacifists believe that there is an *absolute* prohibition against harming civilians. International law and human rights organizations recognize that if in the course of attacking an enemy military base of 100,000 soldiers, one civilian nearby is killed, this is unfortunate, but legally and ethically permissible. But to attack a small military base and kill many civilians would not be permissible. Numbers matter. When we call the police to hunt down a murderer, we know that having an additional police car on the road will increase the risk of harm to the innocent (via the added danger of a traffic accident); most would accept this as morally permissible. On the other hand, to bomb an inhabited apartment building where the murderer might be holed up would obviously be unacceptable. Thus, Truman's claim that Hiroshima was a military target because it contained a military base is beside the point: the fact that the overwhelming majority of those vaporized were civilians makes the atomic bombing morally unacceptable.[4] And bin Laden's suggestion that the World Trade Center was a legitimate military target — destroying vital economic infrastructure of the enemy — is also morally abhorrent. One notes that the vast majority of those killed were not captains of finance, but janitors, secretaries, low-level bond traders, firefighters, and so on, and that, according to the Fiscal Policy Institute, in terms of economic impact, most of the jobs lost as a result of the disaster in lower Manhattan are in predominantly low-wage industries. And one can assume that there will be a global economic impact as well, hurting the world's poor most of all.

Some people took the position that they supported the U.S. war in Afghanistan as long as the United States took care not to harm civilians. This was the view of the Catholic Bishops and of Richard Falk writing in *The Nation*. Others argued that the way the war was actually being waged showed inadequate care to avoid civilian harm, and thus that the war was unjust — this was the position that Richard Falk shifted to shortly after the war began (though he has apparently shifted back yet again). But in fact the U.S. war was inevitably going to harm countless civilians and thus should never have been launched in the first place.

Surely, it will be said, the U.S. does not *intend* to kill civilians. But it

is morally unacceptable to kill civilians through reckless indifference, even without any specific intent, and the United States' indifference to the fate of innocent Afghan civilians has manifested in a variety of ways.

First, U.S. bombs, as "smart" as they sometimes are, often miss; they hit villages, hospitals, UN offices, the Red Cross (twice). No doubt Taliban claims cannot be taken at face value, but Pentagon media managers seem equally unreliable — and many deaths are likely in remote areas where there is no one to tally them. The Taliban shares responsibility for harm to civilians — it probably did site its heavy weapons and leaders in civilian areas on purpose. But this hardly justifies Defense Secretary Rumsfeld's claim that "responsibility for every single casualty in this war, be they innocent Afghans or innocent Americans, rests at the feet of Taliban and al Qaeda." As Human Rights Watch noted, according to international law if one party to a conflict illegally uses "the presence of civilians to shield military targets, the opposing force is not excused, in calculating the legality of an attack, from taking the risk to civilians into account." The U.S. media has been extremely reticent about reporting bombing casualties (it "seems perverse to focus too much on the casualties or hardship in Afghanistan," CNN Chair Walter Isaacson told his staff), but a survey of foreign news sources by Marc Herold found reports of more than 3,500 deaths from the U.S. air war.

Among the ordnance being used by the United States are cluster bombs, weapons which scatter hundreds of bomblets over a wide area; most of these explode on impact, but at least five percent of them do not, becoming in effect anti-personnel mines, threatening all who later come in contact with them, including civilians. "If cluster bombs continue to be used," warned Amnesty International, "civilians will not only suffer now but for years to come." And since the bomblets are brightly colored (the same color as the food packets dropped by U.S. planes — though the latter may change), children are especially likely to be victims. Human Rights Watch, which estimated in mid-November that there were some 5,000 unexploded bomblets littering Afghanistan, repeatedly called on the United States to immediately discontinue use of cluster munitions. Afghanistan has long suffered from an immense number of landmines, placed there by the Soviet Union during its invasion and by the mujahideen opposition; now U.S. cluster bomblets add to the population's danger. And as hundreds of thousands of Afghans fled the cities to the landmine- and cluster-bomb-strewn countryside, many no doubt died and are still dying, again probably without reporters on hand.

Much more serious than the direct casualties from the bombing is the fact that the war has increased the dangers to the literally millions of Afghans who are at risk of starvation. In mid-October, Jean Ziegler, Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food to the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, declared: "The bombing has to stop right now. There is a humanitarian emergency... In winter the lorries cannot go in any

more. Millions of Afghans will be unreachable in winter and winter is coming very, very soon" (Reuters, Oct. 15). His call was echoed by Oxfam and other international aid groups. The call was ignored, however, by U.S. officials, virtually all the U.S. mainstream media, and virtually every U.S. mainstream commentator.

Obviously the U.S. war was not the start of the food problem in Afghanistan. Decades of invasion, intervention, and civil war, international neglect, the Taliban's neglect, regressive social policies, and intermittent interference with aid workers, and serious drought — all these had brought millions of Afghans to the edge of starvation for years. But things got worse on September 11. Fearing a new war, aid agencies pulled out their international staff, making internal food distribution far more difficult. And once the bombing started, truckers became more reluctant to bring the food in. To cite just one example of how war interferes with getting food to the needy, Human Rights Watch reported on October 18, "shrapnel from U.S. bombs landing at the Kabul airport wounded an employee of the U.N. World Food Program.... The incident halted what would have been the first OXFAM food delivery into the famine stricken Hazarajat district of Afghanistan since September 11." In addition, U.S. attacks on civilian infrastructure (for example, the power station at the Kajaki Dam) increased civilian suffering, and, not surprisingly, few farmers want to plant crops while U.S. bombs fall. According to a specialist for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, Afghanistan had "an extremely high mortality rate even before September," but "we can only expect that the situation is much worse today" (Gall with Becker, *New York Times*, Dec. 6, 2001).

Fortunately, the Taliban collapsed quickly in the north of the country, and it became possible to get food in again — but food shipments actually declined, rather than increased. The reason was that the security situation was so dangerous — several journalists were killed, for example — that aid workers did not feel safe enough returning. The aid agencies called for an international security force to protect their return, but the United States rejected any international force as interfering with its war effort. So, incredibly, the battlefield victories worsened the humanitarian situation (Becker, *NYT*, Nov. 30, 2001). Furthermore, the main land-route into northern Afghanistan is over a bridge from Uzbekistan, but the Uzbekistani government said it wouldn't allow the bridge to be used unless security was provided to prevent Islamic radicals from infiltrating into the country. The U.S. refused to provide that security, declaring, in the words of one official "We don't guard bridges...." (Gall with Becker, *NYT*, Dec. 6, 2001). It now seems the bridge will finally be opened, and perhaps eventually security will be improved enough to permit food distribution. But who knows how many additional people died during this U.S. obstruction.

But even without this impediment, a catastrophe was still looming because enough food must get into the country and to many remote areas

before the winter snows make the roads impassable. Whether that race could be won or will be won once security is restored is yet unknown (though, ominously, one aid official declared, "They are too late, the snow is already here" [ibid.]) But one thing is clear in any event. No one in the U.S. government expected the war to end so soon. Thus, U.S. officials who refused to stop the bombing before winter were risking a disaster of staggering proportions, and were willing to let the Afghan people take that risk. This is reckless disregard for the lives of countless innocent civilians. When someone plays Russian Roulette and survives, we don't praise that person's wisdom. When someone plays Russian Roulette and aims the gun at the heads of millions of Afghans — even if they all survive in the end, the game is monstrous.[5] But, unfortunately, they won't all survive.

Washington has offered two defenses to the charge that it has been indifferent to the lives of Afghan civilians. First, that it has been dropping food packs to hungry people. But these food drops have been denounced by aid groups as a pure public relations gimmick — when millions are on the verge of starvation providing 35,000 daily rations per day is barely noticeable. But worse, as aid organizations noted, the drops may actually be harmful, discrediting humanitarian aid programs as being an arm of military operations, and often forcing the hungry to scurry across minefields to retrieve the packets. The second defense put forward by U.S. officials has been to charge that the starvation results from Taliban seizures of food supplies. Aid officials have refuted some of the claims of Taliban interference, but certainly there are cases where Taliban forces have looted warehouses. Such looting, however, was a predictable result of U.S. strategy. As one news report noted: "Pentagon strategists plan to take advantage of the harsh Afghan winter.... U.S. airstrikes against barracks, fuel bunkers, vehicle depots and supply stores are steadily depriving Taliban and Al Qaeda forces of the shelter, warmth, food, fuel and ammunition they will need in the coming months, defense officials said" (Landay, *San Jose Mercury News*, Oct. 24, 2001).

Christopher Hitchens has declared that this war has been won "with no serious loss of civilian life, and with an almost pedantic policy of avoiding 'collateral damage'" (*The Nation*, Dec. 17). This is an astonishing claim. The war's not even over yet, and people are dying everyday from lack of food and clothing in refugee camps (like "Maslakh" — which translates to "slaughterhouse" — west of Herat). No one knows the death toll so far or what the ultimate toll will be, but there is no doubt that the loss of life will be "serious," and will surely exceed by a huge margin the grisly toll of September 11. Such a war cannot be just.

Creating Terrorists

BUT IF THE IMMORALITY OF KILLING SO MANY CIVILIANS is one argument against the war, another is that it won't even accomplish its stated aim of reducing terrorism, even if al Qaeda leaders are killed or captured.

The decision to become a terrorist is not one that people make lightly. To kill civilians — not to mention oneself — takes a degree of fanaticism not easily achieved except under extreme circumstances, where deep anger and frustration become unleashed. It takes years of suffering at the hands of an arrogant oppressor, or watching loved ones brutalized. This is why terrorism rarely leads to peace, but instead to more terrorism, in an escalating cycle of violence. Terror by one side does not justify counter-terrorism, but one usually provokes the other, nonetheless.

The U.S. war in Afghanistan will probably add to the number of terrorists who hate the United States. Every innocent civilian who dies in that war has relatives, and these relatives are unlikely to draw as the lessons of these deaths that violence is wrong or that killing civilians is unacceptable. On the contrary, this is the sort of situation that can drive someone to adopt nihilistic violence or see civilians as legitimate targets.[6] This will especially be the case when the country responsible for the dead relatives behaves in an arrogant manner.

The United States earned a great deal of sympathy on September 11, but since then its policies have seemed particularly designed to outrage Muslim and Arab opinion.

Despite Secretary of State Colin Powell's initial pledge to publicly present the evidence against Osama bin Laden, the United States has refused to do so. The Bush administration, stated the *New York Times* on Oct. 7, "decided it was not necessary to make public its evidence against Mr. bin Laden." Admittedly, it may be impossible to present some evidence without compromising secret sources, but, significantly, Washington privately showed its evidence to Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf — before his intelligence chief was dismissed for being too sympathetic to the Taliban. From the beginning, bin Laden has seemed the likely culprit, but our strong suspicions are not the same as evidence. Public opinion in the Muslim world asked to see the evidence and was denied.

True, British Prime Minister Tony Blair issued a report purporting to present the evidence — but it was hardly definitive. And on November 14 — more than five weeks after the bombing began — Blair issued a new report, declaring that the evidence "now leaves no doubt whatever" that bin Laden was responsible. In fact, the evidence *still* wasn't conclusive, but in any event isn't the evidence supposed to precede, not follow, the punishment?

If snubbing the widespread request in the Middle East that evidence be presented revealed U.S. arrogance — we don't need to present evidence, ran the implication, we say it, so it has to be true — Washington exhibited even more arrogance in its pre-war dealings with the Taliban. Contrary to the standard account, the Taliban did not reject out of hand the U.S. demand to turn over bin Laden. On October 5 — two days before the onset of the bombing — the Taliban ambassador to Pakistan stated: "We are prepared to try him if America provides solid evidence of Osama bin Laden's involvement in the attacks on New York and Washington."

Asked if bin Laden could be tried in another country, the ambassador said, "We are willing to talk about that, but ... we must be given the evidence." Indeed, said the ambassador, legal proceedings could begin even before the United States offered any evidence: "Under Islamic law, we can put him on trial according to allegations raised against him and then the evidence would be provided to the court." The U.S. dismissed the ambassador's remarks, refused to provide evidence, declared that its demands were non-negotiable, and initiated its bombardment of Afghanistan. Was the Taliban offer serious? Was it simply a delaying tactic? Could it have been the basis for further concessions? Who knows? Washington never pursued it. Superpowers don't need to negotiate.

Moreover, those who rule the world don't even have to follow international law, even if that international law provides institutional arrangements that strongly privilege the position of the powerful. The Bush administration pointedly decided not to get United Nations authorization for its actions. Of course, self-defense permits nations to repel an invader; but issuing ultimatums half-way around the world and launching a war of indefinite duration surely exceeds the standard international law precedent (the *Caroline* case) which holds that self-defense applies only to cases where "necessity of that self defense is instant, overwhelming, and leaving no choice of means, and no moment for deliberation." When other countries are the victims of terrorist or other attacks, Washington urges them to follow the procedures of international law and take the matter to the United Nations. But the United States does not see itself as bound by these same restraints.

The unilateralism of the U.S. response was especially noted in the Muslim world. Iran, for example, which had indicated its willingness to support a UN action, sharply condemned the U.S. attack on Afghanistan. But the U.S. reserved for itself not just the right to unilaterally judge the evidence against bin Laden, unilaterally deliver an ultimatum to the Taliban, unilaterally assess the response, and unilaterally go to war. Washington went further, delivering a note to the Security Council indicating that U.S. self-defense measures might require it to attack other countries of its choosing — essentially announcing an open-ended right to sit as judge and executioner of the entire world. This was arrogance with a vengeance — and it was hardly likely to reduce the intense anger at the United States among so many Arabs and Muslims.

Alternatives

SO IF THE CURRENT WAR IS NOT THE ANSWER, then what else could be done in the short-run to reduce the prospects of a repetition of September 11?

The first and probably the main thing to have done was to pursue the standard techniques of law enforcement (without the appalling attack on civil liberties). Such steps are pooh-poohed by those eager for war, but in fact such measures have already shown substantial results,

and, if anything, it is these measures, not the war, that we can thank for the absence of post-September 11 terrorist attacks in the West. Terrorist cells have been investigated and disrupted, and their members arrested in many countries, including Spain, Germany, and Italy. Financial networks used by terrorists have been dealt a severe blow and are under continuing pressure. Terrorist money-laundering could have been greatly reduced long ago but for the opposition of the banking industry and its political supporters (Weiner and Johnston, *NYT*, Sept. 20, 2001). In any event, one of the chief obstacles to even greater success in the police investigations and the efforts against the financial networks has been the limited cooperation of Saudi Arabia. Few U.S. policymakers, however, have proposed expanding the war on terror to Riyadh.

Christopher Hitchens has written that "Apparently unimpressed by those who maintained that the Al Qaeda death squads were trying to utter a cry for help about the woes of the world's poor..., Judge Baltasar Garzón has put the Spanish wing of this gangster network into custody" (*The Nation*, Dec. 17). This is an exceedingly offensive sentence, implying that those who pointed to the roots of terrorism were not just excusing al Qaeda, but were even against the arrest of members of terrorist cells. There are people who oppose the war in Afghanistan — being not quite as convinced as Hitchens that U.S. officials have pursued "an almost pedantic policy of avoiding 'collateral damage'" — without believing that al Qaeda operatives should remain at large among us to sow further terror. For example, one commentator has written:

> The West and its political, military, social and economic hierarchies have been more preoccupied with the abusive and shameful march of production, speculation and profit than with an adequate redistribution of wealth. It has favoured a policy of social exclusion over integration and progressive immigration. And it has insisted on maintaining — and insisted on payment of — external debt instead of using those funds in the same countries it is now asking for help and understanding. For all those conscious mistakes, the West is suffering the terrible consequences of fanatical religious violence.

Does this commentator oppose arresting members of terrorist cells? No — given that these are the words of Judge Baltasar Garzón himself (*Financial Times*, Oct. 3, 2001). Garzón, whom Hitchens praises for telling U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft to respect the rule of law, notes that the response he seeks "is not military," but "one based on law," specifically "through the immediate approval of an international convention on terrorism."

The question may legitimately be raised that while law enforcement may be the way to deal with terrorist networks in the United States and Europe, how can this get at a bin Laden who was being harbored by the government of Afghanistan? Say the Taliban *really* refused to turn over bin Laden to justice? Is he to be permitted to continue planning and plotting terrorist outrages? International law provides a remedy. The United States should present its evidence to the United Nations for it to take appropriate

action. Under its Charter, the UN is authorized to take various steps, up to and including the use of force, to maintain international peace and security.

Those who favor the U.S. war in Afghanistan reject the United Nations route as being unrealistic. Richard Falk (in his first, pro-war position) claimed that it "seems highly improbable that the U.S. government can be persuaded to rely on the collective security mechanisms of the UN." True enough, but this is not an argument against calling for the U.S. to go to the UN. It was also highly improbable that Osama bin Laden could have been persuaded to rely on non-terroristic methods of redressing his grievances, but that doesn't make his terrorism just or lead us to refrain from condemning him for not doing so.[7]

Another way in which going to the UN is said to be unrealistic is that the UN has no troops of its own and thus cannot do more than issue nice-sounding resolutions. But though the UN has no military force, it can request the loan of appropriate military forces from member states, including the United States, that would operate under the direction and control of the UN. The only obstacle to this happening is that Washington refuses to cede any authority over any of its troops to the UN. But this is not a reason for us to accept unilateral U.S. action.

Going to the UN or using other international institutions (such as war crimes tribunals) are also rejected by some who oppose the U.S. war. These critics argue that the UN (and perhaps also other international institutions more generally) are illegitimate and undemocratic; in this view, international action is just as objectionable as unilateral U.S. action and we shouldn't call for UN involvement.

Indeed, the UN is undemocratic. Many of its constituent states are themselves brutal dictatorships, and the Security Council, its most powerful body and the one with primary responsibility for enforcement action, has a voting system giving veto power to five big powers, including the United States, Russia, and China. So why should we pay any attention to the UN, why should its rulings carry any moral weight, and why should we urge the U.S. to submit its grievances to it?

Going to the UN would make U.S. action legal, in conformity with treaties signed by the United States and other nations. But that an action is legal does not mean that it is just. If the UN authorized an attack on Afghanistan that killed many civilians, this would be wrong and immoral and we should oppose such a war. The Left often criticizes actions that are legal but that violate moral norms. It is legal for bosses to exploit their workers, but of course we still denounce such exploitation. But though we know the laws are rigged in favor of the rich, we still tell the rich to follow the law. Say a rich person's child has been mugged and the rich person responds by hiring a goon to break the kneecaps of the attacker. We condemn this vigilante action. But, what if the rich person claims he has no choice. We would reply, "Yes you do. You can do what all citizens are supposed to do in these cases. Go to the police and let them

deal with it." We say this even though we know that the police, and the law more generally, are often beholden to the rich. Now it may be that if he went to the police, they would proceed to kneecap the attacker themselves. Then what? Then we'd condemn the police action. But we still think it's better to have a legal system than not and would prefer to have people adhering to the law than not, though in some cases we ourselves will call for people to violate unjust laws.

Law places *some* constraints on the power of the powerful. Obviously, we want to see those constraints enhanced and, until there is a truly equitable and democratic legal system, we will want to continually point out existing biases. What about on the international level: does the UN constrain United States foreign policy? The fact that the United States chooses not to go to the UN suggests that Washington believes that to some degree it would not have the same freedom of action as it would have if acting unilaterally. And that's one reason we should demand that it abide by international law and go to the UN. Washington probably also believes that it is important for its credibility as a superpower, for its ability to get other states to succumb to its threats, that there be no precedent established that it needs to seek authorization from the UN. And this is the other reason we should demand that it go to the UN. Yes, the UN contains a lot of thugs, but it's probably harder to get a group of thugs to endorse a specific act of thuggery than to let one thug decide unilaterally.

What do we tell other countries when they are the victims of attack? In October, for example, the Indian state legislature in Kashmir was hit by a terrorist attack, with several dozen casualties. India suspected — probably accurately — that Pakistan was complicit in the attack. Do we want India to unilaterally issue ultimatums, assess the responses, and then go to war? What about Ethiopia and Eritrea, claiming cross-border attacks? In all these sorts of cases we'd like to see the aggrieved party present evidence to the UN and refrain from unilateral action. So do we really want to say that all aggrieved parties *except the United States* should go to the UN? Again, saying that the U.S. should go to the UN does not mean that we have to endorse what the UN chooses to do. We especially should be hesitant to endorse any move by the UN to give a blank check to the United States (or anyone else) to carry out a unilateral action under the UN flag. The problem here is not so much that the troops will all come from a single country, as that the crucial decisions — wording an ultimatum, assessing the response, deciding how much harm to civilians is "acceptable," deciding when the operation should end — will be made by Washington (or whoever has been given the blank check). In the 1991 Gulf War against Iraq, for example, there was UN authorization, but every significant decision was made in the White House, not at UN Headquarters. The U.S. bought the necessary votes and ran the war entirely on its own. We should oppose blank checks and should have opposed that war, but that doesn't mean we should have opposed the call

for the United States to go to the UN.

Some analysts, such as Ian Williams ("The UN and the United States in Afghanistan," Foreign Policy in Focus, Nov. 30, 2001) claim that in fact the UN has already given a blank check to the United States. The Security Council did pass a strongly-worded resolution condemning the September 11 attacks, reaffirming the right to self-defense, and urging international cooperation to combat terrorism. It did not, however, authorize the U.S. war in Afghanistan (or anywhere else). If it *had* done so, giving Washington carte blanche to do as it wished, then we should have criticized the UN's abdication of its responsibilities.

Given the especially undemocratic nature of the Security Council, it makes sense to call for aggrieved parties to go not to that body, but to the General Assembly. Under the Charter, the Security Council was supposed to have exclusive responsibility for enforcement action, but a precedent was set in 1950 at U.S. urging that the General Assembly could act in such cases under the Uniting for Peace resolution. The General Assembly, of course, is also not a model of democratic structure, but it is less problematic than the Security Council. Significantly, during the Kosovo war, NATO justified their bypassing the UN with the claim that the Russians or the Chinese would have vetoed any action. But the British government apparently considered the possibility of seeking General Assembly authorization under the Uniting for Peace resolution and rejected the idea.[8] Presumably, they didn't want to establish the precedent of the UN acting in a body where Britain didn't have veto power.

One problem with acting through the UN, or through any instrument of international law, is that the powerful will be less likely to appear in the dock than the weak. The UN might call for enforcement action against some small rogue state, but never against a powerful state (or even the close ally of a powerful state). The International Criminal Court might put a bin Laden on trial, but never a Bush, Putin, or Sharon. I'm not sure that Washington is so confident that such a Court might not interfere with its freedom of action (else why such opposition to the Court among U.S. officials?). But in any event the argument that we should oppose the Court because not all criminals will be punished is unconvincing.

Say a corporate CEO is responsible for thousands of deaths but his political clout enables him to escape punishment. At about the same time some poor person goes around committing serial murders. Would anyone say that we should not arrest the latter because the former is out free? This is not simply a question of equitable treatment — that we want to treat all murderers equally; it's also, and more importantly, a matter of protecting innocent victims. So by all means, let us denounce the murderous policies of the CEO (and of Bush, Putin, Sharon, etc.), point out the inequities, and demand that the legal system deal with *all* criminals; nevertheless, we must stop those murders that we can stop, even if we can't stop them all.

The Taliban

ALTHOUGH WASHINGTON'S STATED REASON FOR GOING TO WAR against Afghanistan related to Osama bin Laden, the Bush administration was glad to discover just how deserving of overthrow the Taliban was. Some of the indictment against the Taliban — like Blair's claim that this was a war to save Europe from being flooded with opium — was nonsense (in the last year the Taliban had stamped out poppy production in regions under its control, while production more than doubled in territory held by our new-found allies, the Northern Alliance) and some was gallingly hypocritical, coming from an administration whose first act had been to prohibit any international group receiving U.S. funds from accurately informing women of their reproductive health options. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the Taliban was a moral abomination. Its oppression of women was perhaps in a class by itself in modern times. And this oppression was not just a reflection of the backward social norms of Afghanistan: while social pressure played a role in constraining women, the Taliban's Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice enforced the regime's misogynist decrees with an iron fist. The Taliban's religious intolerance was also extreme, as was its general neglect of the public welfare. Thus, the demise of the Taliban is a welcome event.

This happy outcome does not, however, make the U.S. war just. The Afghan people will not be going from a horrible regime to a decent one, but — there is good reason to believe — from a horrible one to a slightly less horrible one. And, in any moral calculus, this residual benefit must be weighed against the human costs of the war as well as the costs of having regime changes decided in Washington.

The major armed force in the opposition that is replacing the Taliban is the Northern Alliance (also called the United Front). Hitchens disparages those who are critical of the Northern Alliance's "spotty" human rights record, but others have used rather stronger language to describe its record. Human Rights Watch, for example, condemned the "dismal human rights records" of some of Washington's new allies, who had a "deplorable record" of attacks on civilians. "From 1992 to 1997, forces that are now part of the alliance shelled civilian neighborhoods in Kabul and looted, raped and killed civilians there and in other parts of the country." In March 1995, reported the U.S. State Department, Northern Alliance forces "went on a rampage" in Kabul, "systematically looting whole streets and raping women."[9] The Revolutionary Association of Afghan Women was less restrained in its November 13 assessment: "The retreat of the terrorist Taliban from Kabul is a positive development, but entering of the rapist and looter NA in the city is nothing but a dreadful and shocking news for about 2 million residents of Kabul whose wounds of the years 1992-96 have not healed yet." One might recall how the Taliban came to power: in part it was with the military help of Pakistan's intelligence service, but in part the population was so fed up with the deadly power-struggles that characterized the Northern Alliance's

reign, that the Taliban was welcomed for restoring some measure of internal peace. Now, with the Northern Alliance in power again, RAWA predicts an intensification of "ethnic and religious conflicts" and "another brutal and endless civil war.…The terrible news of looting and inhuman massacre of the captured Taliban or their foreign accomplices in Mazar e Sharif in [the] past few days speaks for itself."

The change from the Taliban to the new government has come about at a tremendous price: namely, all the war-induced deaths from starvation, disease, and exposure, from destroyed civilian infrastructure, from stray bombs and lingering bomblets. The price includes as well all the stunted development that will be the long-term impact of war-induced severe malnutrition. Of course, there are deaths to be counted on the other side of the ledger as well; for example, the Taliban's policy of denying girls an education contributed to Afghanistan's horrific infant and maternal mortality rates. We don't have, and we won't have, any accurate data as to the overall human consequences — positive and negative — of this war, but certainly there is no basis for the claim that the war has involved, in Hitchens' words, "no serious loss of civilian life."

Aside from the costs of the war on the Afghan people, the war has one other extremely significant cost: the precedent it sets for unilateral U.S. military intervention. Recall that from 1979-89 the mujahideen who were fighting the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan were vicious women-haters. Some mujahideen leaders were infamous for throwing acid at females who dared to show their faces in public or go to school. The Soviets, on the other hand, backed a regime that would have promoted women's rights, relatively speaking. But would anyone think that this justified the Soviet invasion? Even if the Soviet invasion had not caused some one million deaths, Moscow's more enlightened view on women would not have justified its invasion. One can make a case that sovereignty is not sacrosanct, that extreme human rights violations might justify a humanitarian intervention. But surely, we would not want the intervention to be decided upon by a single government, especially one whose foreign policy more generally has promoted the most egregious violations of human rights. Washington has already served notice that it considers itself to have the right to intervene anywhere in the world it chooses in pursuit of its war on terrorism. This is a precedent that must be opposed.

Why War?

WASHINGTON DID NOT ATTACK AFGHANISTAN BECAUSE OF ITS CONCERN over women's rights. Its enthusiastic backing for the regime that ranks second in the world's misogyny hit parade — Saudi Arabia — demonstrates that. But its stated reason for war — stamping out terrorism, or, more accurately, anti-U.S. terrorism — is not the whole story either. Surely U.S. officials are aware of the record of military force for dealing with the problem of terrorism. The history of Israel-Palestine is just one among many that

shows the counter-productivity of military action for addressing this problem. But U.S. policy-makers have another powerful reason to wage war in Afghanistan. The war serves the interests of U.S. elites. This is not to endorse the ludicrous and sickening claims that the CIA (or the Mossad) were behind the September 11 attacks. But war is quite functional to top U.S. officials. It boosts approval ratings, funnels money to the military, allows a clamp-down on civil liberties and dissent, permits the transfer of wealth to the rich, can be used to bludgeon environmentalists, delegitimates institutions of international law, bases U.S. troops in a region of growing competition over natural gas pipelines, and serves notice on the world that "what we say goes" — to use the words of George W. Bush's father.

September 11 was a horrendous event. But we shouldn't allow our trauma to distort our political judgment. We still need to oppose unjust policies and unjust wars.

NOTES

1. Thanks to Cynthia Peters, Michael Albert, and Mark Dow for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this article.

2. The Bush administration's recent statement supporting a Palestinian state, while an advance over its previous position, does not represent an acknowledgment that Israelis and Palestinians are entitled to equal rights. A Palestinian entity with the West Bank divided into multiple pieces — as Clinton's Camp David peace plan offered — is a series of Bantustans, not a viable state. Even Sharon says he supports some form of Palestinian state: unconnected islands of Palestinian self-rule surrounded by belts of Israeli control.

3. Some argue that poverty or U.S.-backed oppression can't explain terrorism because if it did then most terrorists would come from Africa, Latin America, or Vietnam. But, of course, poverty and oppression *alone* don't explain terrorism, just as poverty and oppression *alone* didn't explain why in 1789 revolution took place in relatively rich France rather than in Africa. Clearly there were other factors involved. But would anyone deny that the misery of daily life in France, and the rage that that misery engendered, mattered?

4. See my "The Obliteration of Hiroshima," *New Politics*, No. 21, Summer 1996, pp. 153-75.

5. Richard Falk now writes (*The Nation*, Dec. 24) that he had worried we were in for a long and savage military campaign inflicting great suffering on the Afghan people, but, "at this point, in view of the unexpectedly rapid collapse of the Taliban, the overall undertaking appears reasonable." But unreasonable actions do not become reasonable by virtue of unexpected developments. Say a police officer calls in air strikes against a mugger hiding in a crowded movie theater; unexpectedly the mugger gives himself up before the bombers arrive. Do we conclude that the police officer's actions were reasonable?

6. It is true, of course, that U.S. terror bombing in World War II did not produce hordes of post-war German or Japanese terrorists. But wars against nations, whose governments can surrender forces, have a different dynamic than wars against amorphous terrorist organizations. Israel, for example, has found it far easier to defeat Arab armies than Palestinian terrorist groups. In any event, during the Pacific War, U.S. bombing probably made it easier rather than harder for the Emperor to recruit kamikaze pilots.

7. For a fuller critique of Falk's initial view, see my on-line essay, "A 'Just War'? A Critique of Richard Falk," Oct. 21, 2001, www.zmag.org/shalomjustwar.htm.

8. House of Commons, Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Kosovo*, Fourth Report, June 7, 2000, Minutes of Evidence, Examination of Witnesses, Questions 63-66, 178.

9. Hiltermann and Parekh, *International Herald Tribune*, Oct. 10, 2001; HRW "Military Assistance to the Afghan Opposition," *Human Rights Watch Backgrounder*, Oct. 5, 2001.

Only a Democratic Foreign Policy Can Combat Terrorism

Thomas Harrison

IT IS STILL SO HARD TO BELIEVE. That a mere handful, armed with the simplest of weapons and the maddest of doctrines, could bring about carnage and havoc on a scale so immense beggars the most lurid imagination. Such puny forces, yet such an earth-shaking consummation. We still don't know much about Al Qaeda, except that it is (or was) a highly disciplined network of murderous fanatics, who seem to inhabit a bizarre mental netherworld of spirits, omens, prophetic dreams and bloody commandments. The attack on the World Trade Center and the other American targets was apparently part of some apocalyptic fantasy, in which these twisted, heartless men saw God guiding the righteous toward a final showdown with the "infidels" — the "crusaders and Jews," to use Osama bin Laden's expression. The videotape showing bin Laden gloating over his ghastly deeds and genially accepting the congratulations of some cronies indicates that he did not imagine that crashing the jets into the Twin Towers would bring both structures down. As it turned out, then, he and Al Qaeda succeeded beyond their wildest dreams — that is, if they measure success in terms of shedding American blood and disrupting American life. With the Taliban in ruins and their hiding places fast disappearing, it is hard to imagine that even Al Qaeda can feel triumphant. But the thoughts and feelings of these God-intoxicated zealots defy rational understanding

In any case, as has been frequently pointed out, and as most people probably understand intuitively, the American attack on Afghanistan will *not* put an end to terrorism, or even weaken or diminish it in the long run — it will almost certainly do the opposite. For one thing, the war has already enormously enhanced the ability of the world's number one perpetrator of *state* terrorism — the American government — to terrorize civilian populations wherever and whenever it chooses. And as for the other kind of terrorism, capturing or killing Osama bin Laden and his associates, and destroying the Taliban, *may* bring a brief respite. Afghanistan, it seems, was a center for violent jihad networks operating throughout the Muslim world and beyond, so the war may inflict a temporary setback on some of them as well.

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But the success of "Operation Enduring Freedom" will have no effect whatsoever on the poverty, humiliation and political powerlessness of the Muslim masses, the misery and resentment that are the medium in which totalitarian Islamism and terrorism breed. In fact, it will reinforce the repressive status quo, especially in the Middle East, where the Bush administration has publicly issued a blank check to Sharon to crush and terrorize Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, thus guaranteeing an ever-growing army of suicide bombers. Just as a hard-line response by Israel simply means that more young Palestinians will blow themselves and many innocent Israelis to bits, the current military muscle-flexing by the U.S. will bring more terrorism down on the heads of innocent Americans. If there are not already other Al Qaedas getting ready to strike at this country, there soon will be.

At the moment, popular support for the Bush administration's war policy is overwhelming. On the left, many see no alternative to U.S. military action, while others oppose it on a narrow "hands off Afghanistan" basis. I will argue first, that retaliatory war, which inevitably victimizes the innocent and reinforces American imperial power, cannot be the answer — and second, that simply saying no to war without offering a democratic, non-military strategy for fighting terrorism is inadequate and politically isolating. The only real answer to September 11 is to change American foreign policy. To those who object that adopting a new foreign policy is not an *immediate* solution, one has to insist that there *is* no immediate solution — and that the pseudo-solutions currently being pursued are immoral and counterproductive.

A Crime Against Humanity

WRITING THREE MONTHS AFTER SEPTEMBER 11, I can only recall the horror and incomprehension I felt, like millions of others, at the colossal and utterly sickening cruelty of the attack on the World Trade Center. Familiarity with history's countless barbarities doesn't help one understand how human beings can do such things. As a New Yorker, a Manhattanite, who once had a fine view of the Twin Towers from my apartment window, I struggle now to recall exactly where they were on the skyline. They were hardly beautiful, but they *were* impressive. Impossible to fully grasp, even after having seen "ground zero," that they are now nothing but smoking graveyards.

Whatever bin Laden's expectations, it might so easily have been far worse. Nearly three thousand dead is bad enough. But for all the hijackers and their masters knew, most of the 50,000 people who normally worked in the World Trade Center might have been at their jobs that morning, and far fewer might have managed to escape. The Twin Towers might have toppled over, rather than collapsing vertically, crushing a great many nearby buildings.

The September 11 terrorists must have carefully selected the tar-

gets for their symbolic significance. But the goal of Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda, with, one must assume, the hearty approval of their Taliban hosts, was also to kill Americans — "infidels" or Muslims, it didn't matter — as many as possible and in the most spectacular way imaginable, not to force the U.S. government to accede to some set of demands. Military deterrence is America's ultimate weapon against all foreign foes, actual and potential. There was no way to deter the terrorists by threats of retaliation, however — nor could they be "appeased." Suicidal holy warriors are not put off by the promise of deadly response, and it is hard to imagine any sort of concessions by the United States that would have stopped these possessed zealots. Their mental universe is a supernatural, not a political, one — not, that is, a world defined by human-scale means and ends. But they live in the real world, and in that world U.S. foreign policy, especially toward the Muslim countries, could have made and can still make a big difference.

"War Is The Health Of The State"

AMERICANS HAVE LOST THEIR "INVULNERABILITY," IT IS SAID. As inhabitants of the world's chief superpower, Americans have long been shielded from some of the harsher realities faced by our fellow human beings, and they have gotten used to a feeling of privileged isolation. September 11 has seriously challenged this smug fortress mentality. At the same time, however, it has only strengthened Americans' belief that their country is entitled to lord it over the rest of the world. This belief is not unshakeable, as we know from past history, but at the moment it is probably flourishing as never before since the 1950s.

There was nothing admirable about Americans' belief that they led some sort of charmed existence. It was always part of this country's monumental imperialist conceit, and it encouraged ignorance and indifference to the fate of other peoples. Nevertheless, there is no justification for sanctimony or speaking of chickens coming home to roost. Neither Americans nor any other people, it should go without saying, "deserve" the sort of thing that occurred on September 11, no matter what crimes their government has committed.

But the fact remains that the American government, the American military and American corporations preside over a world-system that is catastrophically irrational and deeply inhumane. And now, for the time being, that dominance is more secure than it has been in a long time, which is very bad news for the rest of the world — and for us. Abroad, billions will continue to toil and die in the most abysmal squalor, thanks in large part to the tyranny of American-backed rulers, the policies of American-dominated international financial institutions and the needs of the global capitalist order. A vast portion of the world's population, perhaps as much as one third, is unemployed. These billions could be put to work building, educating, producing the things that people so desper-

ately need. But under the present system this can never happen.

At home, the trend for the past decade and more has been for the Democrats to close ranks with the Republicans over foreign and military policy. But now, in the aftermath of September 11, almost no one in Congress or the media will have the courage to suggest that the U.S. should not continue to guard its global preeminence at all costs, that it is madness to maintain a bloated military establishment, bristling with evermore horrifying weapons, sucking up vital resources that could be used to support decent lives for millions both here and abroad. There will be very little talk of eliminating or even scaling down the country's massive nuclear arsenal, which poses a world-wide security threat that makes Osama bin Laden look like a juvenile delinquent.

Meanwhile, no one seems to know where the war is going — perhaps including the war makers themselves. Even among many of those who support the war, there is a sense of dread as Congress rubber-stamps the administration's demands for extraordinary war powers, arrangements are made for secret military tribunals, and talk of fifth columnists and traitors proliferates. As for the President, his glaring personal inadequacies and his political illegitimacy — the stolen election of 2000 — have been all but forgotten. Now this grotesque windup-doll, absurd and evil at the same time, this utter cipher gets to strut across the national and world stage, a servile press hanging on his every inane word, issuing peremptory edicts and attempting to sound stern and menacing.

And then there's the flag, that now ubiquitous icon. It's hard to quibble with those who wear or display it to symbolize their grief. But, in fact, for most Americans it symbolizes far more. In the current crisis, putting out the stars and stripes is all about national "unity." It is not merely a gesture of sorrow and solidarity with the victims of September 11. Unfortunately, it's also a declaration of unity with Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Ashcroft and the whole political and corporate elite as well.

The political implications of all this flag waving and unity mongering are, or should be, depressingly clear. As the radical writer Randolph Bourne said during World War I, "war is the health of the state." The current atmosphere has already provided an unprecedented opportunity for corporate plundering, new assaults on the environment and bolstering police powers. Under cover of the crisis, the right has lost no time implementing its agenda: star wars, increasing the military budget, more tax breaks for the rich, savaging civil liberties. The Democrats, with the tiniest handful of exceptions, have fallen all over themselves to reassure the administration that partisanship is now the farthest things from their minds — not that the Democrats were any kind of opposition even before September 11.

Ashcroft's sinister program of mass detentions, secret military tribunals and eavesdropping has nothing to do with real security — but everything to do with the Bush administration's disregard for civil liberties and relentless drive for power. Most of this program has simply been

imposed by executive fiat, but earlier portions sailed effortlessly through Congress, blessed by the Democrats' willingness to be, in Tom Daschle's word, "understanding." When the Senate Judiciary Committee, responding to a rising tide of concern, had the temerity to summon the Ayatollah Ashcroft, all he had to do was warn the Democrats that civil libertarianism "aided terrorists" to send them into a "political rout," as the *Wall Street Journal* put it.

The Attack on Afghanistan Is No Just War

THE PRUSSIAN MILITARY THEORIST KARL VON CLAUSEWITZ famously described war as the continuation of politics by other — military — means. The politics of this war have nothing to do with stopping terrorism per se — American leaders know full well that they cannot do this. The real politics are about something else — extending U.S. hegemony over Afghanistan and, more importantly, reasserting American predominance as the world's leading superpower and chief cop of the global capitalist order. Even the war's open-endedness, the administration's refusal to clearly define goals, has a definite political meaning: the assertion of an unlimited "right" to attack any country the United States chooses.

Strengthening ties to the Saudi royal family, winning the discreet concordance of the Iranian mullahs, and forging links with the Central Asian republics have served to further shore up American domination of the Persian Gulf region and its hinterland. A new U.S. military presence has already been established in Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, as well as Afghanistan itself. As I write, it is not yet clear if the war will be carried to Iraq, Yemen, Lebanon and Somalia: here too, striking at a vicious dictator in Baghdad or at terrorist nests in the other countries would have the effect primarily of advancing American power, with all the malign consequences that would flow from that — and not promoting democracy and "civilized values."

The war's brevity (assuming it ends with the final elimination of the Taliban and Al Qaeda), and relatively limited civilian casualties do not obviate its essential immorality. One has to be cautious about describing civilian deaths as "limited," of course, because the press has no reliable estimates at this point. The Pentagon probably has a pretty good idea how many civilians have perished under the bombardments, but for obvious reasons it is keeping this information secret. The number of civilian casualties is in all likelihood well above the toll in the World Trade Center attack. U.S. policy of relying on the Northern Alliance and anti-Taliban Pashtun militias as ground forces (there has been very little sustained combat on the ground), while conducting heavy aerial bombardment guarantees the deaths of thousands of innocent Afghans. But no matter how many or few have died and will die, there can be no justification for killing Afghan peasants and other noncombatants to extract vengeance for September 11 or to further the interests of American power.

There is no reason to doubt the word of Bush and Rumsfeld that they don't *want* innocent people to perish, but they obviously know that numerous civilian casualties are inevitable and, frankly, it's hard to imagine them losing much sleep over it.

Tony Blair gave a speech to the Welsh parliament defending the war in which he expressed regret for civilian casualties but told his listeners, essentially: whenever you hear about Afghan casualties, think again about the people who died in the World Trade Center and the passengers in those hijacked jets. In other words, he was saying: *don't* think about the victims of British and American bombs; as soon as you hear about them on some inconvenient news broadcast, try to blot them out of your minds. That way, they won't be real and you won't have to feel any emotions or think any thoughts that would get in the way of the war effort. But as Arundhati Roy, the Indian novelist and courageous campaigner against her government's nuclear weapons, has said (*In These Times*, Nov. 26, 2001): "Each innocent person that is killed must be *added* to, not set off against, the grisly toll of civilians who died in New York and Washington."

Most important of all, Bush, Blair and their allies emphatically did *not* know when the attack on Afghanistan was launched that masses of civilians would *not* be killed, and they were quite prepared to see them die. This is important to keep in mind; indeed, it is key to understanding how American power is exercised. The administration expected a long, drawn-out war; Rumsfeld said as much on numerous occasions. Now it is probably true that the architects of "Operation Enduring Freedom" never intended to rain down bombs and missiles on Afghanistan indiscriminately. But this is not because American leaders are tenderhearted. They are no more humane than the criminal gang — Nixon, Kissinger and the rest — that carpet-bombed Cambodia in the 1970s. If they had decided that this was the only way they could get Al Qaeda and bin Laden and destroy the Taliban *and* that they could get away with it, they would have carpet bombed without a qualm.

Fortunately for the people of Afghanistan such a policy was militarily unnecessary and would probably have been politically impossible in any case. Unlike the Soviet Union in the 1980s, which confronted Afghan forces amounting to 100,000 men, heavily armed and subsidized by the CIA and Pakistan, the U.S. faced a scraggly and rapidly disintegrating Taliban army, abandoned by its foreign backers and loathed by the civilian population, as recent events have shown. Moreover, the effect on public opinion throughout the Muslim world of a more intense U.S. assault, a public opinion already deeply alienated by a relatively limited war, would have been too destabilizing for the American government's friends, especially Pakistan. U.S. policymakers had no wish to trigger the Armageddon sought by the mad bin Laden

But again, all this had to do with strategy and political expediency, not any willingness on the part of American leaders to abide by the rules

of limited warfare for ethical reasons. When the bombing began, delivery of food to an estimated 5.5 million starving Afghans was brought to a halt. Now that the fighting is winding down, relief will resume, one supposes — although the onset of winter will slow things down, and the possible resumption of internecine violence among the restored warlords could easily imperil humanitarian efforts. But the point is, the speed with which the Taliban has been driven from power was not expected by U.S. officials, who turned a deaf ear to pleas by UN and other relief agencies and were unflinchingly ready to accept mass starvation as part of the price of victory. The policy of dropping snack packs from the air, many of them falling on mine fields, was an empty and absolutely cynical gesture, meant solely to deflect attention from the real humanitarian disaster the U.S. was about to create.

So, even if it could be shown that the results of the war are "proportionate" to the means employed, as "just-war" theorists such as Richard Falk have maintained (and I have argued that the broader political agenda of the U.S. renders a narrow means-ends calculus irrelevant), this could not have been known in advance. No confidence should ever be entrusted in *this* American government to use its military power in a restrained way, and certainly not to use this power for legitimate ends.

Varieties of Terrorism

THE CLAIM THAT THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT IS WAGING A WAR against "terrorism" is absolutely Orwellian. To be sure, the incident that began the current conflict was an act of terrorism in the fullest sense and of the most horrific kind. By plunging those planes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Al Qaeda declared war on the entire American people, not just on the U.S. government. Its object was to frighten and demoralize the whole population, to make it so that no American can feel safe. But terrorism comes in many forms.

Terrorism — instilling fear for political ends — originally meant state terrorism, used against domestic opponents of a government as during the French Revolution. Later it came to be applied almost exclusively to anti-state actions, what anarchists called the "propaganda of the deed." In the 1970s "international terrorism" emerged — bombings, hostage seizures, plane hijackings — often supported by "rogue states." Since World War II, however, terrorism perpetrated by the world's most powerful (non-"rogue") states against foreign countries has devastated great swaths of the globe and taken far more victims than any band of hijackers or suicide bombers.

The chief culprit in this sort of terrorism has been none other than the United States. Through direct military intervention and the sponsorship of foreign proxies, the U.S. government has terrorized vast populations as a means of crushing popular insurgencies and keeping pro-American elites in power. Instead of hijacking and hostage-taking, the

U.S. has trained torturers and death squads, provided weaponry and intelligence, and, when necessary, itself bombed civilians from the air to secure its aims. This state terrorism in defense of the status quo has simply dwarfed the other kind (which, of course, does not justify terrorism by less powerful states or by non-state forces).

The anti-terrorist credentials of America's current allies simply cannot be taken seriously. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, along with the United States, helped create the very networks that gave birth to the Taliban and Al Qaeda. In the 1980s, Pakistan's military dictator, general Zia-ul-Haq, the recipient of billions of dollars in U.S. and Saudi aid, set up hundreds of fundamentalist madrasas, religious schools, to train young men to be terrorist fanatics. Pakistan continues to sponsor terrorist attacks on India. Within Saudi Arabia, the fantastically corrupt autocracy, increasingly cut off from its subjects, has in its panic and desperation poured millions into violent fundamentalist groups as protection money — even though these groups are dedicated to its overthrow. Russia wages a war of terror against Chechen civilians. China's totalitarian regime, with its secret police, vast gulag of prisons and thousands of executions, is a terror state par excellence. Actually, none of the big powers currently supporting the anti-terrorist crusade have any objection to terrorism as such, just to terrorism directed against *them*. As the wildly overrated Colin Powell put it, with truly breathtaking cynicism: "One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter."

"Why Do They Hate Us?"

BIN LADEN, THE TALIBAN AND THE ISLAMISTS *DEPEND* ON the crimes of American foreign policy. Without these crimes, their political appeal would be much weaker. The answer to the question so often asked in the aftermath of September 11 — "Why do they hate us?" — is that it's our country's actions, our government's foreign policy above all, rather than our "values" — what we *do*, not what we supposedly stand for — that fuels popular anger in the Muslim world. Like people in all poor, tradition-bound societies, the consciousness of the broad majority is fairly conservative and patriarchal. This is especially true where a mass-based secularist, democratic left has either been crushed or hasn't yet developed — which is the case throughout the Muslim world. Plus, of course, the teachings of mainstream Islam — like those of most religions — tend to have a conservatizing impact on popular consciousness. But if many Muslims respond to the appeals of political Islamism it is not — apart from a hard core — because they want to obliterate "Western civilization" and establish a global theocracy. Political sympathy for Islamism is fundamentally *reactive* — to the policies of the U.S. and other Western countries, and to the authoritarian rule of Western client regimes.

When American leaders proclaim their commitment to democracy and

human rights, most citizens of Muslim countries know that this is a lie, that the U.S. has been a determined and very effective enemy of every attempt to empower the mass of Muslim people. For decades now, the American government has supported every dictator and corrupt royal family that has agreed to play along with it. Our vaunted "way of life" is a privilege we jealously reserve for ourselves, Western Europe and a few other rich nations. Muslims regard the U.S. as an arrogant, hypocritical, and totally self-interested bully, a global thug, a genuine rogue state that does exactly as it pleases. And to top it all off, in their eyes the U.S. is a cowardly thug that wages risk-free wars, firing missiles at its enemies from hundreds of miles away and dropping bombs from 15,000 feet in the air.

There can be little doubt that this is how our country is perceived by the mass of Muslims from Morocco to Indonesia — even Iranian young people chafing under the mullahs and longing for Western-style freedoms, or Afghans temporarily elated by the fall of the Taliban and grateful to their "liberators." Actual *political* support for the U.S. — that is, support for its global role as the dominant superpower — is limited to a small minority among the privileged elite. Among ordinary people, only those who have actually experienced life under Islamist regimes — as in Iran and Afghanistan — will gravitate toward the U.S., but even then only temporarily. In the last analysis, the American government can have little appeal to the masses in the Muslim world because it does not trust or respect them, and because it fears their democratic power like poison.

Can the Leopard Change Its Spots?

AMERICAN LEFTISTS, SUCH AS CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS, who advocate "humanitarian intervention" by the U.S. military often point to the example of the Iraqi Kurds. But the American policy towards the Kurds illustrates precisely a pattern that is deeply resented in the Muslim world — the way in which Muslims are alternately coldly ignored and cynically manipulated by the U.S. American leaders only pretended to care about the Iraqi Kurds when that was useful during the Gulf War, then blithely allowed Saddam Hussein to attack them after the war had been "won." As always, the U.S. preferred the immediate restoration of "stability" under a strongman, even Saddam Hussein. It was only after an international outcry that the Bush administration provided a protection zone, meanwhile including the Kurdish regions of northern Iraq in the UN embargo. So Kurds starve, but at least Baghdad can't bomb them. Meanwhile, millions of Turkish Kurds can expect no official American sympathy whatsoever, since their oppressor is a NATO member and important U.S. ally.

Hitchens would no doubt grant that for the most part the history of American policy in this region makes a sordid tale. But he argues that the Iraqi case proves that "enlightened pressure" can *sometimes* re-de-

ploy American military forces in a limited way for humanitarian purposes. No reasonable person can doubt that Iraqi Kurds are better off, at the moment, living under the protection of America air cover than they would be if left to the tender mercies of Saddam Hussein. Nor would it make any sense to maintain that U.S. foreign policy is immune to enlightened public pressure. In the past, organized protest has won important victories, like forcing the Reagan administration to impose sanctions on South Africa. But the *total* effect of U.S. policy is the opposite of what sanctions, no-fly zones and other ostensibly pro-human rights initiatives would seem to suggest. Today, the leaders of South Africa and the ANC have become political prisoners of Washington and the World Bank.* The overall policy of the U.S. towards Iraq and the Kurds remains an imperialist one, based on realpolitik. The Iraqi Kurds are pawns in Washington's game and subordinated to its agenda.

Some more recent examples, also held up by Hitchens and other advocates of humanitarian intervention as prime examples of American benevolence, are the wars over Bosnia and Kosova. But a closer look is needed. The U.S. gave tacit political support to Belgrade for years while Serb forces massacred Bosnian Muslims. When American intervention came, it occurred at the moment Bosnia's troops were beginning to take the offensive against Serb strongholds in the western part of the country, and it was designed to head off a complete victory for the Sarajevo government. The resulting Dayton Accords permanently partitioned the country as a reward for Milosevic's cooperation — he was then still seen by the U.S. as a useful strongman in the Balkans. For even longer, the U.S. gave Milosevic the green light to do his worst to the Kosovars; when NATO finally did an about face and intervened against Belgrade, it was not to rescue the Kosovars, although it had that accidental and welcome side effect, but to punish a defiant and no-longer useful sub-imperialist. Few Muslims were fooled by American propaganda in these cases, or by apologists like Hitchens, because they have kept the bigger picture in mind.

The Gulf War was generally seen in the Muslim world as a war for oil and American power, not for Kuwait's right to self-determination, much less a war to bring democracy to Iraq, and the subsequent sanctions that have brought death to many thousands of Iraqi children are regarded as a continuing atrocity. And then there are the policies that no decent left-

*This doesn't mean it was wrong to call for sanctions, of course. It was right, in part because sanctions themselves did not increase the ability of the American Establishment to control the popular movement in South Africa. By contrast, the no-fly zone over Iraq is intimately connected to American imperial domination of the Persian Gulf, with all that that entails in terms of a massive U.S. military presence in the region, backing the rulers of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Jordan, etc. In the first case, opponents of apartheid demanded, in effect, that the U.S. stop acting like an empire — Cold War policy and the need to protect American investments had been the main reason Washington had supported the Pretoria government. In the second case, the call for air cover in no way challenged America's "right" to continuing playing its imperial role.

ist or democrat can attempt to justify — toward the Turkish Kurds and the Chechens (weak, pro forma American criticisms of Russian savagery have been overwhelmingly outweighed by Washington's embracing of Putin), massive aid for the brutal Mubarak regime in Egypt. About Israel, little needs to be said. Its crimes against the Palestinian people, aided and abetted at every step by Washington, have outraged Muslims for decades. In all these areas, the U.S. has acted pretty much according to its natural inclinations, while paying nothing more than lip service — and sometimes not even that — to human rights concerns. The idea of American humanitarian intervention — intervention by *this* government, whether under Bush or Clinton — on behalf of the Palestinians, or Chechens, or Turkish Kurds is laughable.

If situations like the plight of Iraq's Kurds under Saddam Hussein and the whole Afghan people under the Taliban could somehow be isolated from world politics, then it might be right for the U.S. to intervene. In fact, it would probably be right for *any* state that could do so to intervene. What if Putin or Jiang Zemin — or even Muammar Qaddafi or Saddam Hussein — offered to attack Afghanistan in order to destroy the Taliban? What would be wrong with supporting them? While their tactics might (or might not) be more brutal than those employed by Washington, the result would probably be pretty much the same: restoration of the pre-Taliban warlords, a little more freedom for Afghan women, maybe even a little economic aid. Presumably, nevertheless, no one who cares about democracy and human rights would have called for or supported anything of the kind. It is the agendas of intervening powers that matter, not the accidental by-products of their intervention.

Writing in *The Nation* (Dec. 17, 2001), Katha Pollit points out that whatever freedoms are restored in Afghanistan, including for women, this was not the goal of U.S. intervention but merely a bonus, so to speak. If American leaders had had the slightest interest in Afghans' democratic rights, then Carter, Reagan, and Bush would not have supported the mujahedeen and Clinton would not have essentially ignored Taliban oppression. In the same issue, Hitchens claims to see a "new situation" resulting from the war. But what's new about it, unless Hitchens is suggesting that Bush junior, of all people, has ushered in a foreign policy qualitatively different from his predecessors?

Pollit mentions the glaring inconsistency of Laura Bush speaking out for Afghan women while maintaining a diplomatic silence over the treatment of women in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt and other American allies. One should add that while the war might have made democracy more accessible for Afghans (it remains to be seen whether the warlords and tribal chiefs will actually allow free elections, or even whether they will refrain from reverting to their custom of plundering the country and warring incessantly over the spoils), it has probably been a setback for democracy in some other countries — Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, the

former Soviet republics in Central Asia, the Israeli Occupied Territories, indeed the United States itself. And globally, strengthening the American imperium cannot bode well for democratic prospects.

The Appeal of Islamism

SYMBIOSIS — A RELATIONSHIP OF MUTUAL SUPPORT between two quite different organisms — describes the relationship between American foreign policy and Islamic fundamentalism — and the war has reinforced it. Western fear of totalitarian Islamism has long served to mute domestic criticism of U.S. policy toward the Muslim world. And now the attack on the World Trade Center has herded even more critics into the war camp and provided new justification for the use of military force in the Middle East and Central Asia. On the other side, the pervasive Muslim resentment of the United States, the anger at American policy in the Middle East, Iraq, the Arabian Peninsula and elsewhere, has long been exploited by bin Laden and the Islamists. In the face of an increasingly monolithic American public opinion, Muslims, especially young men, are attracted to ever more desperate forms of anti-Americanism.

The cause of Al Qaeda and other apocalyptic and ultra-violent elements among the Islamists is not democracy, Palestinian rights, social justice for the poor — not at all. Their goal is a grim regime of total oppression, a Taliban-like state for every Muslim nation, virtual imprisonment for every Muslim girl and woman, extermination or expulsion for the Jews of Israel. They would not abandon their bloody schemes even if the U.S. pursued entirely different policies. Behind them are the Muslims who make up the rank and file of the much larger and less apocalyptic (though still generally reactionary and anti-democratic) Islamist parties and underground movements. These groups flourish in the absence of a secular, anti-imperialist left, most of which has been destroyed or discredited (for example in Afghanistan by its association with the Soviet occupation).

With no democratic left-wing alternative, millions of the poor and aggrieved are attracted to political Islamism, while millions more reject theocracy but are still strongly anti-American, many even admiring bin Laden. Most detest the Taliban and Al Qaeda, and many explicitly repudiate the terrorist attacks on Americans —while at the same time opposing the war against Afghanistan and wishing defeat and disgrace to the United States. The Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk (*New York Review of Books*, Nov. 15, 2001) described one of his neighbors in Istanbul, an old man, not religious at all, who barely makes a living doing minor repair work. On hearing of the World Trade Center attacks, he told Pamuk: "Sir, have you seen? They have bombed America," and added, "They did the right thing." Pamuk notes that this old man later regretted his comment, but of course it is the initial response that is so telling and, there is every

reason to believe, so typical. That fewer innocent Afghans than expected have been killed does not fundamentally alter the perception that America has bombed a ruined nation and a helpless population in order to satisfy its craving for revenge and power.

Afghanistan

OF COURSE, IT WAS NOT ONLY THE UNITED STATES that ruined Afghanistan and created a world where the poor and oppressed of the Muslim nations turn toward Islamism. The postwar world is a joint creation of two powers above all — the U.S. and the Soviet Union — and it is the Soviet Union that was most responsible for devastating Afghanistan. Local Communists took power there in 1978 with little support among the population outside the small, educated class, many of whom were attracted to Stalinism as a way of modernizing the country without succumbing to Western domination. Other educated Afghans were attracted to radical Islamism; for them resisting Western imperialism entailed the repudiation of modernization. The Communist leader, Hafizullah Amin slaughtered 12,000 people in Kabul alone and was considered excessively bloodthirsty even by Brezhnev. Then in 1979 the Soviets began their occupation of the country. They created a secret police and launched ferocious attacks on rural areas, where resistance was centered. Helicopter gunships fired on fleeing refugees and dropped insidious "butterfly mines" to attract children.

Eventually the Soviets installed a more moderate puppet, Mohammad Najibullah, but by this time Afghanistan was deeply immersed in a proxy war between Russia's clients and the mujahedeen, supported by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United States. In the course of the 1980s, the war brought death to one million Afghans, mostly from Soviet bombing and landmines; another five to six million fled, the largest refugee population in the world. U.S. support to the mujahedeen had actually begun before the Soviet invasion. Recently Zbigniew Brzezinski has boasted that the Carter administration did this with the deliberate purpose of drawing the USSR into a self-destructive Vietnam-type quagmire. "What is more important to the history of the world," he asked, "some stirred-up Muslims or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the Cold War?" Then Reagan's CIA vastly stepped up the U.S. commitment, dispensing $3.5 billion to "stirred-up Muslims" in Afghanistan, more than to any operation in CIA history.

Finally in 1989 the Soviets withdrew, and three years later the Communist government fell. Afghanistan descended into bloody chaos as rival warlords fought over territory and control of the country's now booming heroin business, raping women and even children with impunity. Meanwhile, having achieved its objectives, the U.S. lost interest in Afghanistan and turned off the aid spigot. Out of this maelstrom emerged the Taliban — a cadre of young students from local and Pakistani

madrasas and a foreign legion of Islamist volunteers — led by Mullah Omar and other rural clergy. Pakistan backed the Taliban, as did Saudi Arabia, which had earlier sent in a certain wealthy businessman named Osama bin Laden to organize the thousands of Arab fighters who were streaming in from North Africa and the Middle East to join the mujahedeen. The Taliban's warlord opponents, most of them regrouped in the Northern Alliance, received aid from Iran and Russia. It shows what the U.S., Russia, Pakistan and the rest had reduced the Afghan people to that they initially welcomed the Taliban seizure of power.

Throughout all this, the Afghan people were treated by the interventionists as utterly expendable, as so much debris cluttering up the game of power politics. Their right to self-determination, to govern themselves in peace and freedom, the right of Afghan women not to be terrorized by Islamic misogynists, all were totally disregarded by the manipulators. No one would expect any better of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran and the Soviet Union, of course. But there are still widespread illusions about the United States, which is now considered a suitable agent for bringing about a different, humanitarian military intervention, one that will supposedly introduce democracy, civil society, ethnic reconciliation, etc., to a long-suffering people. No one in his/her right mind would expect Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran or Russia to play such a role, but for many who ought to know better, the United States, whose record in Afghanistan has been scarcely less malignant than the aforementioned, is somehow exempt from any judgement based on past performance.

Unilateralism, Multilateralism and the UN

DISPUTES WITHIN THE AMERICAN ESTABLISHMENT over unilateralism versus multilateralism do not reflect important differences over the ends of U.S. foreign policy but merely alternative means of maintaining global dominance and policing the system of "free trade" and corporate power. Whether unilateralists or multilateralists are controlling the State Department or have the ear of the President, Washington will never have an answer to the problem of terrorism — or of "rogue states" that might be acquiring weapons of mass destruction — except for military force. This will be true as long as the United States is run by the Democratic and Republican parties and by the elites that control them.

Liberal critics of U.S. foreign policy, and even many radicals, tend to turn to the UN whenever international crises break out. But the idea of UN intervention as an *alternative* to big power politics is a chimera. The UN's structure as a collection of states and its completely undemocratic domination by the Security Council — with its five permanent members armed with vetoes — mean, in fact, that it is just one more vehicle for power politics. Historically, its record is a wretched one. The UN undermined independence struggles in the Congo, Namibia, and Angola. In Leba-

non it acted as a cover for Israeli aggression, and it did the same thing for Serbian aggression in Bosnia with its grotesque "safe havens" policy — safe havens that became death traps for Bosnian Muslims. In all these cases, the chief role of the UN was to pressure indigenous forces to accommodate themselves to the wishes of the big powers on the Security Council, or to their clients like Israel. In no case did the UN do anything to encourage domestic democratic forces. Where UN peacekeepers have played a relatively benign role, as in East Timor or Cambodia, it has only been because this has coincided with the interests of the big powers, not because of any independent UN initiative in favor of peace and democracy.

As soon as the American attack on Afghanistan began, there were calls on the left for shifting control over military intervention to the UN. But had this been done, it would not have changed the politics of the war. UN control would mean Security Council control, so the first thing one wants to ask is: why would sharing decision-making power with Russia and China — whose leaders are responsible for genocidal policies, torture and mass murder in Chechnya and Tibet, as well as a host of other crimes — have made the war more humane and democratic? Actually, most of those who demanded a UN, rather than U.S., intervention did so for essentially procedural or juridical reasons. As Stanley Hoffman, who supported a Security Council takeover, noted, it would simply provide an *American* war with "a seal of international legitimacy" (*New York Review of Books*, Nov. 1, 2001).

Since the end of the Cold War, and especially since the Gulf War, the UN has become even more solidly an instrument of U.S. foreign policy than it ever was. When Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali displeased American leaders, he was promptly disposed of and replaced by Kofi Annan, who has been consistently deferential to U.S. interests. The fact that the United States rarely even bothers to seek UN legitimation of its actions, as it did in the Gulf War, and prefers instead to act alone doesn't reflect the UN's real independence or its potential for restraining American imperial designs, but merely the ultra-unilateralist proclivities of American policy makers.

Millions of Muslims refuse to believe that the American bombing of Afghanistan is a war against terrorism or in favor of any universal values — instead they see it as an imperialist aggression by a rich and powerful nation, *the* richest and most powerful nation, out for revenge, not justice. Many see it, despite the assurances of the Bush administration and its allies, as a war against fellow Muslims and against Islam as a whole.

The Nation editorialized: "The allies need a large blue UN umbrella to counter Muslim charges of a U.S. holy war against Islam" (Nov. 5, 2001). Given the records of the five permanent members of the Security Council, in both domestic and foreign policy, however, there is plenty of reason for Muslims to regard *all* of them as hostile to Islam and indifferent at best to the welfare of Muslim people. Russia wages a vicious war

on Chechen Muslims, and China persecutes the Uighurs and other Muslim minorities in Xinjiang province. Muslims have suffered harassment and discrimination in Britain, France and Germany. European leaders joined the United States in embargoing arms to Bosnian Muslims for years as they were systematically slaughtered by Serb forces and turned a blind eye for even longer to the brutal mistreatment of Albanian Muslims in Kosova; meanwhile, Russia actively championed the Serbian butchers themselves.

The point here is not that the U.S. *is* actually waging a religious holy war against Islam. But there is no way the current foreign policies of the West, especially against a background of racism toward Muslim immigrants within Western countries, can dispel that suspicion.

The idea of an international tribunal for bin Laden and his fellow mass murderers is no solution either. Some see the International Criminal Court, with expanded powers, as the proper venue, while others advocate an ad hoc court, created to deal only with bin Laden and the other terrorists — like the war crimes tribunal in the Hague, which was set up to try war criminals in the former Yugoslavia such as Milosevic. The trouble is, any international tribunal established by the UN as presently constituted can only be another tool of big power politics — a fact that would be universally understood in the Muslim world, even by those that have no sympathy for Al Qaeda.

The International Criminal Court could not pursue leading war criminals other than non-state terrorists like bin Laden, and it could conceivably punish figures like Pinochet only long after their crimes had been committed, they were no longer in power, and they were of no further use to their backers among the Security Council members. What is the point of an international judicial system that can apprehend and prosecute only a very restricted category of war criminals? How can it have any legitimacy unless it is seen by the whole world as even-handed? How could a court that had no power to punish violations of human rights by the United States be seen as anything other than another tool of U.S. foreign policy?

There are plenty of prominent war criminals still alive and at large — Henry Kissinger would certainly head the list. Why should bin Laden pay for his crimes and not Kissinger? How about a commando raid to capture Ariel Sharon — a terrorist if ever there was one — and bring him to the Hague for trial? Don't hold your breath. An international tribunal to punish Al Qaeda, just as much as a U.S. military tribunal, would be regarded by most of the world's Muslims as nothing but victor's justice — not real justice. And they would be right. As satisfying as it would be to see bin Laden and his whole bloody gang receive the punishment they deserve, one must ask: are international tribunals part of a political program that offers any hope of undermining terrorism and promoting democracy and social justice in the countries from which global terrorist networks originate? The answer, I think, is that they are a dead-end

alternative to such a program.

Not Containment But Liberation

THE ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT HAS SO FAR CONCENTRATED ON getting the bombing stopped and the starving fed in Afghanistan and on defending Muslims against racist attacks in this country. These are important goals, of course, but they don't by themselves address Americans' legitimate security concerns, nor do they get at the root of the reactionary global dynamic, fueled by U.S. foreign policy, that drives people in Muslim countries toward terrorist fundamentalism.

Opposition to the war and to current U.S. foreign policy must be accompanied by opposition to totalitarian Islamism, indeed to all regimes and political movements that trample on human rights in the name of religion or any other ideology. And not just opposition either, but proposals for a political offensive against Islamism and terrorism as well — including *all* terrorism, notably that of our own government. This is a cause that the peace movement should champion. It must not be left to the American Establishment to exploit the real problem of terrorism for its own purposes.

The Bush administration, as well as the rest of the Establishment, knows that it cannot eliminate the sort of terrorism with which it is now at war. They accept the permanent existence of conditions throughout the Muslim world that nurture Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism. Their *real* policy is containment, not elimination. Apart from what containment might mean in terms of further bombing attacks on Muslim countries and certainly will mean in terms of the perpetuation of a monstrously unjust global status quo, it projects a bleak future for us in the West. Networks like Al Qaeda may be wiped out, but the kind of terrorism they practice never will be. Christopher Hitchens dismisses such predictions as "witless and fatalistic" (*The Nation*, Dec. 3, 2001). If new bin Ladens rise up, he assures us, "tens of thousands of people would also rise up to rid the world of bin Ladens all over again." So, for Hitchens too, containment — and, evidently, perpetual war — is the only realistic perspective.

Now *this* is fatalism, and the American left and the anti-war movement must not succumb to it. A slogan seen on posters at peace demonstrations is "Justice Not Bombs." This begins to suggest a *positive political* program to counter terrorism. But the anti-war movement needs to advocate justice just as strongly as peace. Progressives in general need to start talking about what American foreign policy — a *new* foreign policy — can actually do to promote justice in the Muslim world. Our alternative to imperial intervention should be not "hands off" Afghanistan or wherever, but political engagement, a kind of "intervention from below" — identifying and linking up with groups that are fighting for democracy, secularism, women's rights. With Iraq looking like the next

target of American military intervention, it is crucial to make connections with democratic Iraqi oppositionists. Political solidarity and concrete acts of assistance from the American left would also help counter any attempts by our government to suck opposition groups into its orbit.

Making these links would be one step in the development of a clear alternative to the militaristic containment policy of the American Establishment. The left needs to propose a new deal for the Muslim world: democracy and economic development. It needs to say: our position is not the acceptance of a "contained" terrorism, while leaving the Muslim world to fester in its misery. We want to do all we can — and to use the immense political and material resources of the United States — to help the peoples of the Muslim world liberate themselves. Self-emancipation, not control and manipulation, should be the guiding principle of American policy. We want to see the people of Iran, Iraq, and the Arabian Peninsula take possession of their oil resources and use the wealth to raise their standard of living, not to enrich parasitical elites. Freedom and prosperity will reduce terrorism to insignificance in all those countries where millions, in their poverty and desperation, now celebrate bin Laden as a hero and lend apocalyptic Islamism a sympathetic ear.

A Democratic Foreign Policy: Deeds, Not Just Words

STANLEY HOFFMAN WRITES THAT THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM "needs to begin with an adequate understanding of our adversaries' grievances, if only to allow us to shape a perceptive policy." Terror feeds "on experiences of despair and humiliation, and these can be understood and to some degree addressed." Also writing in the *New York Review* (Nov. 15, 2001), Tony Judt is even more forthright: "The U.S. needs thoroughly to reassess its relationship to the rest of the world" — a promising suggestion! "Our efforts to eradicate terrorism will go for nothing if we keep uncritical company for tactical ends with rulers who practice at home the very crimes we claim to abhor." But in the end Hoffman and Judt propose only words, not deeds. Judt wants Washington to "distance itself" from repressive governments and to "take its political case" to Muslim public opinion — presumably as Tony Blair did on the Al Jazeera satellite network. The problem is, without deeds — that is, without actually pulling the American props out from under these governments — there *is* no political case, at least not one that is likely to make much of an impression on Muslim public opinion.

But if centrists like Hoffman and Judt have little to offer, not much more can be said of the left. A *Nation* editorial complains, "we wish Secretary of State Powell had shown more urgency" in calling on Israel to halt settlements in the Occupied Territories. The same editorial calls for a new Marshall Plan for the Islamic world, insisting that it is "not utopian" to hope *this* government might sponsor such a scheme. Unfortu-

nately it is thoroughly utopian. What *this* government wants in the Muslim nations is oil and "stability" — meaning authoritarian regimes that keep the masses at bay — not democracy and economic development. Whether Republicans or Democrats are in charge, it is by its very nature incapable of fostering anything else, and one misleads people by suggesting otherwise.

There's nothing wrong with calling on the government to do the right thing in its foreign policy, of course. Indeed, it is essential to demand that it provide things like famine relief, economic aid, sanctions on South Africa, lifting the arms embargo on Bosnia, etc. We certainly must insist that *this* government put pressure on Sharon to withdraw from the Occupied Territories, that it lift the cruel sanctions on Iraq, that it stop supporting repressive regimes wherever they are, and so on. But if that's *it*, if your strategy is *mainly directed at* urging those in power to be more democratic and you've based everything on this perspective, then you're facing a dead end. The only strategy that has a hope of transforming U.S. foreign policy is one that focuses on building a movement to throw both the Republicans and the Democrats out of power. As part of *that* effort, it makes sense to demand of the powers that be that they pursue a democratic foreign policy — while openly stating that you know they cannot do it. A serious third party that campaigned for a new foreign policy might even extract important foreign policy concessions — just as the anti-apartheid movement did in the 1980s — but it would not be able to change the basic orientation of U.S. foreign policy until it won political power. The leopard will never change its spots.

A systematically democratic foreign policy, championed by an independent progressive political party, would take Americans' fears for their security seriously by arguing that real security is only possible in a democratic and egalitarian world. To start bringing this new world into being, it would propose, first of all, withdrawal of all support for dictators, kings and emirs. To counter those who insist that only by keeping these unsavory rulers in power can Americans be assured of oil supplies, the proponents of a new foreign policy would respond that democratic governments are much more reliable trading partners — but also that a rational energy policy must emphasize the development of alternative fuels.

By promoting democracy and development, this new foreign policy would drive a wedge between the fundamentalists and the Muslim people. Its goal would not be to appease people like Osama bin Laden but to defeat him and all that he represents politically. U.S. troops would be withdrawn from Saudi Arabia not because their presence is something bin Laden and his ilk particularly object to, but because they have no legitimate business being there in the first place.

Economic sanctions against Iraq would be ended, not because we want "peace" with Saddam Hussein; on the contrary, we should actively support all democratic forces aiming for his overthrow, even to the point

of supplying them with arms. An absolutely central part of any democratic foreign policy toward the Muslim world, an indispensable proof of this country's seriousness, would be to stop all military aid to Israel and finally put serious pressure on it to withdraw completely from the Occupied Territories. The United States must give full political support to an independent, democratic Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza; at least as much foreign aid as that now lavished on Israel should be given to the Palestinians, who for so long have been the victims of U.S.-backed Israeli aggression.

All military aid to the crooks and torturers who rule Egypt would be terminated forthwith. Similar action would be taken against the Turkish government, along with demands that it fully recognize the right of the Kurdish people to self-determination. Real pressure would be exerted on Russia to pull out of Chechnya. The list could go on.

This would be a program of deeds, not just words. If it were implemented, how could the Islamists capitalize on the crimes of American foreign policy to peddle their reactionary remedies? Nothing would be left but their naked ideology — and in a democratizing Muslim world, this would have less and less appeal.

Organizing and building support for a new party and winning elections won't happen tomorrow or the next day — but, equally obviously, it will never happen unless we start now. However, even the act of forming a significant third party that advocates a democratic foreign policy would have an enormous effect. It would encourage democratic movements throughout the world by letting them know that there is "another America" — and that it is determined to wrest control of this country from the corporations and their political lackeys and military enforcers.

Clearly, this is not a quick fix or a panacea. It's a plan for a worldwide political offensive against *both* the powerful with their oppressive status quo *and* those totalitarian, terrorist forces that attempt to usurp the struggle of the oppressed. This idea is in the tradition of independent "third camp" socialism, the tradition that has inspired *New Politics* since its birth in 1961. During the Cold War, independent socialists sought to rally an international third camp of democratic movements and political parties in opposition to both the American and Soviet dominated war camps, and against both capitalism and Stalinist Communism. Today, a new political party in the United States would constitute an important part of a new third camp or third force, committed to democracy and equality everywhere.

A tall order, certainly. But it is the height of folly to think there *is* a quick fix. The war is no quick fix, nor is the continuation of current American policies toward the Muslim world. In fact they are recipes for more terrorism, more suffering, more of what we've got and much worse. If we are ever to live in a free and secure world, we had better get busy now with the hard work of organizing a real left opposition.

The War at Home

Michael Hirsch

THERE WAS NOTHING ROUTINE ABOUT SEPTEMBER 11, when, out of a cloudless sky, it rained people.

Not in the way the suicide assault was carried out. Not with high-school kids a block from the Twin Towers stepping around the human remains of jumpers, or with office workers moving en masse and without panic to midtown trains, across the Brooklyn bridge by foot or south to evacuation by ferry. No, the predictable, the calculated came later, as the media and public officials beat the jingo drum nonstop, and flags flew everywhere — most poignantly on taxi limousines driven by new immigrants. The incumbent, increasingly unpopular mayor, became an icon overnight, while newcomers in the Arab and South Asian sections of Brooklyn and Queens felt under siege. A Yemeni-American professional I interviewed in October said she feared for her safety and for the many other women and girls wearing the traditional *hijab*, or head-and-shoulder scarf, which marked them as targets.

Also predictable: a more or less balanced City College teach-in was misreported by the *New York Post* as "CCNY Bashes America," and other campus critics were branded by Republican operative Lynne Cheney as no less than opponents of Western civilization for asking hard questions about the U.S. role in the world.

Many oppositional voices have sounded predictable, too. Almost from the day of the attacks on the twin towers and the Pentagon, too many responded as if they were sleepwalkers, if not actors, reciting canned anti-war lines and declaring that the U.S. is chiefly responsible for the carnage. The newly formed New York Coalition for Peace and Justice was slow to condemn the killers, name the attack a mass murder or demand punishment from any authority, even as it branded U.S. war moves in Afghanistan "racist." Robin Blackburn, in a mostly balanced, thoughtful and exhaustive essay, "Terror and Empire" (www.counterpoint.com), focused on the real dangers of U.S. unilateralism and a U.S. "national messianism" that allows this country to constitute itself as "the arbiter of global terror"; yet he, too, writes as if the U.S. were principally to blame for the rise of clerical fascism, Levantine style.

This is a movement that eats its old. When Carl Davidson of the Committees of Correspondence called for "tak[ing] a clear stand for the

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destruction of Al Qaeda's terrorist network," while making clear the need "to project a progressive voice and vision, a strategy and tactics, for the other America, in order to defeat the threat posed to us by reactionaries at home and abroad," he was denounced by one commentator for the quaint crime of "Kautskyism."

When a movement cannot express righteous anger at an attack on our hometown, or speak as passionately for justice as it does for peace, then we have a problem. The same groups that claim that the concept of "terrorism" is ahistorical and subjective have no trouble weighing in against "globalism" or "empire," which are equally out of focus, while their collective tongues freeze up on mouthing the word "imperialism" as a viable concept explaining how the world works. The moniker, "Our grief is not a cry for war" is no substitute for an analysis of recent events and offers no hint of how we move forward. No, the peace movement is still too much of a shining city on a hill, pure and distant, all witnessing and no marketing, unable to appeal broadly, popularly and immediately. It still cannot, as Sean O'Casey once wrote, "talk to a shepherd about sheep."

IT'S NOT NEWS TO *NEW POLITICS* READERS THAT U.S. POLICY, supported by administrations from both major parties, abets some of the world's premier villains. We know that the Al Qaeda militia network was a beneficiary of State Department largesse, if not its actual client. We know that the CIA backed Afghan drug lords even as a succession of American presidents ratcheted up drug-use and drug-sale penalties at home. We know that the extermination of secular and progressive movements during the cold war left a vacuum in the Middle East that only fundamentalist mullahs could fill. Secretary of State Colin Powell himself said in October that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter," meaning of course that the only standard the U.S. uses is a self-serving one. But we already knew that, too. Calling Powell a hypocrite and finger-wagging won't help right now. Neither will a literary dogfight on the nature of Al Qaeda, kicked off so famously by Christopher Hitchens in *The Nation* and *The Atlantic*. Hitchens said that no accounting of predatory U.S. policies in the Middle East could explain or justify the attack on the Twin Towers — and bravo, he is right. But so what? Rhetorically delectable as a Hitchens/Noam Chomsky brawl is, gaining a fuller understanding of the Islamist mind, a task on which Hitchens's argument depends, is background. Defining the nature of a possible enemy and the scope of a threat is critical only if joined at the hip with an argument that national and local priorities must not be perverted by war preparations. Hitchens credibly argues that bin Laden is a phenomenon like no other, which I take to mean that traditional socialist and anti-militarist assumptions are problematic now. If true, that is all the more reason to insist that what needs clarity is not just our bright, shining line on bin

Laden, but our line on who benefits by and who directs the recovery from the economic and social damage he likely masterminded.

Here's the nub of the problem: The financial damage to the financial, investment, and real estate (FIRE) sector was enormous. Somebody — but not the FIRE sector — is going to pay for it. Focusing on the war powers mobilization to the exclusion of these other domestic consequences is a mistake the Left cannot afford. The war, which appears to be winding down at this writing, will only strengthen the hand of capital if we let it. The enemy is always at home.

Who Really Pays?

THE AIR ASSAULT ON THE WORLD TRADE CENTER, which ended some 3,000 lives, is expected to cost the city and the state more than 150,000 jobs. The liquidation of a portion of the financial, insurance and real estate sector is turning the national drift toward recession into a forced march. The collapse in city and state revenues caused by the wipeout of a big piece of the FIRE sector puts every municipal contract at risk. Every effort to improve the pay and working conditions of the uniformed services — the "heroes" of September 11, along with the teachers, who were briefly called the "quiet heroes," then forgotten — may have been mooted by the assault.

For all of corporate America's new headaches, it has the whip hand. That newly-won power threatens the anti-globalism movement in a way that right-wing propaganda and police action never could. It turns unions into beggars and environmentalists into irritants. Business failures and security collapses at airports are already signaling an end to free-market cant and a more interventionist federal role in securing and guaranteeing profits. In a suggestive headline, the *Wall Street Journal* announced that "Now, Public Works Seems Too Precious for the Free Market." Dozens of major banks and investment houses located in or near the Twin Towers, including Bank of America, Bank of Taiwan, Lehman Brothers Holdings, Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, Thomson Financial, Credit Suisse, First Boston, Merrill Lynch and — most visibly from the haunting posters scattered throughout the city in the days and weeks following the attack — Cantor Fitzgerald — all lost billions in assets and valuable personnel. Lloyd's of London, one of the world's largest re-insurers, announced losses of more than $2 billion in late November, doubling earlier estimates. Meanwhile the New York Stock Exchange announced it had prepared a fully equipped second trading floor "somewhere in New York City" in the event another attack leveled the Exchange. It also announced its long-sought, heavily publicly underwritten $1.1 billion headquarters rebuild is proceeding, but mercifully without its centerpiece, a 51 story tower — this at a time when electronic trading could do the same job better. And within a day of the attack, Larry Silverstein, the World Trade Center leaseholder, floated a plan to rebuild the Twin Tow-

ers, since scaled back to four 50-story skyscrapers. His is just one of many scenarios for replacing the 12 million square feet — 44 percent of all modern office space downtown and 7 percent citywide — lost or damaged in the assault.

The revised city budget, highly dependent on corporate taxes, projects a $1.3 billion shortfall for the current fiscal year, including a 20 percent decline in personal income taxes and more than 30 percent fall-off in hotel and real estate transfer taxes. Others peg losses at close to $4 billion over the next two years. Added costs for additional police overtime, downtown cleanup, and other services will soar into the billions. And city contracts expire at the end of June, while the last round of teachers and police pacts has not even been included. The mayor called for cuts of 15 percent in city agencies (2.5 percent in police, fire and education) to make up for the losses. City services will suffer. Retirement of the capital debt, some $40.8 billion in bonds that finance construction for schools, jails, housing and infrastructure, is a permanent and inescapable feature of city spending that eats up 8 percent of the municipal budget and 16 percent of city tax revenues. Debt service has grown by half in eight years under Giuliani to where it is now four times the allocation for transportation and housing and the highest per capita of any major American city

In trying to gin up dollars, Governor Pataki and then-Mayor Giuliani, never chums, approached hat-in-hand in an ad urging the public to spend freely in New York. The effort makes some sense, because lowered retail activity means slumping sales tax revenues, while sluggish tourism means declines in hotel tax revenues. In the first weeks after the attack, suspended alternate side of the street parking itself meant no traffic tickets were issued, pulling out another plum from the anticipated city revenue pie.

Given the ideological climate, progressive real estate taxes are not an option, though sacrifices by unions are always in vogue. Doing their bit to help, the city's five employee retirement funds pledged to pump $800 million into discrete building and transportation projects.

City rebuilding efforts will be in the hands of a government growing more permanent every day. The promised $40 billion in federal recovery aid — reduced to $17 billion for talking purposes, still not in hand, and likely to be doled out in increments if at all — will be spent by a newly christened autonomous body on projects that few elected officials or accountable democratic institutions will oversee. That body, the Lower Manhattan Redevelopment Corporation is a subsidiary of the Empire State Development Corporation, the state's economic stimulus arm and a notorious enemy of neighborhoods, manufacturing, and well-paid, low-skilled jobs. Interestingly, it is also not beloved by free marketers, who score the economic development body for a history of collusion with favored realtors and mob-influenced contractors to the detriment of mar-

ket forces.

The Redevelopment Corporation, established by the governor in late November, has an overwhelming FIRE slant. It is chaired by John C. Whitehead, the former Goldman Sachs chair, who comes with impeccable permanent government credentials as the grandest of the city's grand panjandrums. A director of the New York Stock Exchange and Chairman of the Securities Industry Association, Whitehead was Deputy Secretary of State under Ronald Reagan, is board chair of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, and is a fast Pataki family friend. In 1996, *Mother Jones* magazine ranked him 30th on its list of the nation's 400 largest political contributors, listed two ahead of Democrat Felix Rohatyn but well behind 16th place finisher and Bill Clinton pal Denise Rich. The authority also includes Frank G. Zarb, the former Nasdaq head; Richard Grasso, chair of the New York Stock Exchange and a close Rudolph Giuliani ally who before 9/11 was a fixture on business news reports as he exuberantly gaveled each trading session to a close; and Deborah Wright, an African-American woman and Empire State Development Corporation director who once served as Giuliani's Housing commissioner and is now chief executive of Carver Federal Savings Bank in Harlem.

Also on board is union official Ed Malloy, president of the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York and a notorious friend of developer Donald Trump; Howard Wilson, the chairman of the much-maligned School Construction Authority; and Roland Betts, lead owner of Chelsea Piers and the former lead owner of George Bush's Texas Rangers baseball team. All but one of the remaining members are present or former Giuliani aides. The new entity can condemn and acquire land while overriding local zoning and environmental regulations. The local neighborhood is represented solely by the chair of the area community board, an advisory body appointed by the Manhattan Borough President who herself holds an increasingly ceremonial job.

Meanwhile, a lower Manhattan federal bailout plan sponsored by Senators Schumer and Clinton that aimed to attract new business and keep companies from leaving the area looks more like a boondoggle for financial firms with no real plans to abandon the financial center. Smartertimes.com, the neo-con Web site specializing in niggling corrections to *The New York Times*, and once got it right when it spotlighted such benefices in the Democrats' plan as "tax credits of up to $4,800 per employee per year, at a total cost to the federal budget estimated at $2 billion over five years" to help Merrill Lynch, Lehman Brothers, Deutsche Bank, and Goldman Sachs, among others (Dec.5). These are all led by executives who are big Democratic Party funders and whose companies were not leaving. The conservative site says that a more appropriate and ostensibly less partisan tax cut would "focus more heavily on incentives for investment. Better yet, let the market determine which businesses can make it downtown."

Capital For Capital

IT ISN'T JUST DEMOCRATS WHO ARE FEEDING ON THE PUBLIC TAB. After weeks of praising local (or at least New York-centric) contractors and crews for their hard work, the mayor rewarded them with a thumb in the eye by moving to put the San Francisco-based and Republican-connected Bechtel Group in charge of the $1 billion cleanup. Had the move gone through — it was publicly opposed by the Civil Service Technical Guild, a union of city engineers and designers that regularly opposes outsourcing — the world's largest general contractor would have received fees running to 3 percent of the total for managing a job with a non-union workforce that four cooperating contractors with labor agreements have been doing since 9/11.

The mayor's effort tells a lot about the "know-who" involved in city operations. Bechtel's Republican Party connections include Reagan Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, who found a hidey-hole there after leaving government service, and former Secretary of State George Shultz, who sits among its directors. Working with New York design firm Parsons Brinkerhoff, it serves as the private management consultant on Boston's $14.5 billion, hideously over-budget "Big Dig," the two-decades long effort to replace Boston's decaying harbor expressway with a central artery tunnel and bridge system.

Unlike the Technical Guild, few unions are pushing envelopes in planning New York's future. Despite a noble fund-raising effort for victims' families and affected workers and an aggressive emergency employment clearinghouse project coordinated by the Central Labor Council to aid cashiered workers, there is no firm or consistent trade union position on what should be done now or who should control the rebuild.

While Hospital Workers Local 1199/SEIU joined health industry leaders and the governor in lobbying for $1 billion in increased Medicaid payments to fund raises and plug a more than $350 million hole the attack cost facilities statewide, the benefits will affect mostly hospital workers themselves (and, of course, low-income families), a worthwhile if necessarily narrow goal. Win or lose, the union will be indebted to the Republican governor, who is up for re-election next year. The lack of union vigor is sadly reminiscent of labor's go-along position during the last city fiscal crisis. Back then, teachers union president Albert Shanker was alone among union tops in labeling the effort to enshrine a fiscal monitor (even as unions were allowing pension funds to bail out the city) a "bankers coup," though some say that labor's central role in shepherding investments by the city's pension system today in and of itself guarantees it a seat at the table when the big decisions get made.

Companies failing because of events independent of the attack are impacting on the city, too. Enron, the bankrupt energy trader, laid off more than 5,000 workers — 4,000 in Houston alone, and its collapse is already causing blow-back. *Crain's New York Business* (12/3) reports that

the state retirement fund lost as much as $60 million after selling its 4.6 million shares in Enron at 45 ½ cents a share. The stock sold at $80 a share in January. The city's five pension funds hold 2.9 million shares of the now worthless stock, losing $109 million on investments they are suing to recoup. Local gas and electric buyers must now purchase supplies in the deregulated market at higher spot prices. Commercial-property insurers, worrying that New York will continue to be singled out by terrorists, are boosting quoted rates for building owners in Manhattan by about 100 percent. That is far higher than raises in other cities.

Yet even as the Left is mute on the domestic consequences of the 9/11 attack, the right is getting its ideas out. Steve Malanga, former *Crain's New York Business* editor and now a Manhattan Institute fellow, argued in *City Magazine* (Fall 2001), *The New York Post* and other friendly venues that every free-market nostrum he espoused before the attack could cure what ails the city now. By green lighting projects held up by those pesky zoning hearings and restricting any federal role to clean-up and infrastructure repair while committing local government to "preparing the way for private developers to build whatever the market wants at the site as expeditiously as possible" and insisting on productivity agreements in all city contracts, the right is securing the foundation for an ideological rebuild as well.

The Economist and others are also predicting fights over productivity deals with municipal unions, saying winning these are a sure way to bring down spending.

Flagrant free-marketer George Gilder weighs in, too (*American Spectator* 11/12/01), noting that, as economic growth derives from technological advance, war preparation could signal a new technological boom if only Washington develops more capital-accumulation friendly policies — specifically those policies directed to end deflation and "crippling antitrust and telecom regulation." He and co-author Bret Swanson fear that 9-11 will serve as an "enabler" allowing government to hide its misdeeds.

CRANK STUFF? OF COURSE. As Columbia University sociologist and privatization critic Elliot Sclar put it at a recent Center on the Urban Future forum, "When manufacturing fails, it's called the market. When real estate can't make the money it wants, it's called government's fault."

Granted that adopting laissez-faire solutions would be a first, after more than 60 years of concerted city and state planning in guiding development of a wholly artificial downtown, the conservatives now offer elements of a coherent plan put forward to guide or shame policy makers.* Where is our plan, the plan of a Left? And what counterarguments

*For details on how New York's public sector historically aided one wing of the private sector (FIRE and others) while helping divest another (manufacturing, shipping), see Bob Fitch's "A Mistake in the First Place" at www.gothamgazette.com.

and counterplanning are we making on a national level, where, measured by payroll, the city's less than 3 percent of the national workforce accounts for 37 percent of its securities industry, 20 percent of its advertising, and 18 percent of its book publishing? A recession in these New York-based industries will be felt nationwide.

What demands are being raised about unemployment, where job losses this fall totaled nearly 800,000, the most since the Reagan recession of the early 1980s? Labor Department figures show November's unemployment rate at a six-year high, with transportation hardest hit and corporate mendicants lining up to get their share of a $24 billion airline bailout. Federal largesse did not extend to cashiered air industry workers, whose job cuts total 70,000 so far.

In Britain, where British Air and other big carriers are crying poor mouth, Michael O'Leary, CEO of no-frills Irish carrier Ryanair, rightly complained to the London *Guardian* that his larger rivals were already losing money and were planning large job losses long before the attacks. In the U.S., too, some of the wailing is an old-fashioned attempt by badly run firms to feed off the public trough. Like transportation, the tourism industry went south. Las Vegas reports visits have plunged, and convention cancellations were widespread everywhere. In New York, taxi limousine companies are hurting, with business down almost 70 percent. The number of tourists visiting New York dropped by 20 percent. Other cities are also hard hit. A National League of Cities survey shows expected revenues decreasing by 4 percent, this exclusive of losses in New York and Washington, while public safety costs are up, due in part to the Anthrax scare. States and school districts are seeing decreased revenues and are deferring purchases, and textbook manufacturers expect spending for their products will go down (*Education Week*, 11/21/01).

At isolated moments, the Bush Administration seems to understand it has a commanding role to play in the economy, and not just one rewarding the boys at the yacht club. In a certain light and if you squint, you could confuse the Bush Administration for the executive committee of a ruling class Marxists expect it to be. At other times, the president and his congressional allies seem less the embodiment of the state and more like the small-town board of trade nabobs they are.

Michael Tomasky reported in *New York* magazine (10/1/01) the bungled effort by Republican Senators Phil Gramm, Don Nickles and John McCain to scuttle the city bailout on the grounds that the appropriation would create a "slush fund." Nickles even whined that his own Oklahoma City never got this level of support from the Clinton Administration after the Murrah federal building attack. Tomasky credits Senators Clinton and Schumer with saving the day with Bush. But if the two operated in October in their capacity as Wall Street nuncios — roles the administration at that moment recognized and respected — jump ahead three months and, surprise, no money has yet been passed to the city or state. Adroit biparti-

sanship could not keep the package on track. True, the governor made a ham-handed $54 billion request that was larded with pork (as well as useful if nonessential projects) and was dead on arrival. And mixed signals from the mayor and state congressional delegation didn't help. But if it isn't easy getting green from D.C., just what is the administration willing to commit to maintain the capital of capital?

Room For the Left

AS SOON AS THE PLANES HIT, POLITICS GROUND TO A HALT. Only the Bay Area's Congressmember Barbara Lee opposed the hurriedly prepared blank war-powers check to Bush. "There are no partisans today, just patriots," DNC Chair Terry McAuliffe told *Roll Call* magazine. And the mayor's threats to stay in office were just the most visible sign that the public might accept a man on horseback. Certainly Giuliani's actions were neither stellar nor singular. But Giuliani's scary re-election trial balloons — he was term limited and needed Albany legislation to continue in office — were shot down by the state's highly partisan Assembly Speaker, Sheldon Silver, the only man in New York with the determination to put politics first.

In other areas, we do know what to expect.

On environmental matters, it's open season to drill in the arctic wilderness while checks on hazardous mining operations were cut back.

In civil liberties, the administration's anti-terrorism proposals were called "almost McCarthyesque" by Shari Steele of the Electronic Frontier Foundation. These were largely enacted as the USA Patriot Act (for Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism) a windy title that sounds like parody but is not. The Patriot Act reduces judicial oversight on phone taps, tracing e-mail, retrieving voice mail and even tracking Web surfing. It expands FBI access to business and other private records, keeps government searches of citizens' homes secret, and permits release of grand jury information. It also allows easier detention and deportation of legal and illegal aliens, giving the Immigration & Naturalization Service authority to hold them for seven days without a hearing, and potentially indefinitely (in certain cases) thereafter. By Thanksgiving, some 1,200 aliens were detained, just 10 to 15 suspected as Al Qaeda sympathizers. The others include those *The New York Times* (11/25/01) described as having "résumés suspiciously like those of the 19 hijackers, and others who have spent days, weeks and now months in prison for immigration violations that before September 11 would probably have been ignored or resolved with paperwork."

The law is all the more remarkable in that its provisions to lower the threshold for wiretaps and search orders for all cases, not just those involving terrorism, were opposed by both civil libertarians and by the gun lobby — a combination that would make any legislation inert in normal times. The act encountered some opposition in the House but passed

with just one negative vote in the Senate: that from maverick Wisconsin Democrat Russ Feingold, who said in classic Robert LaFollette language that "if we lived in a police state, it would be easier to catch terrorists," but that such a nation "would not be America." (In a demonstration that "maverick" does not mean "dissident," the Badger State's junior senator went on to be the sole Democrat to vote against omnibus legislation fast-tracking dollars to New York.)

Press liberties are no more secure. Reporters covering the Afghan fighting complained of restrictions more extreme than those imposed during the Gulf war. *Editor and Publisher* magazine reported how "several photographers were jailed for trespassing while covering the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks. At least four were arrested in New York near the site of the World Trade Center disaster, while two others were detained in western Pennsylvania at the site of the United Airlines flight 93 crash." The mayor used access to Ground Zero as a perk to foreign visitors and favored friends, while New Yorkers photographing or even trying to retrieve items from their homes were manhandled.

The move toward authoritarianism and corporate domination is unmistakable, and some people are even starting to make appropriate noises. The September 25 Get Out The Vote letter from the Working Families Party's Dan Cantor, while limited to electoral issues and supporting some pretty sorry candidates, hit most of the right notes:

> Lots of decisions are going to be made in the wake of the WTC attack. It would be better if those decisions were made by elected officials genuinely committed to the needs of working-class, middle-class and poor people across the state. As the recession deepens and choices in the rebuilding and budgetary process are made, it will be important that non-corporate voices also get heard, also get bailed out.

We don't want those voices just to be heard. We want them to predominate. But the sentiment is right. It is what the Left can — and should — uniquely contribute now.

September 11 can still put paid to the argument that untrammeled competition is a good thing. With the need for government-run security at airports trumping private operations and with an end to the noise about privatizing Amtrak and the U.S. Postal Service, there is a different ideological climate that can make demands on government effective again. A heightened interest in security over profit margins at water, gas and electric utilities joined with the collapse of Enron coming on the heels of California's electricity blackouts last summer could form the vehicle for "talking truth to power" and shifting war critics' attentions from grand gestures to contesting corporate America on grounds where it can lose.

It's a start.

Welfare Reform after 9/11

Betty Reid Mandell

> *"To give aid to every poor man is far beyond the reach and power of every man . . . Care of the poor is incumbent on society as a whole."*
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> — Spinoza, *Ethics, Appendix*, 17 (1677)

I WRITE A COLUMN CALLED "SURVIVAL TIPS" for a welfare rights newspaper, *Survival News*. It is a list of resources for low-income people, telling them where they can get money in a crisis to help them pay for rent, food, or utilities. The paper comes out twice a year and as I write the column in October, I find that there are many fewer resources than there were in June. Here in the Boston area, The Salvation Army and Roxbury Multi-Service Center say their money for crises has run out and they won't have more until January. Two agencies ask me not to list them again as they have such a long waiting list of people needing help. All of them ask me to put in the caveat "depending on funds." By the end of November, 318 families with nearly 800 children lived in 21 suburban motels across the state, more than triple the number five months ago. They live in cramped quarters on busy highways far from their jobs and schools without cooking facilities or refrigeration and far from a grocery store. This situation is being duplicated across the nation.

The hunger crisis existed well before September 11. Between March 1997 and March 2001, the number of Americans served by private emergency food sites grew from 21.4 million to more than 23 million, according to a survey done by America's Second Harvest, a national network of nonprofit food banks that provides 80 percent of the food distributed by private charities. During the same period, the number of people who used food stamps dropped from 21.9 million to 17.7 million, according to the Agriculture Department. The food stamp program was cut by $26 billion over six years in the last farm bill, as part of the 1996 welfare overhaul. Congress also instituted more stringent rules to reduce fraud in the program. That led many states to increase the paperwork required to receive food stamps, which helped discourage as many as 12 million eligible people from applying for food stamps.

Tommy Thompson, now director of the federal Health and Human

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Services Department, created one of the toughest welfare systems in the nation in Wisconsin when he was governor. Consisting almost entirely of forced work, it became the model for welfare reform nationwide. It has apparently caused a sharp rise in infant mortality in Wisconsin between 1997 and 1998. The rise was especially sharp, 37 percent, for African Americans, who are disproportionately represented on welfare in Milwaukee. Epidemiologists are tracking every one of the dead babies to determine their family history of welfare. Their hunch is that the sudden spike of infant deaths is a result of welfare reform because they had already noticed a decrease in the use of prenatal care and increases in hunger among the post-welfare poor.

Private Charities Face More Demands, Less Money

THE SHIFT FROM FOOD STAMPS TO PRIVATE AID is widening, even as the Bush administration urges religious charities to provide more charitable giving. Religious groups, however, which run most of the food pantries and kitchens, strongly support increasing money for food stamps. Rev. David Beckman, president of Bread for the World, a group made up of Protestant and Roman Catholic churches, said, "We think there is no substitute for a strong food stamp program. It is much better for kids to have their Mom and Dad serve them food around the table rather than drag them into a food kitchen. And I'm not sure we churches, synagogues and mosques can keep up with the demand."

Except for a generous outpouring of giving to the victims of the attacks, many charities nationwide have experienced sharp drops in contributions since September 11. Even before the attacks, people were reacting to the economic pinch by cutting back on their giving. Between October 2000 and October 2001, contributions to human services declined from 14 percent to 12 percent of all giving, and public/society benefit dropped from 14 percent to 9 percent. Almost half of the people surveyed by the Independent Sector of Washington said they would reduce their charitable giving in the next 6 months if the economic slowdown worsens, and 1 in 10 said they would completely stop their giving.

President Bush has asked the Senate leadership to give federal money to religious charities, saying that all charities were hard-pressed to provide disaster relief for the victims of the September 11 attacks while helping the needy. The pressures from the war helped persuade Bush to eliminate the most contentious parts of his religion-based initiative to win passage of the law before the end of the year. A bill that has passed the House grants up to $13 billion in tax relief for charitable giving over 10 years.

Health Insurance a Casualty

YOHANNES GEZU WAS A WELL-PAID WAITER at a big Chicago convention ho-

tel before the 11th. Now he is lucky to get a few days work each week. He will soon be confronted with having to pay a $400-a-month premium if he wants to keep his family's health insurance.

Sixty-five percent of Americans under 65 get insurance through their employer, and when they lose their job they often lose their health insurance, which could cost as much as $500 or $600 a month. Workers are allowed to keep their job-related insurance under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (Cobra) of 1986. However, the law does not apply to people who work for small businesses, with fewer than 20 workers, and it requires workers to pay the full cost of their health insurance premiums, plus 2 percent for administrative costs. That could eat up half or two-thirds of the average monthly unemployment benefit.

At the same time, Medicaid — the basic government program for covering low-income people — is under increasing strain. Declining tax revenues because of the economy, rising health care costs and an expected jump in the Medicaid caseload because of layoffs all pose a problem to states, which share the cost of Medicaid with the federal government. And Medicare has already been cut back, forcing elderly people to pay more for their insurance and creating big problems for hospitals that depended on Medicare payments.

There is fierce debate in Congress about providing health insurance to people who have lost their jobs. The Democrats are backing a plan that would provide $9 billion to cover 75 percent of the premiums of people who have lost their jobs since September 11 and are trying to keep their private insurance. Their plan would also provide $5 billion to increase the federal contribution to Medicaid, and another $3 billion for states that want to help unemployed workers not otherwise eligible for assistance with coverage. The Republicans say the Democratic plan is too costly and runs the risk of creating an expensive new entitlement. They would provide a $3 billion grant to the states in the economic stimulus plan that passed the House, leaving it up to the states to decide how to allocate it. Democrats counter that the Republicans are more concerned about rewarding corporations with tax cuts than helping the unemployed. However, the Democrats' plan favors private insurance under Cobra, whose recipients are more likely to be middle class, rather than expanding Medicaid to cover those people. They believe that it would be easier to win support for funding to maintain private health insurance through Cobra than to expand government programs. (Low-income children are already covered by the Children's Health Insurance Program, although their parents and lower-income people without children are often not covered by any insurance.) Already there are over 44 million Americans without health insurance, and the number is growing.

Jobs Another Casualty

THE THOUSANDS OF JOBS LOST SINCE SEPTEMBER 11TH, added to an already sagging economy, will be a further strain on the fragile safety net. Critics of welfare reform predicted that it would fail in a faltering economy, and those predictions are coming true. About 2.5 million adults have left the welfare rolls since the 1996 reforms, many of them to become employed and many simply pushed off by tough laws or bureaucratic meanness, whether or not they found a job. Most of those who found jobs are working for low wages, in the kinds of jobs that are most likely to disappear in a recession; these include waitresses, maids, cooks and clerks. Many work in travel and tourism, the industries most devastated by the September 11 attacks.

Here are some numbers. Nearly 900,000 jobs have been lost since March 2001, nearly half of them in October alone, when 415,000 Americans lost jobs — the most for a single month in more than two decades. Roughly a quarter of the lost jobs were a direct result of the terrorist attacks on September 11, according to Thomas L. Nardone of the Bureau of Labor Statistics. "There is almost like a national hiring freeze," said Chris Varvares, president of Macroeconomic Advisers, in St. Louis. Even the temporary jobs are drying up. When the national unemployment rate rose to 5.4 in November, the service sector alone lost 111,000 jobs. Nearly all the loss was among temporary workers. This loss is not likely to be offset by the usual increase in hiring during the Christmas season.

New York City has been especially hard hit by job losses. Nearly 4,500 members of the Hotel and Restaurant Workers have been laid off, and 1,000 others are working reduced hours. John Turchiano, spokesman for the union, said, "Our members have never been in this position before." Turchiano said that nearly all the layoffs were directly or indirectly related to the Trade Center attack. The Fiscal Policy Institute, a non-profit research organization, estimated that 65,000 jobs were directly affected by the World Trade Center attack, and that 43,000 more were affected by its spillover.

When the first Twin Towers Job Expo was held on October 17, at least 8,000 people came, standing in a line that wound three times around the two square blocks at Madison Square Garden and Pennsylvania Station. While many of them lost their jobs because of the attack, thousands more had been out of work for months. At day's end, about 2,000 were turned away when the Expo closed its door at least two hours before the official closing time. One employer who recently laid off 1,500 workers, Barry Sternlicht, head of Starwood Resorts & Hotels, had this to say about the layoffs: "We're talking about hourly people. People who have made the welfare-to-work leap and are really not equipped to take this kind of layoff." Before the

welfare reform law of 1996 which imposed a five-year time limit on receipt of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), people could return to welfare, and federal financing automatically grew to meet demand. Now federal financing is fixed, and states have wide discretion in deciding whom to help. Welfare is no longer an entitlement.

During October and November, the number of people working part time jumped 1.1 million to 4.5 million. Most would rather work full time but can't. Many employers have hired part-time rather than full-time workers to avoid paying benefits. The director of a food bank in Seattle said that "the single fastest-growing segment of the people coming to food banks has been working families."Unemployment rose among every group, but African-Americans suffered the most: a 1-percentage point increase in their jobless rate in October alone, to 9.7 percent. Just last fall, black unemployment had fallen to a record low of 7.2 percent.

Prior to the 1996 welfare reform law, many former recipients would return to welfare when they became unemployed. In fact, most welfare mothers were in and out of the work force, using welfare as a kind of unemployment insurance. As unemployment rose, so did the welfare rolls. This trend has been reversed. As unemployment has been rising, the welfare rolls continue to fall, in some places sharply. In Illinois, the unemployment rate grew nearly a percentage point, but the welfare rolls fell 30 percent. Florida had already cut its rolls 74 percent, but as unemployment grew there, the rolls fell 5 percent more. Pennsylvania followed the same trend. This is yet another indication that the purpose of welfare reform was not to help people in a crisis, but to slash social spending.

Wages that Don't Support a Family

BARBARA EHRENREICH POINTS OUT that "you can work full-time year-round in America today and barely make enough money for one person to live on, never mind a family of three or more." When millions of desperately poor welfare recipients were added to the work force, wages went down. There was a 7 percent decline in wages in one year after welfare, according to a study by the New York City Housing Authority. The National Council of Research on Women found a 35 percent decline in incomes of all female-headed families since welfare reform.

Whether lowering wages was the primary reason for welfare reform is open to debate, but it was certainly one of its effects. Wages for people in the lower half of the income spectrum are lower now than they were in the 1970s. They haven't caught up to their 1973 level. A typical family coming off welfare, a mother and two children, would be at the poverty level at $13,000 a year, hardly a living wage. The Economic Policy Insti-

tute concluded, after reviewing dozens of studies on the cost of living, that a family of three needs $30,000 a year for a modest standard of living. Both Republicans and Democrats have been unwilling to pass a bill that raises wages $1 from the current minimum of $5.15 an hour. Only the living wage campaigns waged by progressives on campuses and in cities have been successful in raising wages. Even the modest wage raises that they win — typically from $7.50 to $10 an hour — don't begin to raise a family of three up to $30,000 a year.

Unemployment Insurance a Weak Safety Net

MOST FORMER WELFARE RECIPIENTS WHO LOSE THEIR JOBS haven't worked long enough or earned enough to be eligible for unemployment insurance, the nation's main safety net for the able-bodied unemployed. In Nevada, for example, a jobless person has to earn $5,600 in a three-month period to qualify for the average unemployment benefit. That's more than twice what a woman leaving welfare typically earns. Mark Greenberg of the Center on Law and Social Policy says that in the past only 10 to 15 percent of former welfare recipients were able to meet state thresholds like these, and those percentages are expected to rise.

A strong unemployment insurance program could partially replace welfare for the unemployed, with less stigma attached to it. Universal programs that are available to the middle class as well as the poor are generally administered with more dignity than are means-tested programs designed solely for the poor. However, the amount of unemployment benefits varies widely between states, with some states giving over twice as much as others. Some states supplement the basic benefit with allowances for dependents. In 1996, only 36 percent of those technically covered by unemployment insurance actually received benefits when unemployed. More men than women were eligible in 1995 — 80 percent compared to 74 percent of women.

In their efforts to cut costs, businesses have pressured the states to cut unemployment insurance. The value of the benefits also dropped during the 1990s, as states tightened their benefits to reduce the unemployment tax on employers and to make states more attractive for executives looking for places to open businesses.

States Face Falling Revenues

EVEN BEFORE THE SEPTEMBER 11TH ATTACKS, state governments were facing the deepest budget shortfalls in at least a decade, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Forty-four states reported that tax collections had dropped below forecasts made only four months earlier. At least 28 states are imposing or considering budget cuts, and many are using reserve funds. Governors and lawmakers are preparing for more bad news as the first reports

on tax collections after September 11 arrive. In some states, the problem is exacerbated by the need to spend large sums on counter-terrorism efforts without knowing how much money to expect from the federal government. Forty-nine states are not allowed to run annual deficits (the exception is Vermont). When there are budget shortfalls, states must lay off workers and cut program benefits just when more people depend on them. Governor Jane Dee Hull of Arizona called a special legislative session in November to address a projected $1.6 billion shortfall in her state's $15 billion budget for 2002 and 2003. "People just aren't moving around and they're not buying, and those are sales-tax issues," Hull said. "And the layoffs that are occurring in every state will hurt income taxes." California is facing a budget shortfall of $12.4 billion, and Governor Gray Davis is cutting state programs, many of them in human services. In Massachusetts, the gap is $1.4 billion. Human service workers and clients in Massachusetts are in deep despair as millions of dollars are being cut from essential services.

Low salaries, extremely high staff turnover rates, and chronic worker shortages are rampant throughout all of Massachusetts' human services system, creating huge waiting lists and destroying any semblance of "continuity of care" for the most vulnerable citizens of the state. Direct care workers, who had won a salary increase earlier in the year, found that it was not to be funded. Funds to comply with a federal lawsuit that ordered the state to serve people on the waiting list of the Department of Mental Retardation were frozen.

Welfare Reauthorization: What Can We Expect?

THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND WORK OPPORTUNITY ACT (PRWOA) of 1996 (a.k.a. "welfare reform") which established the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program is due to be reauthorized by September 30, 2002. For the past year, welfare advocates have been engaged in a battle to persuade Congress to replace the current, punitive system with one that combats poverty rather than people in poverty. The battle involves changing public as well as Congressional attitudes. Congress and President Clinton were able to pass the PRWOA because there was widespread support for forcing welfare recipients to work. Conservatives have been touting the success of TANF in reducing welfare rolls, without talking about the continuing poverty of the families of women who get jobs or about the more than two out of five women who have been kicked off the rolls without a job. The media have generally parroted their success stories, although the *New York Times* has occasionally printed articles about the real state of affairs.

The myth of welfare reform's success may be beginning to erode. A national poll conducted for Jobs for the Future reports that only 19 percent approved of moving people off welfare into jobs as quickly as pos-

sible if the jobs offered little chance of advancement. If people were still in poverty after leaving the welfare rolls, 52 percent would not feel that welfare reform had been a success. And 69 percent said that a family of four needs at least $35,000 a year to make ends meet. The public might be ready to support stronger job supports and removal of time limits that are forcing large numbers of people into poverty if they are better informed about the effects of welfare reform.

The reauthorization of TANF coincides with the reauthorization of the Food Stamp program and the Child Care and Development Block Grant, and Congress will be looking at how these programs interact with TANF. Congress may also consider the kinds of assistance and support provided to low-income working families that remain below or near the poverty level. Reauthorization discussions may also address health coverage, workforce development, unemployment compensation, and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

The Congressional perspectives on welfare reauthorization were outlined by Doug Steiger, staff member of the Senate Finance Committee, at a recent conference sponsored by the Center for Law and Social Policy and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. The far right complains that states haven't lived up to the behavioral control measures in the PRWOA, such as encouraging marriage and discouraging single parents, particularly teenagers, from having more children. (During the presidential campaign, both George W. Bush and Al Gore promoted responsible fatherhood as critical to the next stage of welfare reform.) Devolutionist Republicans believe the federal government is too big and money should go to states for local control. Democrats are loosely split. The New Democrats focus on work as the only object of welfare reform. They do care a little about making work pay by providing childcare and increasing the Earned Income Tax Credit. Liberal Democrats, such as they are (there are only a handful), recognize that some people are unable to work for various reasons, including domestic abuse, learning disabilities, low levels of education and training, mental or physical disabilities, or the care of a disabled child.

The overall perspective of Congress is that TANF has succeeded by and large. In the present militaristic climate, advocates' calls to divert military spending to meet domestic needs are likely to meet a deaf ear in Congress. The tax stimulus package that Republicans have submitted, done in the name of economic stimulus, gives most of the benefits to the rich. Judging from his past record, we probably can't expect any improvements in the welfare law from Tommy Thompson, director of Health and Human Services, although he does want to maintain the same level of spending in the TANF bill. Advocates object that simply maintaining the same level of spending is not enough because the block grant has fallen in real value by 13.5 percent since 1997. Congress is under the impression that states have not used all of their money, and at one point

this was true. However, existing reserves are now being used as states have developed important new initiatives. States are now spending in excess of their annual block grant allocation. If block grants are not increased, states will face a serious funding shortfall.

The House Committee on Ways and Means, in conjunction with the Brookings Institution and the American Enterprise Institute, has conducted an extensive series of briefings for congressional staff on issues related to the implementation and impact of TANF. Even conservatives admit that the recession will cause some problems. Robert Rector, who studies welfare issues at the Heritage Foundation, predicted that the TANF caseload could grow to more than 3 million next year. He predicts a substantial expansion, but still far below the almost 5 million cases almost five years ago.

Yet both conservatives and centrists are painting a generally rosy picture of the success of welfare reform. Robert Rector reported a decrease in poverty between 1996 and 2000. The Urban Institute reports that the employment rate among single mothers increased 25 percent between 1994 and 2001. An article in *The American Prospect* by Jared Bernstein and Dean Baker speaks of "dramatic declines in poverty rates, especially for African-American families, whose poverty rates fell 5.7 percentage points between 1995 and 1999, while the overall rate fell by 2 points. (By 1999 the black poverty rate was 23.6 percent; compared with 11.8 percent for the overall rate.)"

The authors go on to talk about the dramatic increase in employment for "a particularly disadvantaged group: young African-American women who didn't finish high school. Their rates of employment rose from 23 percent to 37 percent — a whopping 14-point increase. The fact that this large increase partly reflects the work requirements in the 1996 welfare-reform law only underscores the importance of full employment in enabling poor women to move from welfare to work."

None of these people talk about the increasing poverty among single-parent families, most of them headed by a mother, about the fate of those families whose mothers were kicked off the rolls without a job, or about how the so-called "dramatic increases" in black employment began from an outrageously high level of unemployment of African-Americans before the boom years. In addition, more than 2 million people, overwhelmingly minority, are in prison, and this skews the percentage. Bernstein and Baker at least are honest enough to admit that "the fact that one-quarter of teenage black job seekers unsuccessfully sought work in the 'best economy in 30 years' may seem to some a strange victory."

The Mink Bill & Time Limits

REPRESENTATIVE PATSY MINK OF HAWAII INTRODUCED A BILL in the House that would shift the focus of current welfare law from reducing the

caseload to reducing poverty. Some of its provisions are: rewarding states for reducing poverty rather than the present system of rewards for reducing the caseload; requiring states to ensure a minimum benefit that is no lower than the sum of the poverty level plus the amount (if any) by which the family's housing costs exceed 30 percent of the poverty level; providing a guarantee of childcare for recipients who are working, and for those who are within two years of transition off TANF whose income is below 25 percent of poverty; lifting time limits on training and encouraging education that helps single parents find long-term employment; mandating access to services for single parents who deal with barriers to work such as mental illness, physical disability and domestic violence; requiring states to screen for barriers that impede a recipient from meeting program requirements; rewarding states that do the best job of training caseworkers to screen recipients for those barriers; removing the present requirement for teenagers to live in a supervised setting in order to get assistance; counting care for a child who is under age six, disabled, or has a serious health condition as a work activity for the child's parent or relative caregiver; and restoring TANF benefits to legal immigrants.

Paul Wellstone plans to introduce a similar bill in the Senate. The bill addresses many of the problems faced by welfare recipients, but it does not call for abolishing the five-year lifetime limit. Some advocates who favor abolishing the time limit, including the Welfare Made a Difference group in New York City, are urging people to lobby for this bill, arguing that all the protections built into the bill amount to abolishing the time limit, since everyone who makes a good faith effort to comply with these lenient program requirements will be exempt from the time limit.

But that's not good enough. Those of us who have been doing welfare rights advocacy in punitive states (and most states are) know that if welfare bureaucrats are asked for exemptions to the time limit, they are likely to find many reasons not to give the exemption, and they drag their feet while processing the request. We will not do recipients any favor by requiring them to go through this bureaucratic process each time they need some leniency. Federal law should recognize that there will always be families that need help periodically but who may not be exempt permanently.

The Mink bill imposes penalties on states that don't comply with its requirements, but that is no guarantee that states will comply. The present bill (Personal Responsibility Act) requires states to exempt parents from work requirements if their child is under six years of age and they have not been able to find childcare. Despite the penalty for states that don't comply, there are thousands of parents in many states who could not find childcare for children under six and were still forced to work, or were denied assistance even if they had no job.

The state of New York, which is required by its Constitution to aid the needy, provides powerful evidence for the importance of abolishing the time limit. Tens of thousands of families in New York are reaching the five-year lifetime limit on TANF. An estimated 13,700 families had their TANF grants cut by December 1, at least 30,000 of them in New York City alone. An additional 13,700 families are expected to hit their federal time limit over the next three months. Almost half of those losing grants from TANF have jobs, but with earnings so low that they receive a welfare supplement.

New York officials had proclaimed that people would automatically be shifted over to their Safety Net program without a hitch, but the real story is quite different. Rather than shifting them to the Safety Net program automatically, the city's Human Resources Administration summoned 10,000 to 15,000 of the affected families to apply for the program, at a time when welfare computer systems and legal services were still crippled by the attack on the World Trade Center. Advocates for the poor protested that errors were likely to interrupt basic support for many needy women and children. "Some people have received letters just a few days before the time limit denying them state aid, apparently in error. Others, in offices bristling with ominous posters about time running out, tried to apply for benefits but caseworkers told them — within a reporter's earshot — that it was too late."

The American Friends Service Committee and the Unitarian/Universalist Committee are unequivocally against time limits, as are some other groups. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities doesn't call for abolishing time limits, but suggests flexibility in administering time limits when families are complying with program requirements. The Children's Defense Fund takes a similar position, recommending that states provide the necessary supports to families before they lose their cash assistance. Peter Edelman, who quit the Clinton administration after President Clinton signed the welfare law, said Congress should lift the time limits on TANF benefits if unemployment reaches six percent.

Fighting Back

THERE ARE MANY ADVOCACY GROUPS WORKING ON REAUTHORIZATION. Some consist of professionals, such as the Children's Defense Fund, led by Marian Edelman, the Center for Law and Social Policy, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, and the Coalition on Human Needs. Others are religious groups, such as the American Friends Service Committee and the Unitarian/Universalist Service Committee, the National Council of Churches, and many other Catholic groups. Some are progressive social action groups that don't include welfare recipients, such the National Campaign for Jobs and Income Support and the National Organization of Women's Legal Defense Fund (NOW LDEF). Others are

grassroots groups consisting mainly of the people affected by TANF (welfare recipients and former recipients). Others are listed in the footnotes.

Groups are in the process of clarifying their thinking and developing strategy. All seem to agree that reauthorization should focus on eliminating poverty rather than reducing welfare rolls. The professional groups tend to focus on jobs and the importance of providing necessary supports such as education, training and childcare. Recipients agree with this, but also ask for cash assistance for caring for children. Rinku Sen describes the conflict between The National Campaign for Jobs and Income Support and Grass Roots Organizing for Welfare Leadership (GROWL) over support for cash assistance. She says that "the platform of the Campaign has broadened its original narrow emphasis on jobs to incorporate support for cash assistance and income support to people who are not in the traditional labor market. The expansion of the Campaign's membership and platform are the result of a series of internal debates and tensions, some resolved, and some that are likely to continue for the foreseeable future. The political climate of growing hostility directed at poor people lay at the root of the Campaign's reluctance to take a strong stand for income support. It was welfare recipients who got the Campaign to see the ways in which gender discrimination forced women into low-wage jobs and discounted their care-giving as work."

In order to achieve any substantive improvement in welfare, we will need a movement that takes it on as an important issue and wages a militant fight for it. The last time there was a substantial improvement in welfare was during the 1960s, when the energy generated by the Civil Rights movement was turned toward welfare. When George Wiley left his job directing the Committee on Racial Equality, he joined Francis Fox Piven and Richard Cloward in their campaign to organize welfare recipients. They expanded the welfare rolls, raised grant levels, won groundbreaking legal victories, and helped welfare recipients believe they had rights and were entitled to be treated with dignity.

Labor has joined the coalition to improve welfare. John Sweeney, president of the AFL-CIO says that it is critical for Congress to provide a safety net for people who recently moved from welfare to work and into low-paying, entry-level jobs. Sweeney said many of them were in the hospitality and service industries, which had been particularly hard-hit since September 11, and they lacked health and unemployment benefits. "The situation is grim," said Sweeney, "Those who found jobs in boom times have no savings or means of support, and they are also most at risk to lose their jobs."

Feminists have joined the coalition to improve welfare. *Ms.* ran a feature on Cheri Honkala, director of the Kensington Welfare Rights of Philadelphia, as well as other articles about welfare. *Motherhood* featured articles on welfare, including one by Barbara Ehrenreich and a profile of Pat Gowans, a welfare recipient who is director of Welfare War-

riors of Milwaukee. *Sojourner*, a feminist newspaper in Boston, has a regular Welfare Beat column edited by a former welfare recipient. NOW has been active in campaigning for welfare rights, particularly on issues such as domestic violence, reproductive rights, anti-abortion regulations, and marriage requirements. A feminist film group in Quebec chose the work of Survivors, Inc. in Boston (a group that I helped found) as an example of low-income feminist activism in the U.S. It will be shown with other films of low-income feminist activism on five other continents.

IN CLOSING, LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO IMANI JOY, a welfare recipient in Boston. She testified at the Massachusetts State House against Governor Swift's proposal to force recipients to work when their children are three years old (rather than when their children are six, as at present) and to work 30 hours a week rather the present requirement of 20 hours a week:

> I challenge any one of you to trade places with any of us for a few months; to trade in all the securities which you take for granted in exchange for the "privilege" of receiving welfare. You have a cushion under you that protects you from the crises which women on welfare face every day — life-and-death crises, like housing, food and heat. Imagine it. I urge you and your families to try to live on $500 a month, but don't worry, we will give you food stamps too, enough, if you are very clever, to last for two weeks out of the month, but don't worry, if they run out, we will also give you a food pantry, where you will wait for an hour out in the cold and rain with a baby in your arms to receive a bag of pre-selected cans, but don't worry because if you need to spend your little pittance of money on food for your family and can't afford heat, we will give you fuel assistance, enough to cover the first month or two of the winter, after that you're on your own, but don't worry, if you can't afford to have heat and eat and also pay today's rents, if you need emergency shelter we'll find you a motel, maybe it's in Springfield, and you'll have to withdraw your kids from their school to go there, but don't worry, because you are not alone, there are over 1200 other families in shelters and motels at this moment, all vying for the same scarce apartments, with not enough money or subsidy to actually cover the rents, and if the stress of living like this has not affected your health, your sanity or your children's behavior, if you happen to have no other issues at all that come from living unsupported by a system that thinks that giving you this little bit of money is a privilege, a system that degrades you for your impoverished situation, if you are still intact with all of these worries and are somehow still able to work 20, 30 or 35 hours a week to earn the privilege to this pittance of money, then you are all set because Gov. Swift has a great plan for you.

Police State Patriotism

Mark Dow

Two days after September 11th, I was walking around the deserted streets of lower Manhattan. Like others, I was disoriented and yet more present than ever. One of the small but significant things I dislike about living in New York is how rarely one can walk down the middle of the street. I was surprised, on September 13th, how few people left the sidewalks for the street even when there was no traffic. I was beginning to understand how little I understand about liberty and constraint in America. On Canal Street a few days later, where the only traffic was brightly-lit emergency vehicles and dark, unmarked government sedans, I saw a woman walking her Doberman. She picked up her dog's shit, in compliance with the city statute, from the middle of a street still gray with ash from the burning World Trade Center. An isolated act upholding the values of civilization. I felt reassured and disturbed.

Often, in those first days and weeks after September 11th, I found myself recalling Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish's *Memory for Forgetfulness*, about love and politics and the siege of Beirut. Darwish's book is about the incommensurables of life. He writes erotically of making his morning coffee at the stove — he has no choice but to do it — though an Israeli rocket could come through the kitchen window at any moment. And on a more intangible plane, he writes of that which "awakens in me a sadness so pure it is the very substance of happiness." Destruction and creation are not always antonyms. It is difficult to explain to people who have not lived in New York how the violence and death of September 11th led so directly to a new humaneness in daily contact. Sadly, that openness and connection in the most crowded and public spaces has closed down again. And frighteningly, the more simplistic and dangerous legacies of sentimentalism and patriotism — the latter, I think, a category of the former — have not only survived but metastasized. I am not proud of America, because I don't know what America is, and because I don't know what it means to be "proud" of a country, anyway. During the Gulf War, the moronic slogan "Support our Troops" actually meant "Do Not Question the President." But that was nothing compared to what is happening now. Today I think "America" might mean: quick to sentimentalize, and secretly desiring more authority than one consciously admits. But then, like so may definitions of America, perhaps this one has less to do with an "imagined community," in Benedict

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Anderson's indispensable phrase, than with the provincial thoughts of one commentator who lives here.

Like other confused intellectuals, I have been searching for solid ground from which to make some solid proclamations about the balancing act of constitutionally-guaranteed liberties and the need for restricting them at times in the interest of security. My problem is that, as with "America," I don't know what any of the crucial words really mean. Going back to my college course books on American history, I find an intriguing review in Bernard Bailyn's *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* of the literature on power and liberty: "The one was brutal, ceaselessly active, and heedless; the other was delicate, passive, and sensitive," Bailyn writes. And: "Power to [the colonists] meant the dominion of some men over others, the human control of human life: ultimately force, compulsion. And it was, consequently, for them as it is for us 'a richly connotative word': some of its fascination may well have lain for them, as it has been said to lie for us, in its 'sado-masochistic flavor,' [quoting K.R. Minogue] for they dwelt on it endlessly, almost compulsively . . ."

Seeing how vulnerable our liberties left us, we want more authority than ever. We want the trappings of protection. In *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, Wilhelm Reich wrote (in my memory's version) that the clean, faceless forms of authoritarianism gratify a certain sexual dysfunction. No wonder the city of New York tore down the memorials and banners and homemade declarations of independence from Union Square Park. This urban gathering space had become a living memorial and a place of communication, of singing, crying, and arguing in the weeks after September 11th. Then the Parks Department swept up the organic clutter and contradictions because democracy is too messy for the public face. Local and national museums dare to say they are preserving the "archive" of materials taken from Union Square (banners, flyers, poems, manifestoes) and still deciding what is the most appropriate place for it all — now that they have stolen it from its only appropriate place.

WE COULD HARDLY EXPECT DIFFERENT IN WARTIME NEW YORK, considering the so-called "quality of life" repressiveness of peacetime New York under authoritarian mayor Rudolph Giuliani — a campaign against the poor and homeless which his successor Michael Bloomberg has now revived. Many were quick to praise Giuliani's take-charge and calming response to September 11th. Like other New Yorkers, I made a point of being friendly to the cops who suddenly had an increased presence (not to mention stress-inducing double shifts), even after I was pushed in the back by one who told me to stop taking photos of another officer harassing a TV cameraman who was filming an anti-war demonstration in Times Square. "Be kind to cops; they're not cops, they're people in disguise who've been deceived by their own disguise," Allen Ginsberg suggested in 1963. I also stood on the corner of 6th Avenue and Houston St. one evening and joined the applause for firefighters returning from the still-burning war zone

downtown. Nevertheless: even as we admit emotional reality into the political process, we need to contain it or it will be distorted. Thus even Giuliani's "opponents" agreed to the idea of extending his term because of the crisis (the idea was scuttled). In November, the new sentimentalism stumbled when firefighters protested a city-ordered reduction in their numbers at the site of the terrorist attack. The police were pitted against them to prevent access, and punches were thrown. *New York Times* writers Dan Barry and Kevin Flynn unironically described this as "a familial brawl," and noted admiringly that Giuliani "served as the understanding but determined father." The would-be dictator, meanwhile, took to wearing a cap bearing the insignias of the police department, the fire department, and the Yankees: a coalition of false families to calm us and give our lives meaning.

Instead of such fantasy, let's face the realities of law enforcement. "The CIA chief would be the declared king of the US" if law enforcement culture had its way, one observer told me. Leftist zealot? No, that's from a fifteen-year federal law enforcement officer, who, I might add, lost friends in the September 11th attack. "If you're going to give me too much power, believe me, I'm going to do the wrong thing," he said. Several years ago, I profiled a US Border Patrol Supervisor for the London-based *Index on Censorship*. "We're not a police state," the agent smiled as we cruised along the steel border wall in the San Diego Sector. But he wouldn't mind if we became one, he added, "since I'm the police."

On Capitol Hill, as the legislation which would become the USA Patriot Act was being secretly crafted, with normal committee meetings bypassed, one liberal legislative aide privately complained about having to mouth a mantra for credibility: Yes, we all agree we must "give law enforcement the tools they need." She kept mouthing it, though, so here we are: expanded wiretap powers, authorization for monitoring of some attorney-client conversations, and the secret detention of undisclosed numbers — probably in the thousands — of legal and illegal "aliens," who could be subject to the new military tribunals and the possibility of indefinite detention. Racial/ethnic profiling is not new, but it is newly acceptable. Less widely reported are changes which allow nonviolent political activity and unpopular political opinion here in the homeland to form the basis for "terrorist" smear-charges.*

None of this is really about security. As Vice President Cheney said, the military tribunal "guarantees that we'll have the kind of treatment of these individuals that we believe they deserve." That is the logic of the lynch mob, pure and simple. And it sums up the reinvigorated license and legitimation of abuses of power already long at work in the Justice Department. I would feel a lot safer if we were allowed to feel a little less safe.

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* See Nancy Chang, "The Silencing of Political Dissent: How the USA Patriot Act Undermines the Constitution," Open Media Pamphlet Series (Nov. 2001), available at www.sevenstories.com.

Toward an Anti-Capitalist Globe
We Know Why, the Question Is How?

Brian Dominick

"EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED. NOTHING HAS CHANGED." I cannot say how many times I've heard that sentiment expressed by leftists since September 11. We all know it. The elites' aspirations are exactly the same as before. They have found a way to use September 11 to their advantage, to accelerate already-held plans for increased global hegemony — economic, military, political, and cultural.

The social climate in which our struggle takes place has changed, for both better and worse. Everyday people are more interested in the goings-on of the world in which they live than at any time in recent memory. That's good. Suppression of viewpoints and repression of active dissent are on the rise. That's bad.

Nevertheless, we have seemingly let the latter, negative changes interfere with our ability to take advantage of the one positive effect of these terrible events and their frightening aftermath. Society has finally woken up to the fact that there is an entire world beyond our borders, and the elites were there to serve everyone breakfast in the form of CNN's regurgitation of State Department propaganda. The Pentagon and the American Red Cross were there to show us all that we could "do something" to "heal" the world.

Well, break time is over. The world has not changed all that much. The adversary's goals and methods are almost identical. They are moving ahead with their hegemonic aims. It's time for us to rejoin the fight where we left off.

The changing social climate means our strategies and tactics may need some adjustment. But that's perfect, because they needed adjustment anyway. Now is our opportunity to reevaluate them, and reinvigorate them. So let's take a long, hard look at our movement, and let's rebuild it. Now.

I first wrote the remainder of this essay prior to September 11, based on a lecture I gave in June. I have read and reread it, and even rewritten parts of it. But the fact is, the criticisms and suggestions I present here with regard to the anti-capitalist globalization movement have not changed at all as a result of the terrorist attacks or the "War on Terror."

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Movement Definitions and Context (Global)

EVERYONE KNOWS IT, BUT MOST OF US don't really know what it's supposed to look like: The anti-capitalist globalization movement needs to be a grassroots effort at broad-based economic change which takes people, the environment, and cultures into account as primary concerns of trade and investment policy.

The term "anti-capitalist globalization" is my preferred label for the movement, because it forms a relevant double entendre. Our movement is against *capitalist* globalization — it is profoundly *anti-capitalist*. At the same time, it is a movement *for globalization* — it is internationalist.

If we always mention that we are anti-capitalist, we stand a chance of recognizing that all resistance to capitalism, and all promotion of radically alternative economic methods and systems, are in turn opposed to capitalist globalization.

And if we avoid calling our stance anti-globalization (since we're only against a particular version of globalization), we acknowledge that we operate in a certain global context. We recognize that the world is in fact a globe. This has been undeniable since the time of Columbus, who set the stage for globalization. Now that the world is truly connected across borders in so many ways, we shouldn't deny reality. An internationalist perspective is our only hope at this juncture. North American leftists cannot afford an attitude that doesn't recognize our collective responsibility for helping to repair the world our society has played such a major role in ruining. This is commonly understood by most of the anti-capitalist globalization movement — but you wouldn't know it from the way we often behave.

Finally, our perception of the anti-capitalist globalization movement must be that it is a global movement, of which North Americans form a crucial but not all-important component. It is the height of arrogance to suggest we are the center of the movement. Despite all the lip service among European and North American leftists about our recognition of noble struggles throughout the Third World, reality is we haven't demonstrated that we really give a fuck about the movements in the global South. We have all but forgotten the Zapatistas of Chiapas, Mexico, let alone the other movements against capitalist globalization that truly define our social context.

Case in point: Last summer, four demonstrators in Papua New Guinea were killed by police during a protest against the International Monetary Fund. Most leftists I talk to don't know that event took place. There were blurbs here and there, but the U.S. alternative media covered it little more than did the mainstream press. The victims' names appeared virtually nowhere. Less than a month later, an Italian protestor was shot dead by paramilitaries during the G8 demonstrations in Genoa, Italy. His name, Carlo Guiliani, resonates throughout the movement. He has

been regularly called the first martyr of the anti-globalization struggle by naïve and arrogant "radical" reporters.

In reality, thousands of activists have been martyred in the struggle against capitalist globalization. They are union organizers, teachers, guerillas, clergy, and everyday peasants who cried "Enough is enough!" But who's name do we remember? The white kid from the First World country. Our global blinders are on, and it should be an embarrassment.

Movement Context (Historical)

OUR HISTORICAL BLINDERS ARE ALSO WELL-AFFIXED. The slogan leading up to the FTAA protests of April, 2001 said, "It didn't start with Seattle, it won't end with Quebec." But how many of us truly understand that this struggle predates our avid participation in it? Many North Americans and Europeans were awakened to capitalist globalization — which was then called "neoliberalism" — when the Zapatistas chose January 1, 1994, to punctuate indigenous Mexicans' opposition to NAFTA and to assert their own humanity. Some of us had organized against NAFTA, yet we had not realized the global context of the struggle — much less the historical context — until a few thousand Mayans took it upon themselves to shake the world. But the vibrations have since dissipated. Caught up in our own activities, we once again fail to see our struggle in the larger historical context.

True, Seattle sparked the most recent incarnation of the movement here in the global North. But we were way behind the times. In our self-centeredness, we continue to fail at learning the lessons of those who came before us. Our post-Seattle attempts have been mostly superficial, at best, more mimic than any actual reflection of having learned real lessons. Who better to learn from than the Zapatistas, who base their campaign on the heritage of five centuries of rebellion, and on a culture which promotes democracy and participation? Most North Americans have nothing of that sort to speak of, yet we remain isolated in our arrogance.

Movement Demographics

OF COURSE, INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES HERE have precisely that heritage. But, again, we don't give the impression that we care.

In spring, 2001, the Mohawk Warrior Society offered to ensure a relatively open Canadian border at the Akwasasne Reservation crossing so U.S. activists could pass, en masse, into Canada to take part in the anti-FTAA demonstrations. False sentiments of solidarity with the Mohawk people permeated the white American attitude at the event. One couldn't help but wonder if even 5 percent of the people who intended to take advantage of the Mohawk offer would have attended a Mohawk demonstration at Akwasasne had it not been conveniently on the way to a big-

ger, more spectacular, white-organized event against a huge summit of elites. In the end, that query was answered. Hundreds of U.S. activists turned back in tune with a perplexing decision made the night before that if Canada Customs denied entry to a single activist, all would leave in protest. This perversion of "solidarity" with one another was a spit in the face to Mohawk Warriors who had worked tirelessly to enable a safe crossing into Canada, and it was a gift to the Canadian customs and immigration services.

In the fall of 2001, Colorado AIM, in coalition with an impressive list of grassroots organizations, put out a call for activists to attend demonstrations against the celebration of Columbus Day in Denver. The white component of the anti-capitalist globalization movement ignored the call. At least two popular left websites neglected, after persistent requests, to so much as list the Denver event alongside white-organized summit protests enjoying prominent promotion on their front pages.

For all our rhetoric about cultural diversity and international solidarity, the white Left really has not learned the lessons of past movements, regularly divided by racism and white chauvinism. We constantly wonder aloud, "Why aren't there more people of color in our movement?" Meanwhile, people of color aren't wondering where the white people are when it comes to addressing the issues important to them, because they know exactly where we are. We're saving the world, one globe at a time.

So what are the issues important to people of color and poor people? Why don't activists of color seem interested in the anti-capitalist globalization movement?

Capitalist globalization is seen by many nitty-gritty activists as abstract, far removed from the day-to-day struggles taking place in communities and workplaces throughout the country. Like those of us who've devoted significant energy struggling against the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and various free trade agreements, community activists recognize capitalist globalization for what it is: an ally and a weapon of their adversaries in government and big business. Still, those same activists and organizers know that despite the looming specter of neoliberal financial institutions and policies, the struggle in the neighborhoods, farms and factories continues as ever — and it must be attended to. If anything, they perceive many of us as having abandoned those day-to-day struggles in favor of the new, sexy, trendy movement of the moment.

There's only one way to demonstrate our commitment to tangible "bread-and-butter" issues to all the activists who stay home while some of us go summit hopping — we have to become and/or stay involved in those everyday conflicts whose perpetrators don't meet in high-profile summits. We have to continue to take on the mid-level bosses, the landlords and the bureaucrats.

Let's face it, opposing capitalist globalization does not make much of

a dent in all those struggles we have known and cared about since long before Bretton Woods redefined global economics. Our best hope is to keep those struggles from becoming harder to fight. And for that reason, we know we must continue to fight the globalization of capitalist exploitation and misery in all its forms. But we should recognize that struggling against the capitalists and politicians on the home front, in all the ways we always have (while bringing to that battle lessons learned from the anti-capitalist globalization movement), does indeed contribute to the fight against capitalist globalization.

Activists focused on community, labor and environmental issues need to see that they have not been abandoned. If this new movement is growing in terms of the numbers of people willing to hit the streets at major, international actions, but not in terms of the numbers of people becoming involved in practical issues in their hometowns — then we have indeed failed ourselves. Most people's primary concern is not this or that new trade policy, but a new racist domestic policy, or a new anti-union law. We shouldn't patronizingly nod our head in recognition of the priority of such concerns on some people's parts, meanwhile thinking to ourselves that the real issue of the moment is capitalist globalization. Instead, we should recognize and admit that globalization is at best an outgrowth of other oppressions, and that fighting those oppressions — albeit on less-than-sexy battlefields — is the appropriate priority for most of us, not just for those underprivileged enough to suffer from less abstract forms of social wrongdoing.

Perhaps, then, when people of color and working class folks see that anti-capitalist globalization activists are not removed from the real world, but instead are primarily immersed in the everyday concerns of everyday people, they will be more interested in struggling explicitly against neoliberalism. Then again, maybe they won't — in which case their priorities will still be very much in order, and we'll need to continue attending to issues of immediate concern to our and their communities. The point is, paying attention to bread-and-butter struggles at home is not a recruitment ploy — it's actually an integral part of the movement against capitalism, and thus against capitalist globalization.

As if the ignorance and arrogance of those dominating the character of the current movement were not enough to repulse poor people, we have found other ways to alienate them. For starters, we've based accredited membership in the movement on presence at and participation in protests which are geographically inaccessible to people of limited financial means. This is especially relevant for those holding down full-time jobs and raising families. Additionally, whatever one's view of the ethical and public relations aspects of increasing violence and legal ramifications of today's protests, it's hard to deny that these conditions serve as greater deterrents to those for whom police confrontation poses more severe repercussions, and for whom it is indeed an ominous part of daily

life anyway.

We need to recognize new forms of valid participation in our movement. But, again, such efforts should not amount to privileged activists finding token means of incorporating working class folks into "our movement." The preferred approach would be to actually acknowledge the typically less-visible (but at least as valuable) contributions of those who tend to hold down the fort while the self-proclaimed global revolutionaries are off fighting cops and shouting at delegates.

Movement Vision

FIRST RUNNER UP in reasons more people aren't turned on by our movement may be its lack of clearly defined and widely-articulated alternatives to capitalist methods. Many people have put forth ideas for alternative approaches to international trade — from highly-internationalist, radically-conceived institutions and policies prejudiced *for* poorer countries rather than against them; to weak and modest reform goals aimed at altering the policies, but notably not the makeup, of existing international institutions.

The reformist goals aren't attractive to most people. If convincing someone that neoliberal policies are horrible, and the institutions which promote and facilitate them devious in intent, is a prerequisite of turning people against capitalist globalization; then suggesting moderate alternatives which leave the institutional perpetrators essentially intact is not going to float. Most people recognize that real change isn't going to come about through a less insensitive WTO, nor a more humane IMF/World Bank.

This type of understanding — that radical change is the only viable solution — has perhaps never before been so widely acknowledged as truism throughout an entire movement, as currently seems to be the case. In the active circles of the anti-globalization movement, the radicals outnumber the reformists many-fold.

Why, then, do the radicals, who favor the abolition of the WTO, WB and IMF, not explicitly espouse what we are actually *for* in anything resembling a common statement or a visible presentation? Certainly there are and always will be disputes as to the best approaches. But several good ideas have been set forth (see, for instance, Michael Albert's proposals in *Z Magazine* (10/01), or those described in *Globalization from Below* (Jeremy Brecher, Tim Costello, Brendan Smith; South End Press; 2000).

Any radical vision for international trade structures and policies will necessarily be based on an understanding that capitalist systems are unlikely to produce, let alone be able to participate in, a truly revolutionary global economy. Therefore, in addition to presenting our visionary alternatives for world trade and international aid systems, we need to

lay out viable alternatives to capitalism itself. If the root of capitalist globalization is, in fact, market capitalism, then a real alternative to market capitalism is needed. If we cannot present such an alternative, or if we rely on half-baked and half-assed visions, we should not expect to convince people that this struggle is worth the effort. The ends must validate the means.

This essay is not the forum for articulating visions — but at this juncture, it would seem, we haven't suitably provided ourselves such a forum. Without the ability to present clear alternatives, we shouldn't expect many more people to get excited about protest. There's just so far any movement can go without knowing where it's headed. And angry protest will only fuel a movement just so far…

Movement Objectives

SHORT OF OUR EVENTUAL VISIONS, we need to know what our immediate goals are while out in the streets or, better yet, going door-to-door or speaking at neighborhood and other group meetings. What are we after this year or next year?

Lest we get ahead of ourselves, I suggest our primary objective at this point should be outreach. We are still at the stage where many, many more people need to become informed, inspired and active before we can hope to make significant gains against the fast-expanding forces of capitalist globalization. Many constituencies haven't been reached at all, and many more haven't been shown ways to get involved in the struggle. Everything from demonstrations to teach-ins to everyday conversation is a necessary medium for drawing more and more people into the folds of our movement.

In addition to outreach, we need more in-reach. The movement is in its infancy here in North America, and we're thus still at a stage where our knowledge and skills leave much to be desired — and achieved. This we must continue to admit and attempt to remedy.

Finally, other short-term goals should include directly resisting and impeding capitalist globalization's barely-bounded growth. Our presence can't simply be to attract more people to join that presence itself. Part of attracting them, in fact, will be demonstrating not just our opposition, but our ability to affect it in such ways that we are a real nuisance and a definite hindrance to our adversaries. We must continue to beat them in the eyes of the public, but we must also continue to drive them to retreat. If we can't shut down their meetings, we must pressure the politicians and NGOs whose acquiescence they require. We must raise the costs of continuing down the current path until they exceed the perceived benefits of free trade, exploitative lending practices and structural adjustment programs. And we need to attack new, more stationary targets with the same vigor with which we besiege global summits. Only then will we

stand a chance of implementing whatever visions we come to agree on.

Movement Strategies

BUT HOW DO WE GET FROM HERE TO THERE? How do we achieve our short-term goals? And how do we accomplish them in ways consistent with our long-term visions?

Our presence in the street at global summits must continue. It inspires not only those who hear about the goings-on through various news outlets, but it also inspires those of us who've already been around awhile. The demos are indispensable at this point, to be sure.

But major demonstrations are also a very limited tool. They may frighten elites, but only moderately. Massive street actions scare them to different venues, but not to different policies. And, indeed, regardless of the tactics we employ at demos, their range of appeal is decidedly limited in terms of who they'll actually attract.

Many people, quite understandably, require face-to-face interaction and direct engagement before an issue really makes sense to them, or truly hits home. We must always follow up our boisterous street activities with down-to-earth dialog in venues more amenable to most people's comforts. This is where the hard work comes in. It is the work that will not impress those focused on the spectacle of street action, nor make exciting stories to tell the grandkids (or your new love interest). Once we realize that high-profile demonstrations are more self-benefiting than movement-building, we come to understand the need for outreach in everyday life.

So we need to bring the street battles home, in a sense, to our own neighborhoods (with a minimum of the actual melee that now characterizes modern protest). We need local demonstrations, but we also need to create numerous other forms of anti-capitalist presence in our communities. The act of supporting all forms of anti-capitalist organizing — be it of a radical or reform nature — is an integral aspect of anti-capitalist globalization strategy itself.

Movement Tactics

SINCE LONG BEFORE THE SEATTLE ACTIONS OF FALL, 1999, a debate has raged over "violent" vs. "nonviolent" tactics. When the Zapatistas rose up in armed struggle against the Mexican government in 1994, there was not much discussion in North American leftist circles regarding Zapatista ethics. It was understood that the EZLN consisted of super-oppressed peoples who had exhausted other means of resistance, and were using moderate forms of violence as a last-ditch effort.

However, the vast majority of North Americans are not in the same conundrum as the indigenous people of Chiapas, Mexico. We are desperate — some more so than others — but we have not exhausted all op-

tions. Notably, we have also not even discussed armed struggle with a straight face.

Some elements of our movement have, though, engaged in various forms of violence. On occasion, this violence has not even been in direct self-defense. During rare instances, protestors have instigated violence in police encounters by literally throwing the first stone.

And so, the debate continues: are violent tactics acceptable? Do they further our aims? Do they turn people on or off to our movement? None of the answers are whole truths. Recognizing this, some people have begun to support a concept known as "diversity of tactics." Quite often, though, that phrase has been used as a euphemism by those who support only tactics which are highly militant and confrontational, including property destruction or violence against agents of the state. Recognizing this, "diversity of tactics" has been maligned by pacifists who consider it a euphemism for mayhem. Nevertheless, the true spirit of diversity of tactics has for a while now seemed the only sensible stance for our movement to take. We should all tolerate each other's tactical preferences — even when they seem insane or nonsensical — so long as the implementation of any such tactic does not interfere with that of any other performed by allied groups. Easier said than done, but still the ideal we must aspire toward respecting.

This debate has been compounded somewhat by the post-September 11 political climate. There is growing concern that militant resistance to the status quo is much less likely to be tolerated by the public or the state now that the U.S. is leading a so-called "War on Terrorism." Being seen as even remotely terrorist will be highly problematic to our movement and its members.

Contusions

FOR THE PAST COUPLE OF YEARS, my involvement in anti-capitalist globalization street protests has been as a street medic providing emergency first aid to demonstrators injured by police violence. In that capacity, I have had the opportunity to meet some interesting people — ordinary activists placed in terrifying circumstances. My patients have often inspired me. Despite personal suffering, instead of asking about their condition, "how bad is it?", the overwhelming majority of activists being treated by medics simply want to know when they can return to the action. They are brave and committed, very much unlike their typical portrayal in the media as spoiled brats itching to raise hell before it's time to sell out.

In Quebec City last April, I encountered a young "Black Bloc" activist named "Cabbage," who had been beaten over the head by a riot cop, resulting in a torn earlobe, a nasty gash across his scalp, and quite possibly a skull fracture. As battered as he was, this young radical insisted he

was going to return to the front lines to confront the police. During a physical examination, I discovered Cabbage had sustained several nasty bruises from plastic bullets during the previous days' activities. Although this young radical had been wounded on two separate occasions, he wasn't ready to quit.

It's difficult to resist wondering if all the suffering I see as a medic is really worthwhile. Sure, it often radicalizes the victims, who tend to increase their commitment rather than shy away (it surely has the opposite effect on some, too). But in the end, is it achieving anything? There is some glory inherent in directly clashing with those who protect elites and elite interests, but it's quite limited. Street fighting involves significant losses, and it distracts both activists and the public at large from the real issues of wealth and privilege which we need to address. (And we have trouble understanding why those marching under the anti-capitalist globalization banner aren't more diversely representative of the populace, as we misdirect our energy against the guardians of elites instead of elites themselves, and pay a price so many cannot afford.)

Not so glorious is the job of actually articulating complex viewpoints on topics like political economy and global trade — not in journals or position papers, but in social settings where we can influence and learn from the perspectives of people outside our normal milieu. Far less spectacular than the street battle is the comparatively invisible conflict of working day in and day out to build the institutions which make real-world economic change in our communities and between societies.

If we can take the courage that so many of us carry into the streets each time a summit of world leaders/corporate delegates is held, and channel it toward work that really contributes to changing the world in tangible ways, then we will be onto something. But if our protest movement remains just that — a movement based on successive demonstrations but little change in people's economic lives — we'll accomplish little more than modest consciousness raising. If we can fight capitalism and capitalist globalization at the same time, why focus primarily on the latter and isolate ourselves from the people most in need of change?

If there were more people with the dedication and passion of someone like Cabbage actually working for change outside of the summit circuit, there would be no reason to believe anything can stop us from transforming the world.

Iraqi Sanctions: Myth and Fact

Jeff Lindemyer

WITH SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, constantly looming over America's head like a giant mushroom cloud, some Americans have begun to ask the simple question, "Why?" Why did something like this happen to us? Despite widespread media coverage of anti-American protests in dozens of countries worldwide, some as large as 20,000, President Bush repeatedly tells us that the terrorists' motives are that they "hate freedom." For those who desire a more plausible answer, there are several key factors behind anti-American rage, a significant one being the sanctions against Iraq.

ON AUGUST 6, 1990, IMMEDIATELY AFTER Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait and prior to the "Persian Gulf War," the United Nations levied sanctions against Iraq. In the ensuing eleven-year span, the sanctions have not changed, though the Iraqi landscape has undeniably been altered forever. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis lay dead as a direct result of the sanctions, over half them children, and over four million Iraqis have fled the country in hope of a better life. Quality of life has plummeted; the economy is in shambles, disease and malnutrition are commonplace, and even potable drinking water has become rare. Yet throughout all of the devastating aftermath of the "Persian Gulf War" and the sanctions, Saddam Hussein still maintains his position as dictator. The aim of this article is to debunk the most common myths surrounding the Iraqi sanctions whose existence is dependent upon them.

The United States State Department propagates several myths to lull the American people into supporting sanctions against Iraq, the chief myth being that "Sanctions are not intended to harm the people of Iraq."[2] The government's own documents, however, prove otherwise. Several United States Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) documents clearly and thoroughly prove, in the words of Thomas Nagy, "beyond a doubt that, contrary to the Geneva Convention, the U.S. government intentionally used sanctions against Iraq to degrade the country's water supply after the Gulf War. The United States knew the cost that civilian Iraqis, mostly children, would pay, and it went ahead anyway."[3]

One document entitled "Iraq Water Treatment Vulnerabilities," dated

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January 22, 1991, is quite straightforward in how sanctions will prevent Iraq from supplying clean water to its citizens. It explains Iraq's heavy dependence on the importation of specialized equipment and some chemicals to purify its water. Failing to secure these items (which is nearly impossible to do under the sanctions), the documents adds, will result in a shortage of drinking water and could "lead to increased incidences, if not epidemics, of disease."[4]

Other DIA documents confirm that the U.S. government was not only aware of the devastation of the sanctions, but was, in fact, monitoring their progress. The first in a lengthy series of documents entitled "Disease Information" is a document whose heading reads "Subject: Effects of Bombing on Disease Occurrence in Baghdad." The document states, "Increased incidence of diseases will be attributable to degradation of normal preventive medicine, waste disposal, water purification/distribution, electricity, and decreased ability to control disease outbreaks. Any urban area in Iraq that has received infrastructure damage will have similar problems." The document then itemizes the likely disease outbreaks, noting which in particular will affect children.[5]

A second DIA document, "Disease Outbreaks in Iraq" from February 21, 1991 writes, "Conditions are favorable for communicable disease outbreaks, particularly in major urban areas affected by coalition bombing." It continues, "Infectious disease prevalence in major Iraqi urban areas targeted by coalition bombing (Baghdad, Basrah) undoubtedly has increased since the beginning of Desert Storm." Similar to the preceding document, it explains the causes of the disease outbreaks and itemizes them, again paying close attention to which will affect children.[6]

The third document, written March 15, 1991 and entitled "Medical Problems in Iraq," states that diseases are far more common due to "poor sanitary conditions (contaminated water supplied and improper sewage disposal) resulting from the war." It then cites a UNICEF/WHO report that "the quantity of potable water is less than 5 percent of the original supply," that "there are no operational water and sewage treatment plants," and that diarrhea and respiratory infections are on the rise. Almost as a sidenote, it adds "Children particularly have been affected by these diseases."[7] "As these documents illustrate, the United States knew sanctions had the capacity to devastate the water treatment system of Iraq. It knew what the consequences would be: increased outbreaks of disease and high rates of child mortality" (Nagy).

Yet, in light of the startling information revealing their knowledge and intentions, the State Department continues to claim that "Thanks to the oil-for-food [OFF] program, the people of Iraq, especially those in the north, are getting needed foods and medicines." Former UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq, Denis Halliday, oversaw the "oil-for-food" (OFF) program and believes otherwise. "The OFF program as conceived is completely inadequate. It was designed in fact not to resolve the situation,

but to prevent further deterioration of both mortality rates and malnutrition. It has failed to do that; at best it has just about sustained the situation. It's grossly under-funded, and it has not even begun to address the needs, the dietary needs of the Iraqi people... And on top of that you have a medical sector which gobbles up the rest of the money to a great extent, so again we have not managed to provide the basic needs of the Iraqi people."[8] Halliday resigned from his post in September 1998 in protest over the sanctions against Iraq. He had worked for the UN for 34 years.

Despite an inherent contradiction with their preceding contention that all is well in Iraq, the State Department alleges that "Iraqi obstruction of the oil-for-food program, not United Nations sanctions, is the primary reason the Iraqi people are suffering." A basic timeline proves this to be false: the UN sanctions were levied against Iraq in August 1990 and the OFF program commenced in December 1996. It is therefore impossible to attribute the suffering of the Iraqi people to the obstruction of a program, which did not exist until six years after the fact. And, as Halliday explained, the "oil-for-food" program was set up by the UN Security Council as a response to the humanitarian crisis in Iraq created by the impact of the sanctions. The creation of the program itself demonstrates that the suffering of the Iraqi people preceded any possible interference.

But some critics contend that Baghdad's refusal to accept a United Nations "oil-for-food" proposal in late 1991 also constitutes Iraqi obstruction of a much-needed program.[9] This claim, made in hindsight, assumes not only that the motives for the program's creation were pure, but also that there were no legitimate problems with the suddenly altruistic, U.S.-backed program. Roger Normand notes, however,

> Despite evidence of a humanitarian disaster, the Security Council took no action to mitigate the impact of sanctions until August 1991, after highly-publicized UN and independent missions to Iraq revealed dramatic civilian suffering. In Resolutions 706 and 712, the Security Council proposed an food-for-oil agreement allowing Iraq to sell $1.6 billion of oil every six months. After a 40 percent deduction to pay UN expenses and war reparations, the amount remaining to purchase food and medicine for the civilian population would be about half of the $3.6 billion that the UN itself had estimated as Iraq's minimum emergency needs, and far below the estimated $22 billion needed to repair damage to the civilian infrastructure.[10]

To boot, a significant portion of the billions of dollars in reparations would go to pay back the United States in addition to Kuwait. Thus, theoretically Iraq would be (and currently is) paying the United States back for the bombs that it dropped on its countryside and people.

Furthermore, the "oil-for-food" program was never intended to act as a substitute for a fully functioning Iraqi economy. The Security Council Resolution 986, which provides the framework for the "oil-for-food" pro-

gram, itself refers to the program as a "temporary measure." And in the words of the UN Secretary-General "the [oil-for-food] programme was never meant to meet all the needs of the Iraqi people and cannot be a substitute for normal economic activity in Iraq."[11] Over the years, there have been repeated extensions to this short-term program, as well as slight modifications, such as lifting the cap on oil sales permitted by Iraq, but efforts to reform the program have consistently failed and the dismal situation in Iraq has either sustained itself or worsened.

"OIL-FOR-FOOD" PROGRAM OR NOT, the plight of the Iraqi people, especially that of children, has been unconscionable. Since the onset of the sanctions, almost one-quarter of all infants are born underweight and a similar number is malnourished.[12] The situation doesn't get any better as they get older either, as thirty-two percent of children under five are chronically malnourished,[13] with the mortality rate increasing over six-fold to be among the highest in the world.[14] Stemming mainly from hunger and disease, the result is the death of 4,500 children under the age of 5 *per month*.[15] That translates roughly to 150 children killed *each and every day*. In all, if pre-war trends in child mortality had continued through the 1990s, there would have been *half a million* fewer deaths of children under five in Iraq from 1991 to 1998.[16]

There is, however, a morbid controversy over the exact number of deaths resulting from the sanctions. In a recent article, David Cortright questions the magnitude of the death toll, specifically challenging the number derived from the 1995 Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) study that concluded that sanctions were responsible for the deaths of 567,000 Iraqi children. He then cites the "two most reliable scientific studies on sanctions in Iraq" in challenging the FAO study: "Morbidity and Mortality Among Iraqi Children" by Richard Garfield and "Sanctions and Childhood Mortality in Iraq," by Mohamed Ali and Iqbal Shah as published in *The Lancet*.[17] Unfortunately for Cortright, these two studies contradict one another. The Garfield study asserts that from 1990 to March 1998, there were 228,000 excess deaths of children under five, as opposed to the 567,000 asserted by the FAO study. But the Ali and Shah study—used as evidence of Iraqi mismanagement, discussed below—is actually a published account of UNICEF's mortality data, which is the basis for the calculated half million death toll, and is entirely independent from the FAO study. (Ali headed the UNICEF team of consultants in Iraq, Shah reviewed the survey report, and both co-wrote the article submitted to *The Lancet*.)[18]

Although touting the accomplishments of the "oil-for-food" program on the one hand, the State Department, like Cortright, professes that "Iraq is mismanaging the oil-for-food program, either deliberately or through incompetence" on the other. This claim is based mainly on the assertion that because there has been some improvement in the mortal-

ity rates in northern Iraq, where the UN controls distribution of food and medicine, this proves that Saddam Hussein is to blame for the crisis in southern and central Iraq. But as Hans Von Sponeck, former UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq, who took over after Halliday's resignation, has noted, the claim of mismanagement is simply not true.[19]

Since the bombing of the Persian Gulf War was concentrated in southern Iraq, the destruction of civilian infrastructure is most severe there. Yet the "oil-for-food" program provides no funding for the distribution of food and medicine in southern and central Iraq. Southern and central Iraq also receive far less support per capita from the international community than does northern Iraq. Comprising 85 percent of the population, southern and central Iraq benefit from only 11 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as opposed to the 34 NGOs which serve northern Iraq. Similarly, northern Iraq receives 22 percent more per capita from the "oil-for-food" program and gets about 10 percent of UN-controlled assistance in currency, while the rest of the country receives only commodities.[20]

Keeping in line with the policy of championing the "oil-for-food" program when convenient and scoffing at it when it's not, the State Department claims that "Holds on inappropriate contracts help prevent the diversion of oil-for-food goods to further Saddam's personal interests." This despite the fact that requests for desperately needed equipment routinely get held up in the Security Council for months at a time. The delays have gotten so bad that UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Office of the Iraq Program Director Benon Sevon have written letters decrying the excessive holds placed on items ordered under the Program. To this very day, holds continue to expedite the process of destruction within Iraq. "Earlier this year [2001], U.S. diplomats blocked child vaccines for Iraq, including for diphtheria, typhoid, and tetanus. Over $3 billion worth of contracts remain on hold. To date, no hearings have been held."[21]

The holds that perpetuate the detrimental health impacts of the sanctions have gained the attention of one House member. In the summer of 2000, Representative Tony Hall of Ohio wrote a letter to then Secretary of State Madeleine Albright "about the profound effects of the increasing deterioration of Iraq's water supply and sanitation systems on its children's health." Hall wrote, "Holds on contracts for the water and sanitation sector are a prime reason for the increases in sickness and death. Of the eighteen contracts, all but one hold was placed by the U.S. government. The contracts are for purification chemicals, chlorinators, chemical dosing pumps, water tankers, and other equipment… . I urge you to weigh your decision against the disease and death that are the unavoidable result of not having safe drinking water and minimum levels of sanitation."[22] Unfortunately for the people of Iraq, the letter was addressed to Madeleine Albright—the same person who stated that the

death of over a half of a million children was "worth it."[23]

An even more insidious plot than sneaking through chlorine and vaccines to create biological and chemical weapons is at work in the State Department allegation that Saddam Hussein is somehow hoarding both food and medical supplies from his people to evoke Western sympathy. Allegations of "warehousing," however, were put to rest by former UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq, Hans Von Sponeck: "It is not, I repeat not, and you can check this with my colleagues, a pre-meditated act of withholding medicines from those who should have it. It is much, much, more complex than that." Sponeck explained that low worker pay, lack of transportation, poor facilities, and low funding were responsible for the breakdowns in inventory and distribution systems. The bureaucracy of the "oil-for-food" program, such as contract delays and holds, also plays a substantial role. In February 2000, Sponeck, like his predecessor, Denis Halliday, resigned from his post in protest over the sanctions. Also like Halliday, Sponeck had worked for the UN for over 30 years.[24]

Halliday concurs that contract delays, contract holds, and distribution problems account for the medical supplies problem. "[T]hose factors come together and you have a problem… I have no doubt in saying that there is no one person in the Ministry of Health or anywhere else in the Iraqi government who is deliberately trying to damage the health, or allowing children or others to die by deliberately not distributing medical supplies. That's just nonsense."[25]

As a last resort, the government often claims that "Saddam Hussein's repression of the Iraqi people has not stopped" and therefore "lifting sanctions would offer the Iraqi people no relief from neglect at the hands of their government." According to the State Department, "Saddam continues to attack coalition aircraft enforcing the no-fly zones, which were established to prevent Saddam from attacking Kurdish and Shi'a civilians, in violation of UNSC Resolution 688 and 949."

The constant bombing of the "no-fly zones" in Iraq by the United States and Britain, however, is not authorized under any UN resolution. UNSC Resolution 688 of April 1991 rightfully "condemns the repression of the Iraqi civilian population," specifically against Kurdish populated areas, and demands that such repression be stopped immediately. But the resolution makes absolutely no mention of any military response or constant patrolling of Iraqi airspace. Similarly, UNSC Resolution 949 of 1994 condemns "military deployments by Iraq in the direction of the border with Kuwait" and demands that Iraq withdraw its military units and not redeploy them at a later time. This resolution states that the United Nations welcomes "all diplomatic and other efforts to resolve the crisis," but also makes no mention of any military response or constant patrolling of Iraqi airspace.

As Halliday comments, "The bombing of the 'No-Fly' zones, which don't exist under any resolution of the Security Council, has continued

and still continues despite [the crisis in] Yugoslavia. It's a very tragic way for the USA and the UK to operate. It's completely outside the Security Council. It's a unilateral action which shows total disregard for the other member states of the Security Council."[26] Although the United States uses the terms "coalition" and "allies" when referring to its actions, the constant attacks against Iraq are entirely outside of the United Nations and in no way reflect or uphold international law. According to the UN Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, the U.S.-led attacks have, however, killed scores of innocent civilians, and injured many more.

THE STATE DEPARTMENT REPORTS that "Iraqi authorities routinely practice extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions throughout those parts of the country still under regime control. The total number of prisoners believed to have been executed since autumn 1997 exceeds 2,500." Former U.S. Marine and UN Weapons Inspector in Iraq Scott Ritter puts this number in context: "The concept of us trying to save the Iraqi people from Saddam Hussein is ludicrous. He is a brutal dictator. He may torture to death 1,800 people a year. That's terrible and unacceptable. But we kill 6,000 a month. Let's put that on a scale."[27]

The State Department further states that "In northern Iraq, the government is continuing its campaign of forcibly deporting Kurdish and Turkomen families to southern governorates. As a result of these forced deportations, approximately 900,000 citizens are internally displaced throughout Iraq." The State Department, however, fails to mention that over four million people—four times the amount of "internal displacements"—have been forced to flee Iraq in search of a better life due to the deplorable conditions of the country as a result of the sanctions.[28]

Perhaps the most common claim is that Iraq "has not fully declared and destroyed its WMD [weapons of mass destruction] programs" or complied with weapons inspections. Iraqi economic sanctions "prevent the Iraqi regime access to resources that it would use to reconstitute weapons of mass destruction." Interestingly enough, the State Department fails to address its role in helping Iraq develop its weapons programs. According to Phyllis Bennis, a fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, DC, "Long throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the government of Iraq, which was the government of the Baath party led by Saddam Hussein, was an ally of the United States." Iraq was a "recipient of massive amounts of weapons of mass destruction, most notably biological weapons stocks."[29]

Yet despite this omission of history, the State Department proclaims in their report, "Saddam Hussein's Iraq," that "Hussein's priorities are clear" based mainly on evidence of seized shipments of baby milk, baby bottles, and baby powder leaving Iraq. It seems especially unusual to state that if Hussein had greater control of baby products, he would use

them to rebuild his biological and chemical weapons programs, especially considering that the seized items were not even directly linked to Hussein.

"Without sanctions," the State Department warns, "Saddam would be free to use his resources to rearm and make good on his threats against Kuwait and the region." In 1998, before U.S. bombing ended the inspections, Raymond Zilinskas, one of the UN Weapons Inspectors in Iraq, testified to the success of the inspections: "Although it has been theoretically possible for the Iraqis to regain such weapons since 1991, the duplicity would have been risky and expensive, and the probability of discovery very high."[30] Scott Ritter, however, is more blunt. "When you ask the question, 'Does Iraq possess militarily viable biological or chemical weapons?' the answer is a resounding 'NO!' 'Can Iraq produce today chemical weapons on a meaningful scale?' 'NO!' It is 'no' across the board. So from a qualitative standpoint, Iraq has been disarmed. Iraq today possesses no meaningful weapons of mass destruction capability."[31]

The truth is that Iraq has been, by and large, disarmed. "Following the Gulf War, Iraq was forced into an unprecedented disarmament process and its military might has been considerably diminished by the work of UNSCOM. Chief Weapons Inspector Richard Butler said [in July 1998] that 'if Iraqi disarmament were a 5-lap race, we would be three-quarters of the way around the fifth and final lap.' Iraq's neighbors have said that Iraq no longer poses any threat. Even an Israeli military analyst has said that Iraq's biological weapons program was over-hyped."[32]

As for UNSCOM inspections, the reason for the lack of success lies mainly with the United States government's hidden agenda. UNSCOM had eight years of virtually unrestricted inspections. Former UN Weapons Inspector Raymond Zilinskas stated that "95 percent of [UNSCOM's] work proceeds unhindered."[33] But contrary to the UN goal of weapons inspections, the United States government has sought to use the inspections as intelligence gathering missions. Halliday states,

> [T]he difficulty with UNSCOM has been the inclusion of espionage, of spies, of various intelligence organizations which, under the UN auspices, is something that is appalling to all of us. Now as it happens, UNSCOM staff, including Butler, are not staff members of the organization. They are hired under secondment from other organizations, but nevertheless we expect them to behave in a manner consistent of a civil servant, and that clearly was not done. And the CIA and others have owned up to what they did, in fact, that they used the UN as a cover for espionage, which is a very unfortunate thing and what, of course, the Iraqis had been saying for many years and the UN had denied for many years. They were right; we, obviously, were wrong.[34]

Further evidence of this comes directly from former UN Weapons Inspector, Scott Ritter. "Fingers point at the United States primarily in

using the weapons inspection process not so much as a vehicle for disarming Iraq, but rather as a vehicle for containing Saddam and for gathering information that could be used to remove Saddam. The U.S. perverted the system; not the weapons inspectors."[35] Ritter resigned from UNSCOM because of this perversion.

Sanctions supporters retort that the *United Nations* levied the sanctions against Iraq, therefore the United States is not to blame. Sponeck addresses this point head on.

> The UN doesn't impose sanctions. It's the UN Security Council member governments who come together and impose sanctions. . . . I don't see the distinction between U.S. sanctions, in broad terms, and what is done and coming out of the Security Council of the UN. The leader in the discussion for the sanctions is the U.S. side and they are the ones, together with the British, that have devised many of the special provisions that govern the implementation of the [Resolution] 986 [oil-for-food] program. They are coming together, in that Security Council of 15 nations and work as a team, and that's the outcome, but I don't see a separate U.S. sanction regime that is markedly different from the UN Security Council regime.[36]

ON THAT CLEAR, BLUE-SKIED MORNING in the middle of September, something was taken that can never be recovered. Over 3,000 lives were lost and the illusion of invincibility was undeniably shattered forever. Planes fly overhead and we worry, threats of new attacks are commonplace, but worst of all, the feeling of utter helplessness is entirely pervasive, spreading to each and every individual in the United States. For most of America, September 11 was a once in a lifetime event, but for Iraq, September 11 comes every month.

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On Zionism and Jewish Supremacy

Joseph Massad[1]

IT IS NO LONGER CONTESTED, EVEN AMONG MANY ISRAELIS, that the impact of Zionism on the Palestinian people in the last 100 years includes: the expulsion of a majority of Palestinians from their lands and homes and the subsequent confiscation of their property for the exclusive use of Jews and the prevention of the refugees from returning; imposing a military apartheid system on those Palestinians who remained in Israel from 1948 until 1966, which since then has been relaxed to a civilian Jewish supremacist system of discrimination; and the military occupation and apartheid system imposed on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and their population for the last 34 years as well as continued colonization of these occupied territories. Can there be a solution to the conflict that Zionism brought from Europe and imposed on a mostly peasant population?

Ever since the Oslo "peace process" began in 1993, most debates among official Israelis, Americans, and Palestinians about how to "end" the conflict between Zionism and the Palestinians stressed the question of pragmatism as opposed to idealism. The logic runs as follows: it is not pragmatic to give the refugees the right of return; it is not pragmatic to give them back their property; it is not pragmatic to dismantle the colonial settlements in the Occupied Territories; it is not pragmatic to return all the territories to Palestinian control; it is not pragmatic to end all aspects of the occupation. Moreover, although Israel's Jewish character was never part of the negotiations, it has always been made explicit that transforming Israel into a non-Jewish (read non-racist) state is "not pragmatic."

On the pragmatic side, the arguments run as follows: it is pragmatic for Palestinians to give up the right of return; it is pragmatic for Palestinians to accept to live in a Jewish supremacist state as third class citizens; it is pragmatic for Palestinians to live in Israeli-controlled and besieged bantustans rather than opt for independence; and it is pragmatic for Israel to remain a Jewish supremacist state. Identifying the criteria by which these solutions are judged as pragmatic or non-pragmatic is then the question that poses itself insistently.

Is the return of the Palestinian refugees not pragmatic because Israel is too small geographically? This does not seem to be the case as

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Israel continues to market itself as a final destination for millions of diaspora Jews in the Americas and in Russia whose interest in moving there, despite valiant Zionist efforts, is less than enthusiastic (those who moved from Russia between 1990 and 2000 — many of whom turned out to be not Jewish at all — are excepted). In November 2001, as Israel's military continued to kill, strafe, and assassinate the resisting Palestinians of the Occupied Territories, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon had vowed to bring one million more Jews to Israel. Since the Russian Jewish well has almost dried up, it is said that Sharon may opt to encourage the half-million Argentine Jews to come and colonially settle in the Jewish State — American Jews have overwhelmingly opted not to be "redeemed" in Israel while making it up to Israeli Jews through the financial and political support that they give to the Jewish supremacist state while remaining in their American "exile."[2] Surely, if Israel can accommodate more millions of Jews in its small territory, it could conceivably do the same for the Palestinian refugees whom it expelled and whose land it invites these Jews to colonize. Yet all solutions that have been advanced by official and non-official Palestinians and Israeli Jews to resolve the refugee "problem," seem to agree on the non-pragmatism of the return of the refugees to their lands.

TWO OF THE MORE PROMINENT OF SUCH RECENT PROJECTS are Donna Arzt's book *Refugees Into Citizens, Palestinians and the End of the Arab-Israeli Conflict,* and the proposal advanced by Harvard University's Program on International Conflict Analysis and Resolution which was debated by a group of Palestinians and Israelis and written by Khalil Shikaki and Joseph Alpher.[3]

Arzt's proposal, considered "pragmatic" by the official consensus of international politics, foresees the settlement of Palestinian refugees mostly in neighboring Arab countries and in the West Bank with the multi-conditioned possibility of returning a mere 75,000 refugees to Israel. The premise of the book is that no one can establish who was responsible for the Palestinian exodus in 1948 and therefore everyone must share in the responsibility of resolving the plight of the refugees — not only in terms of resettlement but also in terms of compensation. Some of the possible explanations for the exodus that Arzt lists include Israeli expulsion as well as the now discredited Israeli propagandistic claim that Arab leaders called on the Palestinians to leave in order to clear the way for the descending Arab armies. Even if one were to accept Arzt's propagandistic claims that we cannot establish who was responsible for the exodus of *every* Palestinian in 1948 and 1967, we can easily establish with existing Israeli evidence that Palestinians in Lydda and Ramlah (to say nothing of the hundreds of other villages and cities) were expelled by the Israeli army and none other than Yitzhak Rabin, and that scores of Palestinians have been deported individually by the Israeli government.[4]

Despite Arzt's interest in verifying responsibility, she never investigates from within her conceptual framework whether those whose expulsion is supported by Israeli government records should be allowed to return to Israel and be compensated by it while the rest be the responsibility of multiple parties, including Israel. Moreover, even if we agreed with Arzt's and the Israeli government's propaganda that Israel should not compensate the refugees because it does not acknowledge that it expelled them, should not the compensation for stolen property be the responsibility of the thief? It is an established fact that Israeli Jews and the Israeli government are the parties which took over the abandoned property and which refuse to return it to its rightful owners. However, Arzt is only concerned that Israel be spared the heartache and the financial responsibilities, not to mention the demographic "threat," that Palestinians are said to constitute to its existence. She soberly states that the Palestinian refugee question should be resolved with minimal Israeli pay-backs so that "Israelis [read Jews] who will need assurance that a Palestinian will not someday show up on their children's doorstep demanding title to the property and/or with a multi-million dollar compensation claim" will be reassured.[5] As far as returning refugees, Israel could take 75,000 refugees whom it should have the right to carefully screen for a variety of sins and crimes. Arzt is careful to add that such a returning group will most likely include non-reproductive Palestinians: "A population subgroup very likely to seek return...would be...the oldest living generation of Palestinians, the ones who retain personal memories of life before 1948."[6] Indeed a young population of 75,000 refugees might reproduce in ways detrimental to Jewish supremacy in Israel.

As for the Harvard group, they propose four solutions, the two "traditional" Palestinian and Israeli solutions and two "compromise" solutions, one Palestinian and one Israeli. A conclusion is presented which includes commonalities between the Palestinian and the Israeli compromise solutions. The Palestinian compromise position "seeks to provide an acceptable, honorable — though not necessarily just — resolution of the refugee issue while accommodating the realities on the ground and Israeli security concerns."[7] Whereas this solution calls on Israel to "fully acknowledge" the "individual moral right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and property in Palestine," the proposal writers insist that "[n]o return en masse of the Palestinian refugees is envisaged...[rather] a return of only a limited number is seen as feasible."[8] The writers assert that most refugees will opt for compensation and concede to Israel the right "to have a say to the number of refugees allowed to return."[9] They do, however, assert that Palestinians who want to return should have the right to return to a Palestinian state-to-be with Israel having no say in that matter. The compromise is stated succinctly by the authors: "In this final settlement, the Palestinians make a strategic trade-off. They demand a return to the 1967 border, in order to

absorb the largest possible number of refugees, in return for foregoing the full exercise of the right of return."[10] The remaining refugees should be settled in host countries. Israel should be responsible to find the funds and to pay both individual compensation as well as collective compensation, the latter to be paid to the Palestinian state-to-be. This solution, the authors tell us, "provides realistic and reasonable justice by granting a moral/political right while acknowledging realities on the ground."[11]

Whereas the Israeli government has officially refused to make the 1948 refugees part of the negotiation agenda, and consistently makes statements that only few of the 1967 refugees will be allowed to return, some Israelis are advancing informed proposals about what the Israeli government might be agreeable to in the future. While, on the one hand, Yitzhak Rabin insisted after the Declaration of Principles was signed in 1993 that Israel won't allow more than a few thousand 1967 refugees to return, adding that if the PLO "expect[s] tens of thousands [of refugees to return,] they live in a dream, an illusion";[12] on the other hand, the Israeli compromise position, as the Harvard group of Israeli politicians and pundits see it, insists that Israel can share "practical (but not moral) responsibility, together with the other parties to the process that culminated in the 1948 war, for the plight and suffering of the refugees."[13] Note that the fact that half of the 1948 Palestinian refugees "left" Palestine before May 14, 1948, i.e. before the war, is not relevant to the exegetical eye of these authors. The Israeli authors assert that in their compromise "Israel also accepts the right of return to the Palestinian State, but not to Israel proper. Israel also may accept repatriation of 'tens of thousands' of Palestinian refugees as part of its family reunification program."[14] Also the Palestinian state must limit the number of Palestinians returning to its own territory, otherwise the Israelis will curtail their obligations of compensation. The combined authors believe that the ultimate solution would be somewhere in between their two compromise solutions, it being understood that these solutions will not apply to Israeli Palestinian internal refugees. Israel's possible payment of compensation to refugees "might generate parallel demands by Israeli Arabs who also abandoned lands or were removed from them, even though they remained in Israel. This could have far-reaching implications for Jewish-Arab relations within Israel,"[15] the authors worry. Note that in these proposals and in many others, what is at stake is Israel's Jewish-supremacist character (dubbed its "Jewish character"). What makes the return of Palestinian refugees whom Israel expelled and whose land it stole and steals not pragmatic is not some geographic considerations, not some environmental or logistical obstacles; what makes their return not pragmatic is that they are not *Jews*.[16]

IT IS FURTHER ARGUED that Israel cannot become a state of its citizens because to do so means that it would no longer remain a *Jewish* state

and will become an *Israeli* state. Indeed, racist talk about the demographic "threat" that the Palestinians constitute for a Jewish supremacist Israel is not confined to Mr. Sharon and the Israeli Jewish rightwing (which is anyway a majority in Jewish Israel), but also to liberal and leftist Israeli Jews. In December 2000, The Institute of Policy and Strategy at the Herzlia Interdisciplinary Center in Israel held its first of what is to be a series of annual conferences dealing with the strength and security of Israel, especially with regard to maintaining its Jewish supremacist character. One of the "Main Points" identified in the 52-page conference report is the concern over the numbers needed to maintain the Jewish supremacy of Israel:

> The high birthrate [of Israeli Arabs] brings into question the future of Israel as a Jewish state....The present demographic trends, should they continue, challenge the future of Israel as Jewish state. Israel has two alternative strategies: adaptation or containment. The latter requires a long-term energetic Zionist demographic policy whose political, economic, and educational effects would guarantee the Jewish character of Israel.[17]

The report adds affirmatively that "those who support the preservation of Israel's character as...a Jewish state for the Jewish nation...constitute a majority among the Jewish population in Israel." The conference was not a lonely effort. None other than Israel's President Moshe Katsav welcomed the attendees. Reflecting the predominant Jewish supremacist views among Israeli and American Jews, the conference was cosponsored by the American Jewish Committee, the Israel Center for Social and Economic Progress, The Israeli Defense Ministry, the Jewish Agency, the World Zionist Organization, the National Security Center at Haifa University, and the Israeli National Security Council of the Prime Minister's Office. The conference featured fifty speakers including senior government and military officials, including ex- and future prime ministers, and university professors, business and media personalities, as well as American Jewish academics and operatives of the U.S. Zionist lobby.

The conference's findings and commitments are hardly a new phenomenon in Zionist thought. Jewish demographic supremacy, which has always been the ideological cornerstone for imposing ethno-racial Jewish supremacy in Palestine (however the Jewish "race" or Jewish "ethnicity" may be defined), is as old as the Zionist movement itself. It was the founder of the movement, Theodor Herzl, who, in his Zionist musings, understood that European Jews would have to establish their ethno-racial supremacy through demographic supremacy. He soberly stated that "An infiltration [of Jews] is bound to end badly. It continues till the inevitable moment when the native population feels itself threatened, and forces the government to stop further influx of Jews. Immigration is consequently futile unless we have the sovereign right to con-

tinue such immigration."[18] To achieve this, the Jewish settlers would "gently" expropriate the natives' property and

> try to spirit the penniless population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it any employment in our own country.... The property-owners will come over to our side. Both the process of expropriation and the removal of the poor must be carried out discreetly and circumspectly.... Let the owners of immovable property believe that they are cheating us, selling us things for more than they are worth. But we are not going to sell them anything back.[19]

BEFORE THE NATIVES WERE REMOVED, however, they would be needed for some important tasks: "If we move into a region where there are wild animals to which the Jews are not accustomed — big snakes, etc. — I shall use the natives, prior to giving them employment in the transit countries, for the extermination of these animals. High premiums for snake skins, etc, as well as their spawn" will be offered by the Jews.[20] The Jewish supremacist plan that the Zionists had in mind for their state-to-be was not carried out as discreetly and circumspectly as Herzl had hoped. Indeed, part of their "conquest of labor," wherein only Jews were supposed to work "Jewish" land, manifested in a celebrated incident. When in 1908 Zionist colonists found out that the saplings of a forest that was founded in Ben Shemen near Lydda in memory of Theodor Herzl had been planted by Arabs, they uprooted and replanted them.[21]

In addition to the Palestinian population who understood Zionism for what it was and resisted it from its inception in the late nineteenth century,[22] many of the Jewish detractors of Zionism not only opposed the movement because they disagreed with its plans for Jews but also because of its plans for Palestinians. As early as 1919, Julius Kahn, a Jewish Congressman from San Francisco, delivered a statement endorsed by 299 Jews, both Rabbis and laymen, to President Wilson. The document, which denounced the Zionists for attempting to segregate Jews and to reverse the historical trend toward emancipation, objected to the creation of a distinctly Jewish state in Palestine as contrary "to the principles of democracy."[23] Indeed, many prominent American Jews continued to be horrified by the Zionist plan through the 1940s. James N. Rosenberg of the American Jewish Committee denounced the Zionist plans to set up an exclusively Jewish state as undemocratic.

In a major article that later appeared in the American press rebutting Zionist arguments, he objected to the cancellation of the rights of non-Jews as a result of the establishment of a Jewish supremacist state.[24] Due to Zionist tactics of silencing any Jewish criticisms within U.S. Jewish organizations, and their threatening their opponents at the convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in June 1943, Reform Rabbi Louis Wolsey, a fierce anti-Zionist, feared that the prominent American Zionist Rabbi Stephen Wise had "revealed by his tyranny over the

non-conformist what the Zionists would do to the Arabs."[25] American Jewish anti-Zionists, continued to oppose Zionism's Jewish supremacist plans until 1948 when most of the support they had received over the decades dwindled against the reality of the holocaust and the establishment of the Jewish supremacist state.

Aside from the laws that safeguard Jewish supremacy in Israel, including the Law of Return (1950), the Law of Citizenship (1952), the Status Law (1952), the Law of Absentee Property (1950), the Law of the State's Property (1951), the Israel Lands Administration Law (1960), the Construction and Building Law (1965), and a myriad others, not to mention the exclusive Jewish symbolism that Israel deploys, ranging from its Jewish flag and national anthem (which only speaks of Jews) to its ceremonial national days and the practices of institutionalized discrimination against its Arab non-Jewish citizens in every facet of life, Jewish society in Israel as well as the Jewish leadership continue to uphold Jewish supremacy as sacrosanct and non-negotiable.[26] Shimon Peres, the dove of official Israel, worried recently about the Palestinian demographic "danger," as the Green Line, which separates Israel from the West Bank, is beginning to "disappear…which may lead to the linking of the futures of West Bank Palestinians with Israeli Arabs." He hoped that the arrival of one hundred thousand Jews in Israel would postpone this demographic "danger" for ten more years, as ultimately, he stressed "demography will defeat geography."[27] Indeed, there is very little to distinguish between the attitudes of Peres and Sharon on Jewish supremacy from the attitude of Golda Meir who could not sleep in the early 1970s horrified at the number of Palestinians born and conceived every night.[28]

It is further argued that Israel cannot end its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza because it needs to protect Jewish colonial settlers there, continue to have complete control of Palestinian water for Jewish use, and guarantee the security of Israel as a Jewish state from threats to it as a *Jewish* state that might arise from an independent West Bank and Gaza state. This rhetoric was foundational to the Madrid-launched "peace process" in 1991 that culminated in the Oslo Process in 1993, and its oppressive results that the Palestinians have been encountering for the last ten years of "peace" negotiations.[29]

SINCE ITS INCEPTION, ZIONISM'S JEWISH SUPREMACY BORROWED MUCH from anti-Semitic rhetoric. Not only did Herzl agree with anti-Semites that it was Jews who "caused" anti-Semitism — "Where [anti-Semitism] does not exist, it is carried by Jews in the course of their migrations…The unfortunate Jews are now carrying the seeds of Anti-Semitism into England, they have already introduced it into America"[30] — but also with the anti-Semitic conclusion that the end of anti-Semitism could only be brought about by the removal of Jews from gentile societies (hence Herzl's expectation that anti-Semites would immediately rally to the support of

the Zionists, which many among them did).[31] Today's Israeli Jewish supremacists are reviving anti-Semitic ideas of the turn of the century that had accused Jews of seeking to control the world. From the infamous czarist *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* to genocidal Nazi propaganda, Jews as a "power-hungry" people was a notion that was part and parcel of the anti-Semitic lexicon of hate. Today's Israeli Jewish supremacists seem to agree with the anti-Semites asserting that if Jews do not control the entire world, at least they control America. In September 1994, during the Clinton administration, the well-respected Israeli daily, *Ma'ariv*, published an exposé on "The Jews who Run Clinton's Cabinet." The newspaper noted the increasing "Jewish power" in the U.S. government since the Reagan years.

While the newspaper asserted that American Jews had had key positions regarding U.S. policy on the Middle East before Clinton, under his administration, "Jewish power" expanded measurably. Aside from Deputy National Security Advisor Samuel Berger and National Security Advisor to the Vice-President Leon Perth, "In the National Security Council, 7 out of 11 top staffers are Jews. Clinton had especially placed them in the most sensitive junctions in the U.S. security and foreign administrations." The article proudly proclaims how American Jews staff top positions in charge of U.S. policy not only on the Middle East but also on Africa, South Asia, Western Europe, and Latin America. Indeed, the newspaper article provided its readers with the biographies of many of these so-called "warm Jews" — "warm" meaning Jews who identify with Jewish interests defined as Israeli interests. Lest we think that this alleged "Jewish power" is limited to the Democratic Party, the article explains that "there are also many warm Jews heading for the top positions in the Republican Party." The article quoted a Washington DC-based Rabbi asserting that "for the first time in American history…we no longer feel that we live in the diaspora. The U.S. no longer has a government of Goyim, but an administration in which the Jews are full partners in the decision-making at all levels…"[32] The Israeli Jewish journalist was so impressed with how "Jewish" the American government had become that when he phoned the State Department with regard to the then Haiti crisis requesting a briefing from the person in charge of that area, "They referred me to Yehuda Mirsky. I introduced myself to his secretary. Suddenly someone picked up the receiver and then I heard a voice saying in perfect Israeli Hebrew: 'Good morning, how can I help you?' For a moment I thought that I had mistakenly dialed the Israeli Foreign Ministry." Lest this article be thought to be the delusional view of one Israeli journalist and the U.S. Rabbi he quotes, more recently, in late September 2001, and during an acrimonious argument which erupted in a weekly Israeli cabinet meeting between Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and his Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, the following interchange unfolded: Peres was warning Sharon that refusing to heed American requests for a cease-

fire would endanger Israeli interests and "turn the U.S. against us." Sharon yelled at Peres in exasperation: "every time we do something you tell me the Americans will do this and will do that. I want to tell you something very clearly, don't worry about American pressure on Israel, we, the Jewish people control America and the Americans know it."[33] This major ideological convergence between anti-Semites and Jewish supremacists in Israel is hardly surprising if one understood Zionism's project as nothing short of turning the Jew into the anti-Semite.[34]

Certainly, no American Jewish leader and no respectable American newspaper, Jewish or gentile, would have published an anti-Semitic article of the caliber published by *Ma'ariv*. The only exception would be anti-Semitic rags. As for the Zionist project of turning Jews into anti-Semites, it was in evidence early on when Jewish *Haskala* thinkers, or *Maskilim*, like Gordon and Smolenskin, who had much influence on Zionist thinkers, accepted anti-Semitic characterizations of Jews as "dirty," "medieval," "superstitious," and "effeminate." Indeed to transform Jews from the "effeminate schlemiels" that anti-Semitism and Zionism thought they were into manly men modeled after anti-Semites, turn-of-the-century Zionist ideologue Max Nordau set up gymnastic clubs for Jewish men. Nordau's "Bar Kochba clubs" were engineered to "restore" male Jews physically to the condition of their Hebrew "forefathers" who were athletic fighters like the Greeks, as he believed his contemporary male Jews to be as "effeminate" as anti-Semitic claims made them out to be.[35]

BY ACCEPTING THE PREPOSTEROUS ANTI-SEMITIC CHARACTERIZATIONS OF JEWS as "in control of the World," Israel's Jewish supremacists fail to see that the extent to which American Jews are represented in the U.S. government is the extent to which they have become assimilated into a generic American whiteness, and how much their Jewishness, warm or cold, has been integrated into Americanness.[36] American Jews who serve in government are no more pro-Israel than their Christian counterparts, and when they happen to be more pro-Israel, this is more a function of believing that support for Israel is in America's best interests (as well as in the best interests of American Jews whose interests are seen as the same as general American interests). The real danger of these anti-Semitic/Jewish supremacist views is the effect they would have on the lives and livelihoods of American Jews (whether supremacists or not) if taken up by American anti-Semites and their friends. According to this Jewish supremacist Weltanschauung, and in line with anti-Semitic rhetoric, not only will Jews be supremacists over the native Palestinians whom they conquered and must continue to conquer; they are also said to be supreme on a global scale. The complicity between Zionism and anti-Semitism has become complete.

As for Jewish racial supremacy over the Palestinians, it has become part and parcel of an international discourse on Jewish racialism that

has even infiltrated academia. It is in this context that a recent keynote research paper showing that Jews and Palestinians are genetically almost identical was pulled from a leading scientific journal, *Human Immunology*. The paper titled "The Origin of Palestinians and their Genetic Relatedness with other Mediterranean Populations," involved studying genetic variations in immune system genes among people in the Middle East. According to the London *Observer,* "In common with earlier studies, the team found no data to support the idea that Jewish people were genetically distinct from other people in the region. In doing so, the team's research challenges claims that Jews are a special, chosen people and that Judaism can only be inherited." Due to major protests, and the threat of mass resignations from the editorial board, the journal's editor responded swiftly: "Academics who had already received copies of *Human Immunology* have been urged to rip out the offending pages and throw them away." The article's lead author, Spanish geneticist Professor Antonio Arnaiz-Villena, was "stunned." The *Observer* adds:

> The journal's editor, Nicole Sucio-Foca, of Columbia University, New York, claims the article provoked such a welter of complaints over its extreme political writing that she was forced to repudiate it. The article has been removed from Human Immunology's website, while letters have been written to libraries and universities throughout the world asking them to ignore or 'preferably to physically remove the relevant pages'. Arnaiz-Villena has been sacked from the journal's editorial board. Dolly Tyan, president of the American Society of Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics, which runs the journal, told subscribers that the society is 'offended and embarrassed.' [37]

Israel's continued refusal to change its Jewish supremacist character or to change its racist policies toward the Palestinian people is portrayed in the international press and by official Israeli rhetoric as a defense of its "democratic" principles and in defense of a Jewish people whose historic persecution came to a halt only because of Zionism's intervention. However, the only way these arguments acquire any purchase is in the context of an international, read Western, commitment to Jewish supremacy. The cornerstone of Jewish supremacist thought is the commitment to establishing a Jewish State, where Jews (whether as a "chosen people," as Europeans with *a mission civilisatrice*,[38] or as a historically persecuted group who must be liberated at whatever cost[39]), would have rights *qua* Jews over non-Jews and all the accoutrements that follow from such a racially supremacist system. It is Jewish supremacy that makes the question of Israel as a Jewish rather than an Israeli state sacrosanct, whose change would be *not pragmatic*. It is a commitment to Jewish supremacy that makes the Palestinian refugee return a "demographic threat" to the Jewish majority of Israel (which became a fact precisely because the Palestinians now seeking to return to their lands and homes were expelled from them in the first place). It is a commitment to Jewish supremacy that continues to legitimize the treat-

ment of Israeli Palestinian citizens as third-class citizens. It is a commitment to Jewish supremacy that legitimizes the continuation of the occupation as a safeguard against threats to a Jewish-supremacist Israel.

IF WE SUBTRACT THE COMMITMENT TO JEWISH SUPREMACY, then a solution to the Zionist-imposed conflict on the Palestinians would be more easily found. Let us imagine a world where the majority of Israeli and diaspora Jews and their gentile supporters are no longer committed to Jewish supremacy. Israel will become an Israeli state that treats all its citizens equally and does not hold that Jews should have a supremacist status. Israel will allow the Palestinian refugees to return to it, as they will not constitute a demographic threat to Jewish supremacy. Israel will no longer have to occupy the Palestinian West Bank and Gaza Strip because it will no longer be committed to Jewish colonization of Palestinian land or to the theft of their water or to the military occupation of the territories as it will no longer fear for its security. The basis on which Palestinians constitute a threat to Israeli security — namely, Israel's maintenance of Jewish supremacy, which translates into the oppression of the Palestinians — will no longer exist and neither will the "threat." The Palestinians can then either have a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza or, along with the Israelis, opt for a binational state in all of Mandatory Palestine.

How can this be brought about? Institutionalized white supremacy in the United States and South Africa ended when the costs of maintaining it became too high to bear by white supremacists in both countries. It was only after the costs became high that people and rulers in both countries opted to end the institutionalized basis of white supremacy. Today, one would find only a small minority of people in the United States or South Africa who would comfortably avow publicly that they ever supported white supremacy, when they had done so very comfortably a few years ago in both countries. The Jewish supremacists in Israel, both rulers and population, have not paid much for the maintenance of Jewish supremacy. They have not only maintained the land they conquered but constantly expanded it. They have not only been able to eke out a living but also prospered economically, socially, and culturally.

It is the Palestinians who have had to pay the price for the maintenance of Jewish supremacy until now. It is only by making the costs of Jewish supremacy too high that Israeli Jews will give it up. This can be done by the continuing resistance of Palestinians in Israel and the Occupied Territories to all the civil and military institutions that uphold Jewish supremacy and by applying international pressure including divestment from Israel, imposing an international economic blockade on the country, cultural and tourism boycotts, and instituting an international diplomatic isolation of the country. This will hit Israeli Jewish supremacists economically, in the comfort of their daily lives. It is then and only then that the majority of Israeli Jews will be convinced that the costs of

Jewish supremacy are too high to bear and will become much more comfortable in publicly disavowing Jewish supremacy and in claiming, like many of their white counterparts in South Africa and the United States, that they had never supported it in the first place. While this solution may seem "not pragmatic" in the contemporary international political context, it is no less pragmatic than the faltering "peace process" that continues to be sold to the world and to the Palestinian people as "pragmatic." All solutions that ignore the maintenance of Jewish supremacy in Israel will fail. Unless the elimination of Jewish supremacy becomes the major goal of a real "peace process," all other solutions will simply perpetuate the conflict.

NOTES

1. I would like to thank As'ad Abukhalil, Andrew Rubin and Neville Hoad for their comments on an earlier version of this article.

2. Emma Brockes and Ewen MacAskill, "Sharon wants 1m new Jews for Israel," *The Guardian* (London), November 7, 2001.

3. Donna E. Arzt, *Refugees into Citizens, Palestinians and the End of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1997), and Joseph Alpher and Khalil Shikaki, *The Palestinian Refugee Problem and the Right of Return*, Working Paper Series, Paper No. 98-7, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, May 1998. Of the Palestinian group, which, in addition to Shikaki, included other Palestinian pragmatists, namely Ghassan Khatib, Ibrahim Dakkak, Yezid Sayigh, Nadim Rouhana and Nabeel Kassis, only Kassis did not partake of the final drafting of the report (see x). Israeli and U.S. Jewish participants included Joseph Alpher, Gabriel Ben-Dor, Yossi Katz, Moshe Ma'oz, Ze'ev Schiff, Shimon Shamir and Herbert Kelman.

4. On Lydda and Ramlah and other expulsions, see Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); on the Galilee expulsions, see also Benny Morris, "Operation Hiram Revisited: A Correction," in the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, No. 110, Winter, 1999, 68-76.

5. Arzt, 99.

6. Ibid., 91.

7. Alpher and Shikaki, *The Palestinian Refugee Problem*, 17.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., 18.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid., 18-19.

12. *New York Times*, October 27, 1993, A 3.

13. Alpher and Shikaki, *The Palestinian Refugee Problem*, 20.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid., 26.

16. For a detailed discussion of all proposed solutions to the refugee problem, see Joseph Massad, "Return of Permanent Exile," in Naseer Aruri, ed., *Palestinian Refugees and the Right of Return*, (London: Pluto Press, 2001). This is a republication of "Return or Permanent Exile: Palestinian Refugees and the Ends of Oslo," *Critique*, No. 14, Spring 1999.

17. For selected sections of the conference report, see "The Herzlia Conference on the Balance of National Strength and Security in Israel," in the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, No. 121, Autumn 2001, 50-61.

18. Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State* (New York: Dover Publications, 1988), 95.

19. Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, edited by Raphael Patai, and translated by Harry Zohn, Volume I (New York: Herzl Press and Thomas Yoseloff,

1960), 88.

20. Herzl, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, 98.

21. See David Hirst, *The Gun and the Olive Branch, The Roots of Violence in the Middle East* (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), 25.

22. On Palestinian resistance, see Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity, The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), and Hirst, *The Gun and the Olive Branch*.

23. "Protest to Wilson Against Zionist State," *The New York Times*, 5 March 1919, 7, cited in Thomas Kolsky, *Jews Against Zionism, The American Council For Judaism, 1942-1948* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 31.

24. Ibid., 41.

25. Ibid., 73.

26. On Israel's racist laws and treatment of its Palestinian Arab citizens, see Sabri Jiryis' classic, *The Arabs in Israel* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976), and Ian Lustick, *Arabs in the Jewish State, Israel's Control of a National Minority* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980).

27. *Al-Hayah*, August 24, 2001, 3. "Biriz yuhadhdhir min 'al-khatar al-dimughrafi' al-filastini wa yashunnu hujuman haddan 'ala al-nuwwab al-'arab fi al-kinisit," (Peres Warns of Palestinian 'demographic danger' and launches a sharp attack against Arab members of the Knesset).

28. See Hirst, T*he Gun and the Olive Branch*, 242-43.

29. On the rhetoric of 'pragmatism" which even Palestinian intellectuals adopted after Oslo, see Joseph Massad, "Political Realists or Comprador Intelligentsia: Palestinian Intellectuals and the National Struggle," *Critique*, Fall, 1997.

30. Herzl, *The Jewish State*, 75.

31. Ibid., 93.

32. Avinoam Bar-Yosef, "The Jews who Run Clinton's Cabinet," *Ma'ariv*, Tel Aviv, September 2, 1994. Reproduced in the J*ournal of Palestine Studies*, No. 94, Winter 1995, 148-51.

33. Reported on Radio Israel "Kol Yisrael," October 3, 2001, and by the Independent Palestinian Information Network on October 4, 2001.

34. On Zionism's complicity with anti-Semitism and its use of anti-Semites as model, see Michael Selzer, *The Aryanization of the Jewish State* (New York: Black Star, 1967). Also see Joseph Massad, "The 'Post-Colonial' Colony, Time, Space and Bodies in Palestine/Israel," in *The Pre-Occupation of Post-Colonial Studies*, eds. Fawzia Afzal-Khan and Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).

35. See Max Nordau, "Jewry of Muscle," translation of "Muskeljudentum," in *Juedische Turnzeitung* (June 1903), in Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World, A Documentary History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 434-35. For an overview of Nordau's political thought, see George Mosse, *Confronting the Nation, Jewish and Western Nationalism* (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, published by the University Press of New England, 1993), 161-75. Also see Paul Breines, *Tough Jews, Political Fantasies and the Moral Dilemma of American Jewry* (New York: Basic Books, 1991).

36. In this regard, see Karen Brodkin, *How Jews became White Folks & What That Says about Race in America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998).

37. Robin McKie, science editor, "Journal axes gene research on Jews and Palestinians," *The Observer*, November 25, 2001.

38. Herzl spoke of the future Jewish State as forming "the portion of a rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism." See *The Jewish State*, 96.

39. On Zionism's use of Jewish persecution, including the holocaust to justify its crimes, see Joseph Massad, "Palestinians and Jewish History: Recognition or Submission," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, No. 117, Fall 2000.

An Exchange:
The Democratic Party and the Left

1. On "Realignment" and the Left

Jason Schulman

I MUST CONTEST BOTH ASPECTS OF BARRY FINGER'S REVIEW of Maurice Isserman's biography of Michael Harrington, and the general third-party purism (forgive my use of that term) that fills much of the Summer 2001 issue of *New Politics*.

First, it is not true that Harrington never came "to see the [Vietnam] war" as criminal. In his final book, *Socialism Past & Future*, Harrington states that "the campaigns against French colonialism in Algeria and American policy in Vietnam were both morally right and politically effective," not exactly something he would have said in the mid-1960s. His characterization of the war as "tragic" as opposed to "imperialist" or "neo-colonial" largely stemmed from his desire avoid using words that patriotic American workers would never accept. This was very wrong, of course. But had Harrington really never come to see the war as criminal, there is no way that the veteran New Leftists of the New American Movement would have joined with Harrington to form Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) in 1982.

This brings me to The Democratic Party Question. Some radicals in the United States still do not understand that the Democratic Party (the Republican Party, too) is not a party in any meaningful sense. The U.S. is the only liberal democracy in the world where the state, not parties, controls registration and ballot access. While parties in the rest of the world are private associations, here they are no more than ballot lines which can be taken over by whomever happens to win the party's open primary. It is impossible to be thrown out of the Democratic Party, as there is no mechanism for doing so. Conceivably one could start a Trotskyist caucus in the Democratic Party, and the Democratic National Committee could do nothing about it! U.S. "parties" are coalitions of disparate elements — they are not ideologically coherent. Anyone can register and vote in party primaries. Hence, both Klansmen and Communists — and DSA members — have run for office, and even have been elected, as Democrats. There is no party discipline in the Democratic Party (or Re-

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publican Party) whatsoever. The party platforms adopted at Democratic and Republican National Conventions reflect the politics of the person who has won the party's presidential primary, nothing else.

Harrington was correct to realize that a mass independent left-wing third party was not in the cards in the 1960s. But in deciding that the only way forward for the American Left was to take over the Democratic Party, Harrington wrongly decided he had no choice but to make an alliance with George Meany and the right wing of the AFL-CIO leadership, who were in favor of progressive domestic reforms even as they supported the Vietnam War. "Realignment" apparently required a coming together of hawks and doves; hence, Harrington played down his opposition to the Vietnam War so as not to alienate labor hawks. It was a foolish, doomed strategy — and a too top-heavy one at that. Christopher Lasch was correct that the course of the 1968 presidential campaign disproved Harrington's belief that a social democratic hawk-dove coalition could "capture the Democratic Party, purge it of reactionary elements, and turn it into an instrument of 'democratic planning.'"

What Left critics of Harrington often miss, however, is that he effectively abandoned the realignment strategy after the founding of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC). Yes, DSOC had a Democratic Party orientation. This was because Harrington and his comrades saw no choice in the matter. The mainstream of the U.S. Left — middle-class progressive liberals, feminists, Black and Latino activists, and trade unionists (not just staff, by the way) — was already in and around the Democratic Party. DSOC correctly realized that socialists were not going to get anywhere telling them to leave and form a third party — a party unlikely to gain mass support, certainly not enough to displace the entire Democratic Party. So socialists had to go to where mainstream progressives were if they were to have any effect on U.S. politics. As the late 1970s DSOC National Director, Jim Chapin, once explained,

> Coalition politics is not just a tactic for DSOC. It rests on our perception that the elements of the population that must be first won to social change are those who are already active. Recruitment of inactive elements happens either when you have reached a "critical mass" of activists or when some crisis propels new groups into action. At such moments it is crucial to have groups already articulating solutions. The majority of such elements in the population are already active in the Democratic Party…Our participation in the Democratic Party is strategic insofar as the forces that we associate with are there. We will leave permanently as part of a coalition, if that ever happens. We will not leave as a vanguard.

In many respects, the DSOC approach worked. In 1976, DSOC pulled together a labor-Left coalition, Democratic Agenda, which made life problematic for Jimmy Carter's operatives at the Democratic presidential nominating convention. In 1978, Democratic Agenda got forty percent of the conference vote for resolutions opposing the Carter administration's

backpedaling on full employment and confronting Big Oil at the Democratic Party mid-term convention. DSOC thus became the "Left opposition" in the Democratic coalition. After the 1980 election the Democratic Party abandoned delegated mid-term conventions in order to weaken the influence of grassroots, left-wing Democratic activists. But by then DSOC, which went from a few hundred to 5,000 members in the space of seven years, had become the most successful explicitly socialist organization in the second half of the twentieth century in the U.S. Even *Business Week* had to take notice.

The reality that is DSOC (and later DSA) taking Democratic Party activity seriously actually made it more geographically and class diverse (though only a bit more racially diverse) than third-party-purist socialist groups. Until internal party activity became overwhelmed by individual candidates' search for money, there were many progressives active within internal Democratic ward and caucus activity around the country. Many rank-and-file progressive Democratic activists from Iowa, Indiana, Washington state, Alaska, etc., came into DSOC, then DSA, through Democratic Agenda-type activity. DSOC's emphasis on Democratic activity and recruiting trade union staff and mid-level elected officials certainly made it much less New York City-based (and much less purely Jewish) than any socialist or communist organization in the post-World War II period.

This is why the New American Movement (NAM) merged with DSOC. "Willed ignorance" (Alan Johnson's term) had nothing to do with it. DSOC had considerably more members and national visibility, and appeared to be succeeding where NAM was failing in building a credible socialist organization. Whatever DSOC's failings — its somewhat uncritical stance towards liberal labor leaders like Victor Gotbaum and Doug Fraser, and the uncritical attachment of some members to Israel — NAM members were correct to realize that the only real choice for socialists was to act as the radical wing of left-liberal anti-corporate reform politics. A socialist group which stood apart from this coalition due to its Democratic Party work was simply not going to get anywhere, was going to have no impact on U.S. politics. The broad Left was not strong enough to realign the Democratic Party — but given the reality of a winner-take-all, single district, non-parliamentary electoral system, it was not going to fly the flag of a third party in a fundamentally two-party system.

How is our political system fundamentally two-party? It has an executive-led structure, without a parliament that elects a prime minister by a coalition of parties in the legislature. We have direct election of presidents, governors and mayors. Party membership is completely open; one does not have to pay dues to a party to vote in its primaries, one just registers with the state as Republican or Democratic. Hence, the electoral class conflict runs through the Democratic Party, not around it.

It is incorrect to say, as Howie Hawkins does, that progressives such as Jesse Jackson Jr. and Cynthia McKinney are being used by corporate

powers when they hold office as Democrats. Corporate powers cannot force progressive Democrats — who are not being funded by corporations — to do anything they don't want to do when the Democratic Party has absolutely no party discipline.

Hawkins also notes that no Democratic Senator — not even Paul Wellstone — challenged the Electoral College vote by Florida, despite Congressional Black Caucus challenges in the House of Representatives. The reason for this, however, is that the Democratic leadership (Tom Daschle) made a deal that morning that there would be no challenge in return for equal Democratic and Republican composition of every Senate committee and subcommittee. Republicans agreed. This is the first time a 51 vote majority (50 Republicans, plus Dick Cheney) agreed to 50-50 membership on Senate committees. The past few times this Republican-majority arrangement existed, the majority party got one extra seat guaranteeing that straight line party votes in committees would get Republican legislation to the floor. This will not happen now. Also, given that a challenge to the Florida re-count would have been defeated in the House (there are, of course, more corporate Democrats than progressive Democrats) and that Gore would have been in the impossible position of casting the deciding vote if all Democrats had stuck together in the Senate and supported the challenge, the Democratic Senate leadership traded keeping all their mouths shut for an important gain on committees (important for legislation that will affect workers and particularly minorities). This may not be the choice we socialists would make, but it is understandable, and explains why the Black Caucus has not made a huge issue out of the lack of Senate voices.

I do not think the Green Party has a bright future. Trying to run around the two parties (Commoner in 1980, Nader in 2000) yields a lily-white third party that gets the bulk of its vote from non-unionized middle class people in the Great White North (Minneapolis, Washington, Oregon, Wisconsin, etc.) where the absence of African-Americans means white progressives are less purely Democratic. (If Bernie Sanders lived in a state with more than 0.3 per cent Black residents, he would have to run in Democratic primaries in order to win.) Gore won the popular vote due to massive labor and African-American turnout. These people did not turn out for Nader. Why? Because they understand the structural bias of the U.S. system in favor of two parties.

It is funny how some Marxists, who are supposed to be materialists, become complete voluntarists when it comes to U.S. electoral politics. Electoral politics is primarily a reflection of the strength of social forces in civil society. The Left is still quite weak right now. When it was stronger in the late 1960s/early 1970s — when corporate power certainly existed and influenced political parties — a social democrat named George McGovern became the Democratic presidential nominee (but sadly still lost the general presidential election). Such a thing will happen again if

labor and the Left re-gain weight in civil society. There is no third party magic short-cut to the hard job of increasing the popularity of the Left. I, for one, do not want to waste my time trying to build a party that few people are going to join.

The Democratic Party is riven internally. It has a corporate wing whose most effective advocates seem to be academic and professional economists but it also has a wing convinced that not only does Democratic political success depend upon the support and votes of minorities, women, and labor but that those constituencies merit real attention and rewards. But whenever push comes to shove and the vote counters get to work, they are unable to locate what we might call a Left or progressive majority among voters and much less so in Congress. Hence political calculus — hard political realities — gives the corporate wing an upper hand. Only by increasing the strength and voting habit of the party's progressive constituencies — and fighting the Democratic Leadership Council within Democratic primaries — will that balance of power change.

2. In Answer to Jason Schulman

Barry Finger

Jason Schulman has a problem. Being radical he cannot bring himself to consistently endorse the Democratic Party. Yet he strenuously objects, despite an all-too human lapse, to the upstart presence of any left alternative. Nurtured on the DSA line that straying from the Democratic Party is tantamount to breaking faith with its working class, minority and progressive constituencies — proud nevertheless that DSA no longer operates in the context of "realignment"—Jason ends up defending a tactic no longer moored to a coherent *socialist* strategy. The Democratic Party, he insists, is not an entity, which can be taken over, but a "ballot line." The task for socialists, if I read him correctly, is to struggle alongside its left-leaning allies for the domination of this ballot line. It is therefore not through the creation of an avowedly anti-corporate party that meaningful reform will be wrung from the system—parties, in the received sense, being a nonstarter in the American context—but by the consistency in which the left can nominate and elect so many Jesse Jackson Jr.'s and Cynthia McKinneys. He consigns the electoral activity of the socialist movement to get-out-the-vote campaigns. For only by "increasing the strength and voting habit of the party's progressive constituencies" can the influence of corporate pressure on the Democratic "ballot line" be kept at bay.

This new realism, if it is such, marks a real departure from the poli-

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tics of Harrington. Realignment or coalition politics had at least the rhetorical merit of aspiring to create a socialist or, minimally, a social-democratic *party*; that is, a party wedded to a program of systemic remediation of the structural ills that plague society which would also be intimately accountable to its rank and file. Jason's vision, were he to flesh it out, is to multiply the flowers which peep though the cracks of the electoral wall, to pursue the public weal through the incremental expansion of honest government reformers. Jason might object that nowhere does he advance such a proposition and that any such conclusion would be an unwarranted derivation from his analysis. He would surely wish to imbue this reformed Democratic Party with an alternative vision united by a fighting ideology. But the fact remains that the type of party Harrington wished to create—the politics he wished it to embody—cannot be institutionally introduced or sustained within the structure of the Democratic Party either as I or as Jason understands that structure to be. Alternatively, the Democrats, lacking a socialist ideology, can only consistently renounce corporate pressure within the broader political context of denouncing all special interests, including class interests, as social evils. It is under that Pickwickian umbrella that Feingold can join with McCain to putatively "rid" the system of the corrupting influence of money.

And that in fact was the key to George McGovern's appeal among disaffected liberals. As radical as he might seem in retrospect to left sentimentalists, McGovern could never find a language that could reconcile his egalitarian impulses with his unquestioned commitment to capitalism. He was never taken seriously as a tribune of the oppressed and downtrodden from either end of the class divide. His style of above-the-fray progressivism was easily lampooned as the politics of the innocent bumbling do-gooder with a resonance to which neither Debsian nor even Norman Thomas's socialism were susceptible. Perhaps too that is why Harrington, initially, favored Edmund Muskie over McGovern. Muskie at least had the merit of exciting no hopes in excess of what the system could reasonably be expected to deliver.

This utopianism was not, of course, an entirely fair or complete depiction of McGovern's politics. Nor does it properly capture the social role of the Democratic Party as a bastion of capitalism even under McGovern. For the function of the two-party system is not merely to provide free-floating "ballot lines," but to regulate, prioritize and reconcile competing claims to governmental access in order to best advance the interests of the entrenched forces in society. Democrats and Republicans differ not in whose interests they believe society should be run, but in how this is best done. They differ, in other words, in how they shape the consensus. Distinctions in how this gatekeeping function is performed are often not insignificant. But what is crucial, and what seems sadly lacking in Jason's depiction, is that it is precisely their character as bureaucratic money laundering machines—transforming cash contributions into legislation and policy —

rather than as democratic membership organizations that uniquely qualifies the two parties as competing mainstays of the system. For their institutional structure, an institutional structure rooted as Jason correctly notes in preexisting governmental arrangements, inevitably plays to the natural advantage of that class able to exercise its influence not through its *numbers*, where it is a distinct minority, but through its expenditures of vast accumulations of *wealth*.

Jason notes that the "electoral class conflict runs through the Democratic Party, not around it." If by this he means that the Democratic establishment is not immune to the upheavals that convulse society, his contention is indisputable. The "modern" Democratic Party was after all reborn in the wake of the Bonus march, the unemployment leagues and councils, the National Farmers' Holiday movement and the wave of sit-down strikes and factory seizures of the great Depression, just as the McGovern movement was born in the turmoil of the anti-war movement, the black liberation struggle, the rise of the Peace and Freedom Party and the wide-scale revulsion with the two party system of Nixon — Johnson/Humphrey that all this epitomized. If, on the other hand, what is meant is that the Democratic Party is not merely subject to the indirect pressure of larger and broader trends, but actually reflects, represents and champions, however imperfectly, this social disaffection — which I fear is exactly what Jason means — then I think his analysis is sadly wanting.

Capitalism advances by deepening and intensifying the existing level of privileges and inequalities. This is its social incentive system, just as the profit system based on exploitation is its economic analog. To extinguish this system of rewards and punishments, as any radical movement for equality and freedom ultimately threatens to do, would impede, if not render the system wholly inoperable. Where Republicans and Democrats differ is over the scope to which this incentive system can be allowed unfettered freedom of movement. The Republicans insist that social peace rests on providing society with a rising standard of living, which, they insist, only an efficiently functioning profit-incentive system can offer. They are unconcerned by, when not openly solicitous of, the mounting inequalities which result, seeing in them evidence of market efficiency. Conversely, conservatives traditionally suspect government remediation as the principle obstacle to economic expansion. And so when business activity contracts, Republicans typically attribute this to malfunctions in the incentive system inspired by the intrusion of politics— with the notable exception of military spending and outlays on the means of repression, in general— into the market process, the elimination of which, they argue, is the prerequisite for economic self-correction.

Democrats differ and differ significantly in their fear that mounting inequalities threaten the potential mobilization of piecemeal social grievances into a comprehensive anti-capitalist orientation. This leads to a marked tactical division between Democrats and Republicans concern-

ing how best to *defend* the system. Republicans seek to suppress those forces whose unaddressed grievances remain an implicit challenge to the profit system. Democrats typically insist that the management of social disparities remain confined to definitive limits, measured by their success in absorbing, co-opting and neutralizing social insurgencies. Democrats claim to speak for the people, but also do so best by keeping them quiescent. However, this invariably entails not repression so much as the very concessions in the form of non-market expediencies that Republicans fear as economically corrosive. From their common foundation as guarantors of the system—and despite these very real practical differences—derives the largely *symbolic* character of our two-party setup: to circumvent those areas of fundamental disagreement in the organization and purpose of society which should otherwise be the foremost subject of democratic debate and deliberation.

Socialists who oppose the Democratic Party do so not merely because that party serves as an instrumentality in the defense of capitalism, but also because it remains the principal ideological and organizational substitute for the socialist movement among the working class, disaffected intellectuals, anti-war activists, feminists, blacks and other minorities who would "normally" constitute the core elements of any robust socialist movement. Thus all independent socialists and not merely those camp followers of the DSA have, in effect, a Democratic Party orientation. The difference resides over whether the Democratic Party is seen as a conduit, or an unavoidable barrier to be dismantled in preparation for a more propitious opening to the left.

Independent socialists bear theses damning historical propositions against the Democratic Party—that it is incapable of fighting unemployment by shifting the burden to the capitalist class; challenging endemic militarism in the service of economic gain; strengthening the hand of labor by exercising the simple expedients of repealing Taft-Hartley or outlawing replacement workers; abolishing the conditions of racial/sexual oppression; preserving the environment against the ravages of the market; or financing the elimination of poverty. That is, it is inconceivable that the Democratic Party can make capitalism pay for the elimination of the social ills that capitalism itself necessarily creates or perpetuates. So too is there compelling historical evidence for the dogged assertion of the third-camp that those who work for social change in the Democratic Party are invariably compelled to soft-pedal these institutional inconveniences at the cost both of idealism and militancy. It is precisely in the form of internalized self-censorship in the service of this bankrupt tactic that gives systemic rise to such "foolish and doomed" strategies that Jason tosses off as if merely the first, false steps of an otherwise healthy advance of the socialist cause. One might be forgiven the observation that such radiant beams of vitality seem a tad dim outside the charmed ranks of the true believers. It is this maneuvering that similarly commits DSAers to alibi

for a Democratic Party all too ready to sacrifice the voting rights of blacks for equal representation on Senate committees and subcommittees.

I would argue for all the reasons cited above that the Democratic Party represents in the political sphere what a company union represents in the sphere of industrial relations. To defend working within a company union through real politik appeals to the sobering history of failed attempts at independent organizing would be universally recognized as abject submission to the forces of the status quo. Who on the left would contest the proposition that the prerequisite for an effectively functioning, combative union would be its organizational and ideological autonomy from individual capitalists just as that of the union movement would be its parallel independence from the capitalist class as a whole? It should be similarly implicit that the impulse towards the most minimal kind of independent political activity against the forces of the status quo, of the Establishment, is the understanding that the old political forces must be attacked from without.

But to raise that understanding immediately places socialists in confrontation with all the ideological pressures and conservative assumptions that are institutionalized within society against independent political action movements. This is a democracy that triumphantly congratulates itself for habitually squashing all alternatives. In opposition to these pressures a complete break with the Democratic Party must be counterposed actively and consciously and in a way that has immediate relevance to activists. This corollary condition, unfortunately, has been all too lacking among independent socialists.

Where socialist agitation historically trails into sectarianism, however, is in the insistence that the *sole* purpose of third-party political campaigns is to educate and propagandize rather than to harvest that agitation into a political alternative with serious *electoral* ambitions. Such political campaigns exist not as true third-party activities, but as outreach programs for building the "revolutionary party" in microcosm; their appeal being confined to satisfying the yearning for a moral gesture of protest. This approach unavoidably betrays an unconscious syndicalism that plays into the hands of the Democratic Party. By creating a left vacuum in the arena of parliamentary struggle the reluctance of left-leaning activist layers to break from the system is only solidified. The glaring absence of just these sectarian symptoms lends Jason's criticism of "third-party purism" against Green activism a wildly inappropriate and untimely aura. Ironically, there is, on the other hand, an unintended but symmetrically syndicalist twist to Jason's thinking. For, if socialist parties are, in effect, precluded from a meaningful electoral role by the bureaucratic setup of the American system itself, then parliamentary struggles must, of necessity, remain a tangential issue in the fight for socialism. Socialists should perhaps cast their ballots for the liberal lesser evil, but concentrate their efforts in more promising and immediate so-

cial arenas outside the realm of electoral politics.

It is this thinking which is sectarian precisely because truncates socialism and eliminates it from that realm most readily identified in the public mind with democracy itself. The Green movement although not projecting an ultimate social vision shared by revolutionary socialists nevertheless — unlike Jason's conservative syndicalism — represents a serious leap in oppositional political consciousness among activist veterans of the movements for social change. They have taken the lead and advanced a militant anti-corporate program as a basis for grassroots struggle. What would be sectarian would be the demand, as a precondition of socialist support, that the Greens reorient themselves to satisfy our perspective or be threatened by our abstention. Socialists who participate in the Green party are presented with a context for demonstrating ways in which the broader struggle for working class self-interest can be reconciled with other struggles for social justice, without subordinating these interests to that of the Democratic Party, and therefore to the Establishment. It is a perspective that necessarily jeopardizes the bureaucratic security of the union, civil rights, and feminist leaderships by redirecting activist attentions directly to the rank and file of these movements and challenging them to take the lead in their own liberation. The Nader campaign, for all its admitted faults, and Tom Harrison's piece in the Winter 2000 issue of *New Politics* was brutally honest about them, nevertheless gave substance to the claim that the left is finally offering a serious alternative to the status quo.

Sadly, it is just this challenge to the forces of inertia that Jason finds so singularly distasteful. He acknowledges the long decline of the left, but it escapes his attention altogether that this decline coincides with the parallel influx of former leftists, community activists and firebrands of all stripes from the "new left" into the Democratic Party over the course of the past several decades. That, in effect, was precisely the long-term consequence of the McGovern movement — to disorient, co-opt and intellectually disarm the left, most of whom undoubtedly entered the Democratic Party with the honest intention of decisively reforming it, and who were themselves, instead, decisively transformed by the institutional constraints of that experience.

Strikingly absent from Jason's piece is any defense of the Democratic Party as it empirically exists. This is a party that eliminated welfare — the disastrous consequences of which we will undoubtedly begin to realize in the current recession — championed an unfettered capitalist globalization, and endorsed Star Wars. It is a party that, as this is being written, has all but folded itself into the Bush administration's vicious campaign of revenge on one of the most wrecked, poverty-stricken and terrorized nation on the face of the earth.

Of course, there is a logic to this airy abstraction from reality. It is an intellectual process pioneered by Michael Harrington himself and applied

in his time to the Democratic Party, and to the war in Vietnam, and which is pliable enough to justify any other unpleasant, tragic or unconscionable, albeit "unavoidable," concessions to reality that one might yet alight on. First—identify the brutally unfavorable parameters of the "real world," the world that casehardened socialists share with the rest of humanity. Be courageous in your unblinkered exposure of the grotesque choices that presently exist, choices that would not exist in a world of our own choosing. Insist that we must be materialist, not voluntarist when approaching political issues so that our weapons of struggle can only consist of existing institutions, not socialist fantasies. Point to a history littered with failures by those who lost their grip on reality so defined. Then "engage." But what is this engagement beyond a practical call for scolding any left initiative that might embarrass or discredit the work of the respectable DSA socialists in the Democratic Party, the union bureaucracies and civil rights organizations? That is why the anti-war movement was a source of such distress to Harrington. And that is also why, when push came to shove, Harrington's primary identification and concern was not with the health of the movement, but with the Democratic coalition—hawks as well as doves. It is a handy recipe for locking socialism into an endless loop of self-justifying lesser evil-ism and perpetual accommodation.

The moral is: you can't have your socialism and smother it too. Socialism is nothing if it is not the self-expression of the oppressed creating new organs of struggle and ripping themselves loose from the shackles of existing institutional confines and mental conventions. The Jason who voted for Nader instinctively understood that. So too did the young Michael Harrington.

Editor's Note: The reader is advised that in the Correspondence section, there is an exchange of letters between Stephen Shalom and Joanne Landy that also concerns the Democratic Party and the Left.

3. Another Response to Jason Schulman

Howie Hawkins

JASON SCHULMAN MISSES MY POINT about how the corporate powers use progressive Democratic politicians such as Cynthia McKinney and Jesse Jackson, Jr. I did not claim, as Schulman suggests, that corporate campaign contributions control or even influence these progressives' actions. My point is that these progressives give a liberal veneer to the Democratic Party simply by being Democrats. The corporate powers use progressives like these to market their Democratic Party to progressive constituencies, making it seem somewhat or potentially progressive when it is really thoroughly under the control of corporate interests.

Schulman excuses the failure that I noted of even one Senate Democrat to support the Congressional Black Caucus' call for a Senate challenge to the Florida presidential vote by describing the "deal" the Senate Democrats made with the Republicans to share control of Senate committees. Schulman characterizes the deal as "an important gain on committees (important for legislation that will affect workers and particularly minorities)." I think this evaluation illustrates why we part company on the question of independent politics.

Progressives who advocate permeation of rather than opposition to the Democratic Party usually appeal to the ability of Democrats as opposed to Republicans to defend the immediate interests of "workers and particularly minorities." I think this perspective grossly exaggerates what the Democrats — and more generally a strategy of incremental reforms — has accomplished or can accomplish.

In the present case, we have the evidence of the two big decisions of the Senate under shared control: the odious bankruptcy bill and the massive tax cuts for the rich. Since Senator Jeffords defected from the Republicans and the Senate came under Democratic control, bipartisan militarism has prevailed, from the increased military appropriations to the blank check handed to Bush to initiate war against any country he sees fit in the name of fighting terrorism. So much for what the deal accomplished for "workers and particularly minorities." In return for this "defense" of the immediate needs of workers and minorities, the Senate Democrats' silence on the Florida presidential vote legitimized the denial of many blacks' voting rights by Republicans who systematically purged voter lists, the Supreme Court's intervention, and the ultimate result. The Democrats were more concerned with maintaining the public legitimacy of the system than in fighting to win the election.

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Over the last century, we can see that the only periods of progressive reform have been when the two-party system was challenged from outside and below. The independent populist and socialist electoral challenges around the turn of the century instigated the reforms of the progressive era. Direct action by the unionization drives of the 1930s and by the civil rights, antiwar, women's, and environmental movements of the 1960s stimulated the New Deal and the reforms of the 1960s and early 1970s. On the other hand, 70 years of loyalty to the Democratic Party by organized labor, the majority of the organized left, and the majority of organizations in the progressive social movements has yielded a more conservative Democratic Party that takes the votes of these loyalists for granted.

Schulman is correct to observe that the U.S. is unique in the world in that its political parties are highly regulated, quasi-state institutions, not voluntary private organizations as they are in other countries with multiparty elections. In the U.S., state election laws, not party organizations, govern party "membership," which effectively means the right to vote for party officers and nominations in primaries. As a result, for the corporate U.S. parties at least, the party organization cannot hold their primary election winners and elected officials accountable to party policies. That is just how the corporations want it — they want the politicians to answer to them through private campaign financing. Rather than form an independent left party that is democratic, with party officials and politicians accountable to a membership and the program it adopts, Schulman argues for adapting to this corporate two-party structure.

State election laws do make a democratic membership party more difficult, but not impossible. The Socialist Party maintained a democratic membership structure during the early 1900s even as the state election laws were being amended to allow any party registrant to vote in its primaries. The Socialists have maintained this structure to this day, although it did come under pressure when they regained a ballot line in Oregon a few years ago. The Libertarian Party today likewise maintains a dues-paying membership and accountability to its program, mainly by apportioning votes to state delegations to its national convention in proportion to the paid membership in each state. There is nothing in the state or federal election laws that prevent parties from charging members dues, expecting some level of political agreement, and using those membership criteria as the basis for conferring the right to participate in party decision-making, with the important exception of voting in party primaries. Indeed, the federal laws governing campaign finance and party tax status explicitly acknowledge dues as a possible source of income. The only limitation — but it is important and does make party self-determination more difficult — is state election laws governing party primaries that require that any party registrant, no matter what their politics or whether they support the party with dues, has the right to vote in party primaries.

An independent left party can maintain a good degree of democratic

accountability despite the laws governing nominations by primaries. And it can fight to repeal this unwarranted state interference in party self-government. The alternative of going inside the Democratic Party compels the left to abandon its independent identity, voice, and strength. After its candidate (usually) loses the primary, it must support the corporate candidate to prove its loyalty and have any say with the corporate Democrat if he or she wins the general election. In practice, this kind of left (e.g., DSOC/DSA, the Communist Party) rarely runs its own candidates and usually looks to back the most likely winner so it might be on the "inside" after the election.

In jumping from the observation about the lack of democratic accountability in U.S. corporate parties to the conclusion that the left should try to take over the Democrats by winning its primaries, Schulman misses the real power structure in the Democratic Party. If the Democratic Party were a democratic one-member, one-vote organization, the labor movement and allied social movements would have taken it over a long time ago. But the Democratic Party is more than the sum of its primaries. Power in the Democratic Party is exercised through wealth and patronage.

The power of wealth is expressed in elections through campaign donations and on the policies of the party in office through capital's private power to effectively veto progressive reforms by threatening to wreck the economy through disinvestment. The power of patronage is expressed through job appointments and, more importantly these days, government contracts. Alongside the federal military-industrial complex is a social-industrial complex at every level of government that is every bit as effective in tying all kinds of interest groups to the established parties through various service and construction contracts and corporate welfare for "economic development" projects. In particular, these power relations tie the professional liberals in the labor, community, ethnic minority, women's, peace, and environmental organizations to the Democratic Party. These interest group leaders usually back who they think will win the Democratic primary so they are on the "inside" after the election, not the most progressive Democrat.

Schulman also claims that the single-member-district, winner-take-all, non-parliamentary executive nature of the U.S. political system is an insurmountable obstacle for an independent party of the left. But the emergence of third parties in the UK, Canada, and Mexico, not to mention the experiences of the People's and Socialist Parties in the U.S., show that these obstacles — real though they are — are not insurmountable.

The differences between those who advocate permeation of the Democratic Party and those who advocate opposition through an independent left party reflect fundamental differences over how to change society. Schulman's affinity for a deal that gave Democrats shared control of the Senate demonstrates a faith in incremental reforms enacted by a political elite. His acceptance of the legal and structural buttresses of the U.S. two-party system accepts that the given structure sets the outer limits of credible political action. He downplays the qualitative differences be-

tween liberal and radical programs of social change.

For us "third-party-purists," as Schulman describes us, the task is a radical transformation of the system, not a gradual accumulation of incremental reforms. It is better to de-legitimize the presidential election results by registering dissent than to legitimize them in return for a little more power in the U.S. Senate. It is more effective to challenge the political structure of primaries, single member districts, winner take all elections, and concentrated power in directly-elected executives than to accept those anti-democratic structures and try to work within them. And behind these political structures is the capitalist economic structure that confers enormous private power to a small elite that can exercise an effective veto over progressive reforms by threatening a capital strike. This economic system makes its own demands to which both Democratic and Republican administrations must conform or pay the political consequences. Without changing this system, even the reforms of the 1910s, 1930s, and 1960s-70s were limited, served to shore up rather than change the system, and, as we have seen in the last 25 years, reversible.

The way to advance a radical analysis and program is to take it directly to the public through an independent left party. It won't be big at the beginning. But it can begin by building a grassroots network of activists rooted in progressive social movements and the communities of the working class and people of color. And it can build on that base by being active in many arenas, not just the electoral arena.

The Green Party has been doing this since the mid-1980s. It is not a big party yet, but it has been growing consistently. And, contrary to Schulman's assertion, it is growing among black, unionized, and working-class activists. The Greens are a minority in these groups as they are among the middle-class progressives of the Great White North who Schulman seems to think constitute the sum total of Greens. Schulman suggests that blacks and workers vote Democratic because they understand the structural bias toward the two-party system. I think the answer is more mundane. These voters have become "low expectation liberals," as Ralph Nader calls them. They are cynical about what politicians can do for them. They vote defensively, against Republicans rather than for Democrats. An independent left party with a credible vision and a reputation of fighting for the common people could break through that cynicism in time.

As the Greens continue to grow and begin to look more credible in opposition to the Democrats, more of this traditional base for left parties in other countries is voting Green. Indeed, in the U.S., where there is no labor party as there is in most other countries, the U.S. Greens could become the only Green Party in the world with a majoritarian social base encompassing labor as well as the progressive social movements that are the normal Green base in other countries. The Greens are not there yet. But the last century of experience by labor and most of the left of working inside the Democratic Party shows that the Democrats never will be.

Class & Cultural Politics and the Greens

Howie Hawkins

The symposium on the Nader campaign (*New Politics*, 31, Summer 2001) raised two areas of criticism of the Nader campaign and the Greens. One was Jesse Lemisch's claim that Nader and the Greens stand for a parsimonious austerity politics. The other was that Nader's campaign was inadequate in addressing the issues of concern to people of color, women, and gays. I think the first criticism is way off the mark, while the second has some merit.

Class Politics

LEMISCH CLAIMS THAT THE NADER CAMPAIGN AND THE GREENS projected a puritanical and even reactionary outlook, glorifying a small farmer and independent business utopia that never existed. Nader's notoriously Spartan personal lifestyle, along with the Malthusian wing of environmentalism, could convey a puritanical impression of Nader and the Greens. But the Malthusians are not in the Greens, regarding them as hopelessly "humanistic" due to their progressive social and economic policies. And while Nader does defend the family farmer and owner-operated business from the predations of the corporate giants, the main thrust of his policy demands in his stump speeches—national health insurance, abolishing poverty with a guaranteed minimum income and a national living wage, repealing Taft-Hartley so workers can organize again, progressive tax reform, ending corporate welfare—focused on policies for collective economic security and justice, not personal sacrifice or individualistic enterprise. The fact is that Nader has brought economic class issues into the Greens more effectively than anyone else has done in 17 years of Green organizing in the U.S. For Left Greens, one of the frustrations had been the exclusive focus on the cultural issues coming out of the New Left since the 1960s to the neglect and sometimes resistance to class issues. Nader's campaigns have eliminated that problem in the Greens.

Lemisch claims that a politics of austerity permeates Green literature. I think he may be confusing some elements of environmentalist thought such as deep ecology and the Malthusians with most Green political thought. Nader's policies aimed at eliminating poverty and securing decent standards of economic security for all within the context of a

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more regulated capitalism represented the populist wing of the Greens; the socialist wing of the Greens envisions an ecological utopia based on abundance. The "post-scarcity anarchism" and "liberatory technology" concepts of Murray Bookchin are foundational writings for many Left Greens.[1] William Morris' vision of a socialism where work is a realm of freedom, not necessity, an arena of artistic craftsmanship rather than an extension of industrial machines, is central to the thinking of many eco-socialists in the Greens.[2] In a more limited but perhaps more immediately practical vein, the writings of Andre Gorz and French Green economist and politician Alain Lipietz, which call for a reduction in work time coupled to a guaranteed basic citizens income to be received independently of work, have been important in shaping Green policies for eliminating poverty and oppressive working conditions.[3] Joel Kovel, who ran against Nader in the 2000 Green presidential primaries in New York and California, cited the same "Big Rock Candy Mountain" song that Lemisch did in projecting an abundant ecological utopia and criticizing the Green populists' notions of a utopia of small proprietors and a more regulated capitalism.[4]

Lemisch's general point about the need for a Left that projects a vision of abundance is one that most Greens would agree with. They would agree that onerous work and an insufficient supply of the means to life and enjoyment are conditions that must be eliminated. But where Lemisch projects an extension of the technology that has developed under capitalism, Greens call for a transformation of the forces of production as well as relations of production. His glorification of the car and industrialized farming reminds me of the stories in the *The Guardian* in 1976 and 1977 about the Clamshell Alliance anti-nuclear occupations at Seabrook where we were praised for our militancy but criticized for not understanding that socialist nukes would be good nukes.

Where Lemisch wants to expand the car culture in the name of mobility and freedom, the Greens want to make mobility a realm of freedom, not necessity, by reducing the need for mandatory commuting between home, work, school, recreation, and cultural events. Rather than expand auto-based transportation systems, the Greens want to redesign urban space in order to bring all aspects of life into close proximity in well-rounded communities. The mobility afforded by cars, as well as convenient, efficient rail systems, would not be rejected, but placed in a real context of freedom and mobility where travel is for special purposes, not mandatory commuting for everyday living (and the cars and rail systems would be powered by non-polluting hydrogen fuel cells, not dirty combustion engines burning fossil fuels).

Judging by the fact that gardening is one of the most popular pastimes, I think Lemisch overstates his case when he says "small-scale agriculture is among the worst kinds of labor and conditions of life." I believe that most workers risking their health and limbs in the pesti-

cide-ridden fields and packing plants of industrialized agribusiness would much prefer being small-scale producers and packers under a policy of farm price supports that covered the costs of organic production and worker-safe packing systems plus a decent income for family farmers and packing workers. Far from being a source of cornucopia, factory farming is undermining the ecological basis of food production. It does not even produce a net economic surplus when the destruction of natural, ecological capital is factored in. Small-scale production is more suited to husbanding the underlying ecological capital and can produce more foods and fibers from given units of soil, water, and the other elements of farm ecologies. With supportive price policies and other public policies, it can be not just a decent means of livelihood but an enjoyable way of life as it is for recreational gardeners.[5]

Cultural Politics

MANY HAVE SAID THE CAMPAIGN should have featured Winona LaDuke, the Greens' vice-presidential candidate, more prominently, especially since she is so articulate on cultural politics and balances Nader's strength on class issues. Actually, LaDuke ended up campaigning far more than she had agreed to do at the beginning (which was a mistake at the beginning). And LaDuke had faced the same corporate media boycott that Nader faced.

Yet Lemisch criticizes LaDuke's cultural and gender politics for a "traditionalism that places women in a subordinate role." Basing this claim on one statement in a *Ms.* interview where she says that men and women in her White Earth Chippewa community "got the confusion about roles all worked out a long time ago," Lemisch jumps to his conclusion. LaDuke's statement was really an aside in her argument that women's issues are multi-faceted and how she thought single-minded focus on abortion rights of "mainstream" women's groups failed to connect with most women because it fails to deal with the other oppressive gender-based and economic realities most women face. Elsewhere in the article, LaDuke comes across as anything but a traditionalist. When the article describes her household as "a Republican's worst nightmare," with five children from three different sets of parents, with men baby-sitting while she campaigns, LaDuke remarks, "We laugh about family values shit."[6]

The Nader campaign has also been criticized for losing the Perot/McCain "radical middle" by coming out too strongly on issues like abortion rights, affirmative action, reparations, gay marriage, and drug decriminalization.[7] But most in the Nader campaign and the Greens reject that argument. They believe that it was the Democratic scare campaign about the Republicans, not Nader's progressive stands on social issues, that convinced so many to vote for Gore to stop Bush.

Yet I believe there is merit to the criticism that Nader failed to win

over more people of color, women, and gays because he did not put enough emphasis on their concerns. On paper Nader may have taken the right positions, but it came across as an afterthought next to his main anti-corporate, pro-democracy message. Some say the positions came too little, too late. They did not begin to be posted on his campaign web site until September. In fact, very few of Nader's positions were posted on the web site until September because the campaign was pre-occupied with the onerous task of ballot petitioning and litigation. Another mistake was that Nader turned down a request to speak at the "Redeem the Dream" march in August organized by Al Sharpton and Martin Luther King III. This black-oriented march was not singled out. Environmentalists were equally upset that Nader bypassed the main Earth Day rally in Washington DC, giving Gore's campaign uncontested exposure. In both cases, Nader was meeting engagements he had previously accepted in fulfilling his commitment to campaign in all 50 states, the only candidate to do so. But missing these events which were important to national constituencies hurt him more than rearranging his 50-state tour would have.

I think the Nader campaign should be given credit for a better effort than his 1996 campaign on the race, gender, and sexual orientation issues. In 1996, Nader focused almost exclusively on his anti-corporate, pro-democracy theme and referred questions about the social issues to the Greens to answer. But the 2000 campaign still fell short of exciting and mobilizing the activists of color, feminists, and gays.

Nader and African Americans

PERHAPS THE BEST WAY TO UNDERSTAND how the Nader campaign dealt with these cultural issues is to follow one through the campaign, how the campaign related to African Americans. Nader's policy position papers were uncompromising in their advocacy for strong racial and economic justice policies. He called for reparations, supported affirmative action without apology or equivocation, and went beyond the symbolism without substance that characterized the Clinton era by focusing on the economic basis of racism in exploitation based on discrimination. His speech at the NAACP convention, which hit all these themes, was warmly received. But on Election Day, the black vote for Nader was lower than almost any other group of voters.

In late April, there was a meeting of campaign organizers in Washington, where the organizers urged Nader to speak out on police brutality. They told him that black people in particular need to know that he is on their side on this issue. Nader expressed his usual reluctance to speak out on any issue for which he was not prepared to answer the sixth or seventh follow-up question and that he did not want to lose the focus on his central anti-corporate, pro-democracy theme. Nader was non-committal at the meeting, but during the next week he did some research.

The following weekend on "Meet the Press," Nader initiated on his own a discussion of police brutality and called for more federal prosecutions where cozy local DA/police relationships were obstructing prosecution of police misconduct. He noted that the Clinton administration had done fewer prosecutions on these cases than the previous Bush administration despite higher numbers of complaints.

Nader's "Meet the Press" statements on police brutality caught the attention of black activists who had previously been skeptical of Nader's candidacy. The predominantly black Unity Party in New York City decided to invite Nader to speak at an event in Harlem. But the Nader campaign's response was slow and on-again, off-again, reflecting both conflicting advice and the usual delays such requests received as the campaign tried to coordinate all the requests and prioritize Nader's time. The problem was that this event was not prioritized even though it provided Nader with the kind of venue the campaign was having difficulty securing. The Greens in New York were universally supportive and lobbied the campaign to do it, as did many on the Washington campaign staff. But Nader also listened to old Nader hands in the New York area who were not supportive. When the campaign finally said yes, it was eight days before the event and the Unity Party pulled out, saying the notice was too short to do the event well. Actually, this was more notice than was given for most Nader events during the campaign. Nader tried to make up for it with a Harlem rally at Sharpton's National Action Network on the last day of the campaign. But the damage was done. How the Nader campaign "bungled" this event circulated through the black left across the country.[8]

The campaign underestimated the importance of symbolism on these issues. Nader's strength is his substance in contrast to the empty symbolism that Clinton personified. The campaign could cite Nader's pioneering record of fighting for racial justice on issues like biased standardized testing, bank and insurance redlining, and generic AIDS drugs for Africa. But average people, working long hours to make ends meet and hold families together, look less to statistics and policy talk than to signs that a candidate is really on their side.

The campaign did not completely neglect such signals. The first place Nader campaigned after the Denver convention was a housing project in South Central Los Angeles. The support of prominent African Americans such as Randall Robinson, Manning Marable, and Danny Glover was publicized. There were campaign meetings in black communities where the Greens had a base, such as Hartford, Connecticut, Syracuse, New York, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin.[9] But in many places, the campaign found it difficult to get into black churches and community centers where leaders were tied by patronage to the Democratic Party.

Here the campaign missed an opportunity because Gore and Bush were terrible on racial justice issues. The Gore campaign "purposively

kept blacks out of the [media] frame" in order to appeal to white swing voters and black activists were steaming mad about it.[10] But the Nader campaign failed to capitalize on this. Even when events in black communities came off, they only made local news. The corporate media never put reporters on the Nader beat, so these events and Nader's statements on racial justice were not covered by the major media. At one point the campaign held a press conference across the street from the *Washington Post*, which had not run a single news story about the Nader campaign, and still the *Post* would not send a reporter to cover it. A study of network nightly news coverage from Labor Day through mid-October found that the networks had 211 stories featuring Gore; 214 stories featuring Bush; and only four stories featuring Nader. What coverage Nader did get was invariably framed around whether he would "spoil" the election for Gore.[11]

Given all these constraints of time, media coverage, and traditional black leadership ties to the Democratic Party, the campaign should have put far more emphasis on connecting with grassroots black activist organizations like the Unity Party. Field staff in the states were encouraged to make these connections, but it was Nader and LaDuke who the activists wanted to see. I think the biggest failure of the Nader campaign in this regard was its failure to hire experienced national staff with a history of relationships to such grassroots organizations. Involving grassroots black activist organizations directly in the campaign would have done far more than all the personality endorsements, policy position papers, and symbolic gestures to make Nader's candidacy a live option in black communities. Part of the reason for these shortcomings was that the campaign didn't start until February 2000. Most of the field staff were young activists without a history of relationships with many of the constituencies the campaign tried to mobilize. The national staff hired for this work was likewise young. They tried hard, but did not have the prior relationships across the country that were really needed.

Moreover, the same staff were expected to connect with women's and gay/lesbian groups. It was too much to expect. One could also give an account of how the Nader campaign tried to relate to women's and gay/lesbian constituencies. It would be a similar story. The Nader campaign was better in 2000 than in 1996. His positions on paper were far better than Gore's and Bush's. But he did not get his message to these constituencies very effectively due to both the limitations of the campaign and the lack of media coverage. It was not enough to move these constituencies away from the Democrats in large numbers.

Important as the problem of linking class and cultural issues is for envisioning a society without exploitation or oppression and for mobilizing a broad base to fight for it, class and cultural issues are not in the end what moved many progressive voters toward or away from the Nader candidacy. Gore was terrible on class and cultural issues, from trade policy

to enforcing civil rights. Yet Gore retained the allegiance of most unionized workers, blacks, feminists, and peace and environmental activists. African Americans provide the strongest case. While only one percent of African Americans voted for Nader, over 90 percent chose Gore, even though he avoided their issues and even being seen with blacks during the campaign. Bush, on the other hand, surrounded himself with blacks at the convention and on the campaign trail, but still received the lowest Republican vote in history from blacks.

Whatever the limitations of the Nader campaign, the consensus within the Green movement is that both class and cultural demands have to be related and affirmed. How to do that effectively is an ongoing effort. The Nader 2000 campaign showed both how the Greens have improved in doing so, but also how much further they need to go.

NOTES

1. Murray Bookchin, *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1986, 1971 orig.).

2. Walter Contreras Sheasby, "Anti-Prometheus, Post-Marx: The Real and the Myth in Green Theory," *Organization and Environment 12* (1, March 1999).

3. Andre Gorz, *Paths to Paradise: On the Liberation from Work* (Boston: South End Press, 1985); Andre Gorz, *Critique of Economic Reason* (New York: Verso, 1989); Andre Gorz, *Capitalism, Socialism, Ecology* (New York: Verso, 1994); Alain Lipietz, *Towards a New Economic Order: Postfordism, Ecology and Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Alain Lipietz, *Green Hopes: The Future of Political Ecology* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1995).

4. Joel Kovel, Speech to the Green Congress of the Greens/Green Party USA, Chicago, May 27, 2000.

5. Richard Merrill (ed.), *Radical Agriculture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976); Michael Perelman, *Farming for Profit in a Hungry World* (Montclair NJ: Allanheld, Osmun, & Co., 1977).

6. Jennifer Baumgartner, "Kitchen Table Candidate," *Ms.*, April/May 2001.

7. Micah Sifry, "Nader's Unimpressive Returns Spawn Hard Questions," November 28, 2000, http://www.workingforchange.com/.

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

9. At a Milwaukee press conference with African American and Latino leaders in Milwaukee, Nader said: "It is a mistake to concentrate on race and not class, or class and not race. There's a mutually reinforcing vicious circle of race and class." Quoted in David Moberg, "Ralph's Way: Will His Strategy Work?" *In These Times*, October 30, 2000.

10. Tamala M. Edwards, "O Brother, Where Art Thou?" December 19, 2000, www.salon.com. Edwards covered the Gore campaign for *Time* magazine.

11. Ralph Nader, "Statement on Media Concentration and Bias," October 30, 2000, www.VoteNader.org; Ralph Nader, "My Untold Story," *Brill's Content*, February 2001.

A Reply to Howie Hawkins
The Snare of Pre-Modern Romanticism

Jesse Lemisch

LIMITATIONS OF TIME AND SPACE TEMPT ME to let Howie Hawkins's piece refute itself. For instance, he responds to my remark that the small-scale agriculture idealized by the Greens "is among the worst kinds of labor and conditions of life" by telling us that "recreational garden[ing] . . . is one of the most popular pastimes." Sheesh!

The same could be said for Hawkins's claim that Nader took "progressive stands on social issues" including abortion. Huh? (See below.) Or consider Hawkins on Winona LaDuke. Her retrograde statement that her people "got the confusion about [sex] roles all worked out a long time ago . . . We have always had roles that women have and roles men have" is not simply a throwaway line. It is consistent with LaDuke's projection of motherhood as central to her politics. When *Ms.* put her on the cover as "Kitchen Table Candidate," they were picking up on LaDuke's repeated messages, including what her campaign manager calls her "tired mother speech." All this seems precisely described by my comment that she stands for a "traditionalism that puts women in a subordinate role." She never really answers her interviewer's question, "What do you say to the criticism that you talk about motherhood rather than feminism?" And her presumption of the priority of motherhood led her, in the midst of the campaign, to turn down appearances on CNN and C-Span: "At 11 o'clock at night they expect me to drive to fucking Fargo, North Dakota [she lives nearby in western Minnesota], and sit in this studio. I'm a committed activist, but I ain't that beholden to the media."

Sometimes Hawkins simply evades my claims and instead engages in smear, as in likening my critique to left sectarian attacks on the Clamshell Alliance and arguments about "socialist nukes." What's the connection? In general Hawkins doesn't condescend to argue with the specifics that I presented, such as: Nader's attacks on Prozac, Viagra, TV and tourism, and his admiration of an Egyptian architect who deliberately excludes running water from the mud huts he designs for the poor because he grooves on "black-robed women, . . . erect as queens, each [going to the communal

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well] with her water jar carried nonchalantly on her head." At least we can say that this complex, together with LaDuke's traditionalism, isn't postmodernist; it isn't pomo, or even mo'; when combined with idealization of the life of the small farmer, it's *pre*-mo romanticism.

In the piece Hawkins criticizes, I wrote: "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." Nothing Hawkins says offers any basis for changing this judgment. He says, "Lemisch's general point about the need for a Left that projects a vision of abundance is one that most Greens would agree with," citing Gorz, Lipietz, Bookchin and Kovel. I wish them all well in projecting an alternate Green vision. But citing a few Green (and non-Green) theoreticians — some French or English — does not tell us what American Greens actually are on the ground: in protests, public literature, the 2000 campaign, hate mail to me, or listserves. In my experience, any mention of abundance has gone over like a lead balloon in Green circles, bringing, at best, razzberries (organic). Certainly no ordinary Green with whom I have conversed has had any but the most negative response to my invocation of the medieval myth of the "Land of Cockaigne." Those who favor abundance have to be at best an embattled minority within the Greens. As I wrote, there may well be differences among Greens and between Nader and Greens, but the "romance of parsimoniousness and asceticism" is hegemonic among them.

Hawkins's large, amorphous and somewhat negatively viewed category labeled "cultural politics" contains race, gender, sexual orientation, African Americans — anything that doesn't fit into the folder labeled "economic." "For Left Greens," he writes, "one of the frustrations had been the exclusive focus on the cultural issues coming out of the New Left since the 1960's to the neglect and sometimes resistance to class issues." This sounds somewhat Gitlinian (see my "Angry White Men on the Left," *New Politics*, Winter 1997), making everything that isn't economics or class into some lesser issue. The same polarity crops up in Hawkins's notion that LaDuke "is so articulate on cultural politics and balances Nader's strength on class issues." This is unwittingly a very damning statement about Nader; and LaDuke, as we have seen, is hardly strong on whatever it is that Hawkins means by "cultural politics."

A Drive in the Country

AS FOR CARS: FOR ALL HAWKINS'S TALK about how "Greens want to make mobility a realm of freedom, not necessity," his limited vision will decrease mobility and freedom. Of course I support radically increased mass transportation. But having said that, I wonder: how do we get to the mass transportation, or to Grandma's house, or take a drive in the country on a nice day, or shlep our stuff? And how do we do these things on

our own schedule? Invoking the mantra "mass transportation" doesn't face these realities. As a step towards a possible solution, I mentioned White Cars, Amsterdam's successors to the 1960's Provos' White Bicycles. Since then, I have learned, from environmental policy analyst Bernard Tuchman, of "station cars," such as those around BART (California's Bay Area Rapid Transit), and as planned elsewhere. These are small electric cars, plugged in at people's homes overnight, driven to the train station and left at special plugs there during the day. (Consider also hi-tech "car sharing" programs in Chicago and elsewhere.) There are in such experiments the seeds of publicly owned individual transportation, easily combinable with GPS, swipe cards, and interchangeable and available to all. Here is a system that would go far to lessen the congestion following from individual ownership and that also fits Hawkins's rejection of "dirty combustion engines burning fossil fuels." Green aversion to planning and, I think, to technology itself, leaves them disconnected from such intelligent schemes (and therefore assures that such vehicles will be owned by Hertz rather than by the people). In general, our Left seems poverty-stricken in regard to planning when compared even to Western European social democracy.

Localism, parochialism and anti-urbanism lurk just below the surface in Hawkins's views. He says he "wants to redesign urban space in order to bring all aspects of life into close proximity in well-rounded communities." In translation: he fails to see the virtues of rich and complex modern urban life, and the highest expressions of culture, which are at times in fact not adaptable to the neighborhood level. Think about what it means when he says that "recreation and cultural events" should be in "close proximity in well-rounded communities." It's back to Nader's "self-reliance," now in the realms of culture and leisure activities. In practice, I'm the ultra-localist of Green dreams: almost my entire *shtetl* lies between 103rd and 109th Street. But, rootless cosmopolitan that another side of me is, I'd rather not have such parochialism forced on me, especially with the moralizing localist overtones implied by Hawkins.

Women's Rights and Abortion: Beyond "Gonadal Politics"

HAWKINS IS CLOSER TO THE TRUTH when he sees merit in "the criticism that Nader failed to win over more people of color, women, and gays because he did not put enough emphasis on their concerns. On paper Nader may have taken the right positions, but it came across as an afterthought at best." The (indeed admirable) economic reforms that Nader endorses don't deal with racism and sexism: he seems to promise us that anti-corporatism will somehow trickle down, so we don't have to talk about abortion and racism as things in themselves.

Hawkins rightly points out that Nader wasn't as bad on "race, gender, and sexual orientation issues" in 2000 as he had been in 1996. He was so awful in 1996 that it was easy to be less bad in 2000. It's true that this time

he didn't come right out and denounce what he had called "gonadal politics." But he was bad enough that when Joanne Landy and I began gathering signatures on our statement, "442 Academics, Intellectuals, Artists and Writers for Nader," we decided that our support had to be critical:

> Although Nader's announced positions have positive implications for issues around abortion, women, gay rights, race and affirmative action . . . he should speak with more clarity and passion on these matters, and we urge him to do so both because it is the right thing to do, and because it is essential if the Nader campaign is to reach out more effectively to women, gays, lesbians, and racial minorities. (For the whole statement, see http://www.wpunj.edu/newpol)

In April 2000, Landy had given vent to her tendency to cry out in large domed spaces by responding to Nader's bizarre critique of Viagra and Prozac in his speech at Washington's Foundry United Methodist Church by loudly proclaiming, "Whatsamatta with Viagra!!?" This raucous feedback seems to have had some temporary effect on Nader. But six months later, on October 13, at the great Madison Square Garden Super-Rally, she cried out, "What about abortion!!?" We had heard his speeches over and over again, and knew the lines just as people know the Rocky Horror Picture Show. We knew that he would give a fine history of the women's rights movement — an account which he would end in 1920, lest he get onto the uneasy ground of feminist struggles in the succeeding eighty years. The A-word would never cross his lips, and indeed he seemed always to verbally stumble when he got close to women's rights.

There is an inside story, not yet told, about Nader and abortion. As the campaign progressed, Landy and I grew increasingly relieved that we had written into our statement a critical portion, which we came to think had been understated. We sought to contact Nader. The closest we got was to Campaign Manager Theresa Amato. A phone conversation with her in October left me utterly flabbergasted. She defended Nader's silence on abortion by telling us repeatedly, "it's on the website," but when confronted with our persistent urging that he *speak* of abortion and women's rights in public, in particular at the massive campaign rallies that were being held around the country, she said that these were just "special issues," and, so far as she was concerned, Nader's speeches were already too long. Buried away on the VoteNader website was indeed a NOW statement including a phrase or so about abortion. But he could not speak the word. (He also arrogantly told NOW's Patricia Ireland that he had been for women's rights before she had ever heard of them.)

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It's now 2001. All of this is no way to build a left. "Who," I ask again, "will want to join with us if we eschew modernity and instead advocate a romance of backwardness, Spartan living and underdevelopment?" We need a politics of possibilities, not a politics of ideologically imposed limits.

A Debate:
The Legacy of Rosa Luxemburg

Editor's note: The controversy below has its origin in a provocative article by Stephen Eric Bronner that appeared in the previous issue of *New Politics*, Volume 8, Number 3, "The Legacy of Rosa Luxemburg." Readers who have not read Bronner's original article can do so by ordering a copy from *New Politics*, P.O. Box 98, Brooklyn, NY 11231-0014. Enclose a check or money order made payable to *New Politics* for $8.50 (includes shipping and handling.)

A Critical Reply to Stephen E. Bronner

Alan Johnson

WHAT IS THE "SALIENCE FOR THE PRESENT" of Rosa Luxemburg's thought? That was the timely question posed in Steve Bronner's article, 'The Legacy of Rosa Luxemburg' in *New Politics* 31 (Summer, 2001). Steve has done much to preserve Luxemburg's legacy in his 1979 edited collection, *The Letters of Rosa Luxemburg*, and his 1981 book, *A Revolutionary for Our Times: Rosa Luxemburg*. Twenty years ago Steve wrote, "Luxemburg understood that it was Marx's method, not any one of his particular judgements, that provided the key to emancipation."[1] Now Steve thinks the condition for an appropriation of Luxemburg's thought is a rejection of the dogmatic and teleological Marxist framework within which it was developed. I do not find this reversal persuasive. In part one I suggest there are some general problems with this "post-Marxist" method of appropriating the legacy of Marxism. In part two I challenge some of the new political conclusions Steve has drawn from his new Luxemburg.

Part 1: Ransacking the Legacy

CONTEXT IS EVERYTHING. I agree with Steve that simply regurgitating the old slogans of long-dead Marxists is worse than inadequate. And yes, we need the labors of critical re-appropriation not idolatry. However, these are banalities and it has been under the cover of such banalities that a wholesale caricature of the entire Marxist tradition, so-called "post-Marx-

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ism," has established itself as the new common sense. The 1987 work, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, is the most important work of the new caricaturists. The central claim of that book – which Steve seems to have accepted wholesale — is that the entire Marxist tradition is at its core a dogmatism, a crude determinism, an "economic neccesitarianism" unable to cope with the complexity of the world. The new caricaturists tell us that the thought of Marxism's best practitioners, such as Luxemburg or Gramsci, can be of some limited use for socialists today only on condition that the useful bits (this insight, that concept, etc) is extricated from the "teleological" and "deterministic" Marxist matrix in which it was de/formed. The result has resembled nothing so much as the sack of Rome. When the Goths smashed up Roman buildings and dragged away bits of stone they created two things: rubble and fetishes. The post-Marxist Goths do something similar. They ransack Marxism for the concept of hegemony, which they hold aloft as the foundation for a new politics of "radical democracy." However, they detach the concept from both the material structures and determinants that condition the battle and from the social agencies with the interest and capacity to enter the fight. This is rejected as so much "teleological" rubble, from the theory of historical materialism ("monist"/ "necessitarian") and the theory of capitalist exploitation and the capitalist state ("essentialist"/"economist"), to the theory of the revolutionary potential of the working class ("Jacobin"/"religious"/"classist"/ "eschatalogical").

Laclau and Mouffe's impoverished and impoverishing reconstruction of Marxism, really a parody, has eaten through the U.S. and European far left like a cancer. The pre-condition of progress is to contest and refute it through our own scrupulous scholarly interrogation and creative development of the Marxist revolutionary project.

The English Marxist Raymond Williams argued that Marxism must balance two kinds of theoretical work. First, "legitimating theory": in other words we have to keep asking, "what was the legitimate inheritance of an authentic Marxism — including the identification of an authentic Marxist Marx – and thus, hopefully, an authentic revolutionary tradition." Second, "operative theory": in other words we have to produce "theoretical analysis of late capitalist society; theoretical analysis of the specificities of [particular national] societies; theoretical analysis of the consequent situations and agencies of socialist practice." Either kind of theoretical work practiced in isolation from the other is impoverished. A purely legitimating form of theory will be unable to reconnect to the "confused and frustrating politics of our own time and place." A purely operative theory is likely to be eclectic, to mistake short-term problems for long term crises, and to simply relinquish, rather than creatively develop, hard-won theoretical advances.

Marxism, warned Williams, can never reach a 'finished' state. It must

be re/made "in many of its elements [in] essentially unfamiliar ways" as it faces, square-on, "the altered social relations" of late capitalism. Williams's own explorations of, for instance, the nature of a contemporary materialism, of the environmental impact of capitalist social relations, and of the new social movements, and their transformation of the prospects and forms of socialist transition, were efforts at creative renewal. He sought to bring the Marxist tradition — to which he came late — into a creative confrontation with the present, to refine and renew Marxism.

Legitimating theory is often sneered at as "idolatry" or "sectarian." This is a mistake. We democratic revolutionary socialists, miniscule in number and beleaguered, have to fight tooth and nail in this field.[2] Doing decent operative Marxist theory today probably depends upon doing 'sectarian' legitimating Marxist theory. Marxism certainly has to be retrieved from layers of Stalinist filth. However, it also has to be defended against the post-Marxist reduction of the entire tradition to an "economic necessitarianism."[3]

I think the effort to liberate Luxemburg's thought from a "teleological" Marxist cast results in something less than the full measure being taken of its contemporary relevance. There are three points in Steve's article where this is so.

First, Steve claims Luxemburg had a "romantic vision of revolution." This is a view common to bourgeois, "Leninist," and, now, post-Marxist commentators. However, the 'romantic' label misses much in her thought. One of the merits of Norman Geras's book, also titled *The Legacy of Rosa Luxemburg*, was to challenge this legend and, with great exegetical care, draw out the "hard-headed strategic realism" involved in Luxemburg's "theorisation of…revolutionary realities." Luxemburg unified, as components of a distinctively democratic Marxist political matrix, theories of the nature of the bourgeois state, the character of proletarian democracy, and the outline of a viable socialist strategy. Steve seemed to me to spend much of his article wrenching these apart again. Geras summarised Luxemburg's insight in these terms:

> Method of motion and phenomenal form of the proletariat's revolutionary struggle, the mass strike was in her eyes a way of breaking through the barriers erected by the bourgeois state against any direct expression of the will of the masses. It was a way of releasing and galvanising their energies, of overcoming the divisions and the weakness, created by bourgeois ideology and partly by the proletarian condition itself, in order thereby both to concentrate their strength and to impart to them a sense of it…Socialism requiring by its very nature the control of the working masses over the entirety of the social process, it was not possible to envisage that the road to socialism might bypass the direct intervention and active participation of these masses in movements of unprecedented scope and vigour…The proletarian revolution had its own specific forms proper to its unique

> objectives…Luxemburg was the very first to draw the lessons of 1905 for the advanced capitalist countries and to begin to pose the question of power there in a serious, and no longer purely propagandistic way…Luxemburg's lifelong emphasis on the importance of proletarian, socialist democracy was not just a matter of some praiseworthy moral commitment on her part. It was that, but not just that. For it was also a matter of the most hard-headed strategic realism.[4]

Second, Steve alleges that Luxemburg held "an economistic belief in the ultimate 'breakdown' of capitalism." This is indisputable. She thought that once capitalism was dominant throughout the world, "Accumulation must come to a stop. The realization and capitalization of surplus value become impossible to accomplish . . . the collapse of capitalism follows inevitably as an objective historical necessity." Now this may be wrong but it is not, as Steve says, a "teleology." For it to be that it would have to include not only the idea of inevitable capitalist breakdown but also an inevitable socialist triumph lodged immanently within the structure of capitalism. However, no such view can be found in Luxemburg. She wrote, "Bernstein doesn't understand in relation to capitalism as a whole, that society's objective development merely gives us the preconditions of a higher level of development, but..without our conscious interference, without the political struggle of the working class for a socialist transformation or for a militia, neither the one nor the other will ever come about." For Luxemburg the collapse of capitalism is guaranteed, the victory of socialism is not. As Geras pointed out, there is a "resolute refusal, embodied in her political activity and theory, to countenance any form of economism or to wait for that economic process to work itself out."[5] In fact, Luxemburg's view is very similar to Max Shachtman's that if socialism does not replace capitalism then forms of barbarism will.

Third, Steve argues that Luxemburg "foresaw how the communist suppression of bourgeois democracy in 1917 would unleash a dynamic of terror." This suggests a simple continuity between Lenin and Stalin, and between the revolution and the counter-revolution. It risks throwing away the theoretical conquests the anti-Stalinist tradition made — at what expense! — over three-quarters of a century, not just those attempts at a materialist analysis of the degeneration of the revolution but more recent reconstructions of the political and ideological mistakes of the Bolsheviks from within the revolutionary socialist tradition such as Sam Farber's book *Before Stalinism: The Rise and Fall of Soviet Democracy*.

Having said that, there is a common misunderstanding of Luxemburg's critique of the Bolsheviks, which Steve does help us avoid. It is often thought that Luxemburg opposed the closing down of the Constituent Assembly, then changed her mind and supported it. In fact neither claim is true. She was prepared to support the Assembly's closure on the grounds advanced by the Bolsheviks, that it was, by the time it met, politically unrepresentative of the country. Her criticism, surely right,

was that Lenin and Trotsky "failed to arrive at the conclusion which follows immediately" from their own argument, namely, "without delay, new elections to a new Constituent Assembly should have been arranged." Worse, "Trotsky draws a general conclusion concerning the inadequacy of any popular representation whatsoever" and begins talking dismissively of "'the cumbersome mechanism of democratic institutions'." Luxemburg points out that "the remedy which Trotsky and Lenin have found, the elimination of democracy as such, is worse than the disease it is supposed to cure; for it stops up the very living source from which alone can come the correction of all the innate shortcomings of social institutions. That source is the active, untrammelled, energetic political life of the broadest masses of the people."[6]

Part 2: Marxism Today

I HAVE SUGGESTED SOME CONTEXTUAL AND EXEGETICAL PROBLEMS with Steve's new appropriation of Luxemburg's thought. I now contest a number of claims Steve makes based on this appropriation.

Claims about Marxism and Science

STEVE CLAIMS THAT MARXISM could be thought of as a science in the "golden age" of 1889-1914. As "that time is over," Marxism "can no longer be construed as a science." Of course it all depends on what you mean by science. What most Marxists meant by it in the period Steve selects, 1889-1914 (after Marx but before the First World War and Russian Revolution, the time of the Second International), was positivistic, crudely assimilating Marxism to the paradigm of the natural sciences and doing Marxism great damage in the process. However, why take that moment in Marxism's history as some mark of Cain? Why view the collapse of those misplaced scientistic hopes as a collapse of Marxism per se? Why conclude that all socialists have left is "an ethical commitment?" The positivistic Marxism of the Second International had both particular economic and political conditions of possibility and many Marxist opponents. A very different Marxism emerged during and after the First World War and the Russian Revolution, the activist Marxism of Lenin, Luxemburg, Lukacs and Korsch? In the U.S., Sidney Hook wrote an excellent book *Towards an Understanding of Karl Marx: A Revolutionary Interpretation*. Published in 1933, Hook pointed out the "disastrous consequences" of trying to make Marxism an objective science "both in logic and historic fact." Steve erases this bright shining moment in Marxism's history (quickly shut down by Stalinism) when a very different relation was established, in theory and practice, between Marxism and the human making of History. Hook argued that to reject the passive mechanical scientism of the Second International was to reclaim not reject the Marxism of Marx:

> . . . Lenin and Luxemburg appealed [to] scientific knowledge. But scientific knowledge was not merely a disinterested report of objective tendencies in the economic world but a critical appreciation of the possibilities of political action liberated by such knowledge. The spontaneity which the syndicalists exalted at the cost of reflection was not enough. Unless a militant ideology or theory directed that spontaneous will, its energies would run out in sporadic and futile strike tactics…economic development [can] only produce by its own immanent movement the presuppositions of socialism. Power is bestowed neither by God nor the economic process. It must be taken. When Marx spoke of communism as being the result of a 'social necessity' he was referring to the resultant of a whole social process, one of whose components was the development of objective economic conditions, the other the assertion of a revolutionary class will. (…) Economic forces and revolutionary organisation, Lenin insisted, are not related to each other as mechanical cause and effect but are independent components of a dialectical whole.

Marxism does not have to be an outmoded teleology or an economic necessitarianism. It has been before, and can be again, a theory and practice of human liberation.

Claims About the Working Class

STEVE CLAIMS THAT "THE INDUSTRIAL PROLETARIAT IS ON THE WANE" and "the labor movement is obviously no longer what it once was." However, we are living through the conjunctural political collapse of the two dominant forms of working class politics: communism and social democracy. We are not living through some post-modern "farewell to the working class." This is hardly comforting. However, it does tell us what the basic job is: the political reconstitution of a (globally gargantuan) working class as an independent political force. Hard task it may be. Utopian, because of some systemic 'waning' of the proletariat, it is not. There are dozens of countries in which the industrial working class is growing explosively – Turkey, Argentina, Brazil, China, India, South Africa, Thailand, Malaysia, South Korea. Globally, there are more industrial workers in 2001 than at any previous time in human history. In addition, it is much more productive not just bigger.[7] When Karl Marx published *Capital* in 1867 there were barely 250,000 trade unionists in Britain and very few anywhere else. Today there are 165 million trade unionists worldwide. The problem, I repeat, is a conjunctural one of political collapse not a 'waning' of the structural capacities of the working class.

Claims About Workers Councils

STEVE WRITES "'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." Steve also argues that the "liberal republican state" is the realization of "the institutional goal of the revolution initially sought by Luxemburg."

Steve's linking of the impossibility of workers councils to the failure of Stalinism in this way is unfortunate. It blurs the difference between Stalinism, an exploitative social system, which crushed all democracy, parliamentary or council, representative or direct, and the revolutionary Marxist tradition, which embraced workers councils in theory and practice. Also troubling is Steve's comment that Stalinism and socialism "are not mutually exclusive." I wonder if this risks undermining the struggle, practical and theoretical, of an entire historical tradition to preserve something more than radical liberalism from the wreck of Stalinism?

I am tempted to respond to Steve's dismissal of workers councils with the question 'how do you know?', for when were workers councils seriously tried only to fail due to some genetic weakness rather than counter-revolutionary violence? Blurring the lines between Stalinism and socialism tends to bracket this question out.

It is also misleading to say that the "liberal republican state" is the realization of Luxemburg's political vision. Quotes do not resolve if she was right or adequate for today but they do establish what she thought. In *What Does The Spartakusbund Want*? we find, "The essence of the socialist society is that the great working mass ceases to be a ruled mass and instead lives and controls its own political and economic life in conscious and free self-determination. Thus from the highest offices of the state down to the smallest municipality, the proletarian mass must replace the outdated organs of bourgeois class rule — the federal councils, parliaments, municipal councils — with their own class organs; the workers and soldiers councils."

Luxemburg, like Marx and Engels, stood for the democratic republic. More than anyone, Luxemburg understood that only the democratic republic could give shape to the idea of "dictatorship of the proletariat" in a form compatible with self-emancipation. But she reminded Bernstein that "the poultry yard of bourgeois parliamentarism" could not be the means to achieve "the most formidable transformation of history, the passage from capitalist society to socialism." Appropriating the legacy of Luxemburg's thought would show how she struggled, and failed, to integrate both these insights amidst the turmoil of war and revolution. For Rosa Luxemburg had the advantage over Marx of being alive to assimilate the fundamental lesson of the revolutions of the period 1917-1923. Everywhere the popular revolt reached a certain scale and intensity, councils or soviets or committees grew up alongside older representative democratic institutions. Hannah Arendt pointed out that the reason the history of these democratic forms has been ignored is that "wherever they appeared, they were met with utmost hostility from the party bureaucracies and their leaders from right to left, and with the unanimous neglect of political theorists and political scientists. She added, "Workers councils, such as those in Russia in 1917, have for more than one hun-

dred years now emerged whenever the people have been permitted for a few days or a few weeks or months, to follow their own political devices without a government (or a party program) imposed from above."[8] The relationship of councils to parliaments became the subject of intense debate within the Marxist movement. These debates are often little known let alone discussed. They offer no easy answers. However, based as they are upon the most advanced practical expressions of self-emancipation in human history our task is to take the utmost care in their reclamation for the present. I doubt that casting the "liberal republican state" as the "realization" of Luxemburg's vision is adequate to this task. For the "liberal republican state" exists nowhere. Whatever of its forms are preserved/transformed, the brute fact is that the "only" thing that lies between the actually existing liberal republican state (the one which serves the corporations and steals elections) and the democratic republic (the institutional form of popular sovereignty) is a revolution.

However, the institutional shape of the socialist polity is a radically underdeveloped area of Marxist political theory. To take just one example to illustrate the wider point, it is often thought axiomatic that Marxists support the ending of the separation of powers between legislature and executive. Actually, this was not accepted throughout the Marxist movement. Karl Kautsky's writings in the years immediately following the Russian Revolution, for example, are a sophisticated Marxist argument for the indispensability of separation. And on the question of the administration of a socialist society Kautsky's thoughts might be useful additions to Lenin's remark that "every cook can rule." [9] Revolutionary socialists should have the confidence to return to these debates, and to the ideas of the left Mensheviks, ending all the intellectual bans and prohibitions we have inherited.

It is not for wanting to open up these debates that Steve should be criticized but for the opposite: closing the debate down by a rash dismissal of the potential of direct democratic forms to play a central role in both the transition and in the institutional shape of a socialist polity.

Claims About Capitalism and Socialism

BACK IN 1981 STEVE USEFULLY REMINDED SOCIALISTS that "The liquidation of socialism as an *alternative* to capitalism through the emphasis upon particular reforms *per se* has resulted in an identity crisis for social democracy."[10] Today Steve claims that presenting socialism as a wholly alternative social system, as the other, is wrong (the italics, on both occasions are his). Again, Steve seems to be surrendering valuable theoretical positions for little return. The world is globalising before our eyes but under the direction of multinational capitalist corporations and unaccountable institutions of global economic and political governance. It can seem guided by nothing more than moneymaking and ethnic violence. There is a global crisis of reformism. Socialism has never seemed more

like the other to me.

Steve motivates this particular reversal by some sentences about "modern capitalism" and "the liberal state":

> 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.

Capitalist governments can ward off disaster by subsidising industries, manipulating fiscal policies, and introducing welfare legislation.

Steve sounds curiously like Luxemburg's old opponent Eduard Bernstein. Or the British Labor party theoretician Tony Crosland in his book *The Future of Socialism*, written in 1956. But after Bernstein came capitalism's own Thirty Years War. And after Crosland we had the end of the Long Boom to which he had pinned his socialist hopes, world economic crisis, a triumphant neo-liberal campaign to drive down workers living standards, the steady erosion of the social wage, the de-social democratisation of the world, and the squeeze on popular participation in decision-making. In the USA, in 1997, 35.6 million people, close to one in seven Americans, lived below the official poverty line. Globally, obscene levels of inequality, murderous ethnic violence, war, and continued environmental catastrophe vie for the status of the social problem most likely to finish us off. According to the United Nations Human Development Report for 1999, income per person in half the countries of the world was lower at the end of the 1990s than at the beginning. Among those who live in developing countries (three out of four human beings) over half lack access to safe sewers, one in three lack clean water, one in four lack adequate housing and one in five have no health services. In the face of all that Steve's remarks about "modern capitalism" can sound rather like the Dickens character Mr Podsnap who, when asked about the good fortune of being an Englishman, replied:

> '"It was bestowed Upon Us By Providence. No Other Country is so Favoured as This Country…"
>
> "And other countries," said the foreign gentleman. "They do how?"
>
> "They do, Sir," returned Mr. Podsnap, gravely shaking his head, "they do — I am sorry to be obliged to say it — as they do"'.

Against Steve's intent I am sure, his new understanding of "modern capitalism" and "the liberal republican state" has a bit of Podsnappery about it:

> "And Capitalism," said the teleological Marxist, remorsefully, "It does how?"
>
> "It does," returned Mr Bronner severely: "It does — I am sorry to be obliged to say it — in Every Respect Better. Its Liberal State is Literally

> Unsurpassable. Its Rate of Political Participation is Unmatched. The Integrative Power of its Welfare Services and the Adaptive Power of its Fiscal Policies renders it Hegemonic and Crisis-Free."[11]

Elsewhere in his *New Politics* article, Steve himself indicts the barbarism of the world (p.167). The point is, for this reader at least, that this indictment sits at odds with the Podsnappish remarks about "modern capitalism" and the new theory of "the liberal republican state." There are, I think, two incompatible positions, jostling.

Claims About Internationalism

FOURTH, STEVE RECOMMENDS Luxemburg's opposition to the call for national self-determination as a nationalistic demand which divides the working class. For all Steve's concern for the dangers of a dogmatic Marxism unable to engage in the complex task of constructing contingent political majorities he has embraced the most crude, dogmatic, indeed politically useless aspect of Luxemburg's thought. Ironically, it is an aspect of her thought derived from precisely those elements within Marxism of teleology and determinism ("Luxemburg argued that Polish independence would only slow the progress of capitalist development, and thus the growth of the proletariat," says Steve). What of the rich legacy of debates among, for instance, the early Bolsheviks concerning national oppression, national minorities, the right to self-determination, the question of federal political structures, and the relation of socialism to all of the above? These discussions remain unsurpassed, by Marxists at least, to this day. Actually it's much worse than that. We are living through a kind of Grand Regression in which the sophisticated calibration of class and nation attempted by the Bolsheviks has given way to a Manichean view of the world in which the Great Satan in Washington clashes with various "objective anti-imperialists" from the strutting generals to the acid-throwers.

Steve is not a subscriber to that particular Grand Regression. However, he does risk a regression of his own with the claim that to favour national self-determination is to "endorse nationalism" and to "insist on the primacy of ethnic aspirations." But Lenin was not insisting on the "primacy of ethnic aspirations" when he argued that "when national oppression makes joint life absolutely intolerable then the interests of the class struggle will be best served by secession." Steve confuses the Zinovievist efforts to manipulate nationalism for socialist ends, especially in Asia, with Lenin's policy of "clearing the decks" for the class struggle by fighting for "consistent democracy." That policy — though we have to think for ourselves about how to apply it — is relevant today. There is no way past, through, or around nationalism other then consistent democracy married to socialist organisation and politics.

Steve also claimed that "the only institutions capable of furthering

internationalism are now intertwined with capitalist interests and they tend to privilege strong states over their weaker brethren." However, in the spirit of Luxemburg's internationalism, we should support the interventions of these "imperfect institutions" to prevent slaughter. I assume Steve means the UN and NATO.

The left does face excruciating dilemmas today, situations in which we lack forces on the ground and where the only realistic obstacle to slaughter is the intervention of the UN or NATO, or the armed forces of some bourgeois state or alliance of states. Take Rwanda. I might have tried to formulate the sentences opposing any intervention as "imperialist" but they would not take shape in my mouth. At least not without a feeling of shame. And yet I also know that intervention can itself lead to a far worse slaughter than anything which prompted the intervention, as it has in Iraq. I also know that it will be other, progressive, forces which will face 'interventions' in the future, and that my support of any intervention will have extended legitimacy to the Big Powers. The historic defeat of socialism may be the root cause of the dilemma but what is there to do but wrestle with it? In the Falklands War, the Gulf war, and the Kosovan conflict I thought socialists should be against both reactionary contenders. Rwanda seems to me to be a different case, and socialists should not have opposed all forms of intervention on principle. However, Steve, if I am reading him correctly, is not really wrestling with a dilemma. He is arguing there is no dilemma because the UN and NATO are "furthering internationalism" albeit "imperfectly." However, it is one thing to say the saving of one million lives in Rwanda outweighs the need to deny any support to bourgeois state forces. It is another to issue a blanket statement that the UN and NATO are "furthering internationalism." This is to turn Marxism upside down. It is certainly to forget some advice Luxemburg gave her comrades concerning the first world war: "Our party should have been prepared to recognise the real aims of this war, to meet it without surprise, to judge it by its deeper relationship according to their wider political experience."[12]

Claims About Socialist Strategy

I AGREE ENTIRELY WITH STEVE that the fight to protect threatened welfare benefits and democratic rights from roll-back, and then to use that resistance as a springboard to fight for further reforms is a key to socialist advance. I agree "revolution is no longer the issue in the western democracies." That is just, for now, a fact. I also agree we must "seek new forms of alliances between workers and members of the new social movements." Talk of "independent working class politics," which defines itself by hostility to such social movements, is useless, not least because it misses the pre-condition of "independent working class politics": the political constitution of the multi-ethnic and gendered working class as a unity-in-difference.

However, Steve seems to argue that these fights will take place "through the state" and through the "existing international institutions" or they will not take place at all. Again, despite his critique of Marxism as dogmatic I find this…dogmatic. Why not some combination of popular struggles outside co-ordinated with interventions inside existing democratic institutions? Isn't that the most likely strategic line of march for any popular movement? In addition, as representative institutions are dominated — utterly, absolutely — by corporate money-power and the executive/permanent secret state, isn't it obvious that only a popular organised power outside Parliament could win reforms inside Parliament? And this is only to talk of reforms. When we talk of socialism as a new principle of social organisation and a new society, and act on that talk, then the Marxist theory of the state, which the post-Marxists are not interested in, will become (to paraphrase Trotsky on war) very interested in them. As William Morris put it, at that point, "rather than lose anything which it considers of importance, it will pull the roof of the world down upon its head." The conjunctural weakness of our side, and the fact that revolution, because of that weakness, is not on the agenda, is no reason to forget basic truths gained at tremendous cost. In this case the knowledge that there is a structural unity to the capitalist order such that no sequence of reforms can peacefully change capitalism into socialism. The young Sidney Hook put it well:

> The attempt made by "liberal" Marxists …to separate the existing economic order from the existing state, as well as their belief that the existing state can be used as an instrument by which the economic system can be "gradually revolutionised" into state capitalism or state socialism must be regarded as a fundamental distortion of Marxism…For Marx every social revolution must be a political revolution, and every political revolution must be directed against the state.

This need not mean an ultra-left rejection of reforms that would only isolate the left. Indeed we could do a lot worse than think about how to develop afresh for our own times the kind of transitional political strategy Ernest Mandel mapped in the 1960s, the strategy of structural reforms. This strategy was based upon the notion of coordinating a massive popular power, a network or coalition of forces, permanently organised to press its demands with a supportive block of popular elected representatives, ultimately a workers government. Mandel aimed to update Marx's notion, developed in his own time by Trotsky, of a transitional political method in order to "effect an integration between the immediate aims of the masses and the objectives of the struggle which objectively challenge the very existence of the capitalist system itself."[13] Today a transitional political strategy would have to be based upon all popular struggles, and not only those of the labor movement, it would be led by a multiplex political coalition and not "the" revolutionary party,

and it would, of course, be co-ordinated internationally. Perhaps something like this strategy has the potential to be the contemporary version of the mass strike; what Luxemburg called the "method of motion" or "phenomenal form" of socialist advance. Perhaps.

But what is sure is that in the ranks of post-Marxism we will only travel backwards, to the very beginning of the 20th century when Luxemburg complained that Bernstein "transforms socialism into a variety of liberalism" and so "deprives the socialist movement… of its class character."

Steve's thoughts on Luxemburg strike me as hovering somewhere between these alternatives.

NOTES

1. Steve Bronner, *A Revolutionary for our Times: Rosa Luxemburg*, Pluto, London, 1981, p.107.

2. For an example of the most thoughtful and rigorous legitimating theory see the work of Norman Geras. See *Literature of Revolution. Essays on Marxism*, Verso, 1986 and *Discourses of Extremity. Radical Ethics and Post-Marxist Extravagances*, Verso, London, 1990.

3. Steve also indulges in some caricatured presentations of "the left" against which his implicit alternative is able to avoid scrutiny. For instance he insists we have to stop using the slogan "the worse the better" and we have to stop thinking that "intensified repression or exploitation will somehow automatically produce a progressive response." It might be because I came into politics with Thatcher and Reagan but in over twenty years of activity in student unions, trade unions, the Labor party, and more than one Marxist organization, I have not heard one person say anything like that. Ever. However, the idea that hordes of dogmatic Marxists are out there saying things like this all the time is central to the post-Marxist imaginary/mythology. The post-Marxist alternative which is hiding in the corner, hoping to avoid proper scrutiny, is the idealist idea that there is just no connection at all between capitalist crisis and the possibility of socialism.

4. Norman Geras, *The Legacy of Rosa Luxemburg*, London; Verso, 1976, p. 122-4.

5. Norman Geras, *The Legacy of Rosa Luxemburg*, London; Verso, 1976, p. 23.

6. Rosa Luxemburg, *The Russian Revolution*, Workers Age Publishers, New York, 1940, p.35, 38.

7. See Paul Kellogg, 'Goodbye to the Working Class? in *International Socialism*, 2:36, pp. 105-111.

8. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, New York, 1951, p. 159. Thanks to Marvin and Betty Mandell for this point.

9. See Massimo Salvadori, *Karl Kautsky and the Socialist Revolution, 1880-1938*, Verso, London, 1979.

10. Steve Bronner, *A Revolutionary for our Times: Rosa Luxemburg*, Pluto, London, 1981, p.111.

11. Apologies to the memory of E.P. Thompson from whose essay "The Peculiarities of the English," in *The Poverty of Theory* (1978, p.36-7) this little jest is adapted.

12. Rosa Luxemburg, "The Junius Pamphlet: The Crisis in the German Social-Democracy," in *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks*, Pathfinder, New York, 1970, p.279.

13. Ernest Mandel, *A Socialist Strategy for Western Europe*, Institute for Workers Control, Nottingham, no date.

A Second Reply to Bronner

David Camfield

IN HIS "NOTES ON THE LEGACY OF ROSA LUXEMBURG" (*New Politics*, New Series, Vol. VIII, No.3), Stephen Eric Bronner reflects on the question of the contemporary significance of the ideas of the thinker and fighter he calls "the most important representative of a libertarian socialist tradition inspired by internationalism, economic justice, and a radical belief in democracy" (162). At a time when the global justice movement is leading more people to question neo-liberal — and, for some, capitalist — certainties and to search for alternatives, Bronner's question is timely. His rejection of dogmatically "regurgitating the old slogans or finding the appropriate citations from her pamphlets and speeches" (162) and his suggestion that the inadequacies of Luxemburg's thought deserve to be treated much as Luxemburg critically appraised Marx's work are praiseworthy.

However, Bronner's argument — essentially, that it "no longer makes sense" to conceive of socialism "as the *other*, the emancipated society" (165) and therefore Luxemburg's legacy for radical politics as a determined struggle for reforms — concedes too much. Certainly, a dogmatic reassertion of classical Marxism — even in its most intelligent variants — with a few minor innovations tacked on represents an inadequate response to the challenges facing radical political thought in the 21st century. But perspectives that underestimate the extent to which liberal-democratic states are barriers to addressing exploitation, oppression, alienation and ecological destruction, and which foreclose the historical possibility of human emancipation, are at least as wanting. I also believe that Bronner's article is inaccurate with respect to Luxemburg's ideas on two significant issues. I will begin with this last point, since it seems related to Bronner's view of Luxemburg's legacy, and then explain what I believe is the critical weakness in what Bronner proposes as a strategic direction for the Left. Finally, I will offer a different interpretation of Luxemburg's political legacy that, I hope, does not shy away from confronting the major challenges facing those for whom Luxemburg's socialism continues to be a source of inspiration (as well as other radicals).

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Luxemburg, Reforms and Bourgeois Democracy

LUXEMBURG'S ROLE AS A LEADING FIGURE in the debate over "revisionism" in the Second International is well known. Bronner writes that her critique of Bernstein's theoretical expression of revisionism in *Reform or Revolution* "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" (164). True, Luxemburg's position was (like Marx) one of fighting for reforms within capitalist society in ways that changed the participants and prepared for social revolution.[1] She did not contemptuously reject the struggles for tangible changes in which working-class people inevitably engage as a result of their conditions of life. Her withering intellectual dissection of Bernstein's work was not, though, primarily motivated by a concern that economism (restricting socialist politics to struggles for higher wages, better conditions of work, lower rents, etc.) was an obstacle to replacing the German imperial state with a republic. Rather, it was animated by her fear that those for whom the movement was everything and the final end nothing were abandoning the aim of replacing capitalism:

> people who pronounce themselves in favour of the method of legislative reform *in place of and in contradistinction to* the conquest of political power and social revolution, do not really choose a more tranquil, calmer and slower road to the *same* goal, but a *different* goal. Instead of taking a stand for the establishment of a new society they take a stand for surface modification of the old society . . . not the realisation of *socialism*, but the reform of *capitalism*: not the suppression of the system of wage labour, but the diminution of exploitation, that is, the suppression of the abuses of capitalism instead of the suppression of capitalism itself.[2]

Considering the actions of the Social Democratic Party and the "revisionist" current in Germany between 1914 and 1933, this was a prescient assessment.

Bronner notes that Luxemburg insisted that democracy had to be a "practical exercise" (164) and that the socialist objective was institutions through which the working class could run society "without alienation or the impediments of bureaucracy" (165), such as the workers' councils (soviets) first created in the Russian Revolution of 1905. He goes on to write that "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" (165). Here Bronner conflates Luxemburg's perceptive critique of early anti-democratic actions of the Bolsheviks in power, which she saw as hurting a revolution she whole-heartedly supported, with the stance of Karl Kautsky and other political opponents of the Russian Revolution. It was not the "suppression of bourgeois democracy in 1917" she criticized. She rightly did not see the unelected Provisional Government overthrown in October 1917

as a democratic regime of any kind. For Luxemburg, bourgeois democracy, where it existed, had to be replaced because it was insufficiently democratic. As Norman Geras has written, "she insisted that, in order to build socialism, the masses would have first to explode through that very framework of *bourgeois*-democratic institutions which both Bernstein and Kautsky wanted to preserve intact."[3] The goal was, in Luxemburg's words, "to create a socialist democracy to replace bourgeois democracy." This had to begin:

> simultaneously with the beginnings of the destruction of class rule and of the construction of socialism . . . at the very moment of the seizure of power by the socialist party. It is the same thing as the dictatorship of the proletariat. Yes, dictatorship! But this dictatorship consists in the *manner of applying democracy*, not in its *elimination*, in energetic, resolute attacks upon the well-entrenched rights and economic relationships of bourgeois society . . . this dictatorship must be the work of the *class* and not of a little leading minority in the name of the class.[4]

Bronner's claim about the "suppression of bourgeois democracy" is probably referring to Luxemburg's criticism of the Bolsheviks in her pamphlet "The Russian Revolution" for abolishing the Constituent Assembly. This, she wrote, "was decisive for their further position."[5] Yet here she did not criticize the Bolsheviks in the manner implied by Bronner. She was clearly an outspoken advocate of a thoroughgoing replacement of bourgeois democracy, which she saw as a form of capitalist rule. Her criticism in this case referred solely to the closing down of a democratic institution in a society in which she believed the dictatorship of the proletariat had been established, and the consequences of this action for the Russian Revolution. She believed it was, in Geras's words, "one manifestation of a certain carelessness towards democratic rights in general on the part of the Bolsheviks under pressure."[6] In criticizing the Bolsheviks, never did she defend "bourgeois democracy." It is also important to note that after her release from prison, where she had drafted her pamphlet on the basis of the limited information available to her at the time, she concluded that her judgment about the closing of the Constituent Assembly had been mistaken.[7]

A Strategic Direction for the Left?

BRONNER'S ARTICLE IS NOT MERELY "LUXEMBURGOLOGY." It is to his credit that he accepts the challenge of critically assessing what the Left should take from Luxemburg's writings more than eight decades after her murder. It is his conclusion that is most debatable, rather than his decision not to simply assert the continued relevance of Luxemburg's work. For Bronner claims that because our times are so different from what he calls "the golden age of Marxism" between 1889 and 1914 (a remarkably one-sided way to view the heyday of the Second International, consider-

ing that its role in what transpired between 1914 and 1945 was prepared in the earlier period) that Luxemburg's politics of revolutionary-democratic struggle for the self-emancipation of the working class are today nonsensical. He writes that "the industrial proletariat is on the wane; and the labour movement is obviously no longer what it once was." Socialism as an alternative mode of social organization in place of capitalism is not relevant or even desirable, since workers' councils could probably not run a "complex economy" or ensure democratic rights. There is no "serious alternative to the liberal republican state" (165). Socialism today is about "mitigating the whip of the market *through* the state and abolishing the exercise of arbitrary power *by* the state" (166). A reformist struggle against neo-liberalism involving alliances between organized labor and other social movements and a fight to free international institutions from capitalist influence is what the Left should be engaging in.

What is most startling about this is that, in effect, Bronner concludes that the legacy of Luxemburg is in fact a principled updated version of the politics of Bernstein and the "revisionist" wing of the Second International before World War One. Irony may be a hallmark of contemporary Western intellectual culture, but this is a remarkable convergence a century after Luxemburg penned *Reform or Revolution*.

There are a number of good reasons to question this conclusion. Above all, the liberal state upon which Bronner's perspective ultimately depends is not a reliable vehicle for efforts to limit the power of the market. Mass struggles — such as those in France — have slowed neo-liberalism's dismantling of the social programs provided by the state. But it is increasingly evident that state power is an integral and active dimension of global capital's offensive. Recent displays of undisguised violence against global justice demonstrators in several countries are merely an obvious example. More routinely, state power is used to force the unwaged to work in order to qualify for meager welfare benefits, to prevent migrants from crossing borders, and in a host of ways to monitor, fine, deport, evict, harass, imprison, injure and kill people. In capitalist democracies, most of this coercion is legal and sanctioned by elected authorities, of whatever party; where it is not, unelected top officials are often able to do much as they please. This is so precisely because existing state power is *capitalist* state power. Its institutions have developed to politically administer societies in which class and other social struggles may be suppressed or dormant but continue to reemerge (and sometimes win reforms) because people's needs are frustrated by capital, male supremacy, racial oppression, heterosexism and other relations of domination, exercised through "liberal republican" states as well as in other ways. As such, any limits to the market or the repressive exercise of state power are fragile, ultimately dependent on the power of social movements to mobilize to maintain them.

While Luxemburg's view that "the present state . . . is a class state.

Therefore its reform measures are not . . . the control of society working freely in its own labor process" is accurate, it is not an original contribution to state theory. But her revolutionary-democratic insistence on the failings and class character of capitalist democracy ought to inform the more sophisticated understanding of state power we need to formulate political strategy today.[8] Of course, capitalist democracy undoubtedly remains preferable to more authoritarian forms of state power, and needs to be defended. Anything that limits the ability of the governments of the U.S. and other Western states to use international institutions such as the UN in their own interests ought to be welcomed, without suggesting that such institutions can free themselves of the state relations in which they are implicated. Building movements that put demands for reforms on liberal states in a capitalist world is vital. However, to my mind, this does not constitute an adequate strategy.

Luxemburg's Legacy: Another Interpretation

THE WEAKNESS OF WORKING-CLASS POLITICS in the early 21st century is undeniable. As Bronner notes, social democracy and Stalinism have largely adopted neo-liberalism. Yet, on a global scale, the working class is larger than ever. Those employed in manufacturing in the advanced capitalist states have been pummeled by capitalist restructuring, but the ability and propensity to struggle against capital was never the exclusive property of this one layer. In many countries, as writers like Kim Moody and Gerard Greenfield have shown, there are unions and community-based workers' organizations (including those of women and other oppressed people) that have made progress with the difficult task of discovering (sometimes rediscovering) methods of struggle that enable people to not just protest against capital's agenda but to effectively combat it. Some organizations of peasants, indigenous people, students and others have done the same. It is to these pioneering movements and struggles that we ought to direct our attention.[9]

Of course, few of these movements claim to present an alternative to capitalism or a strategy for realizing it, although — despite the political crisis on the international Left that reached new depths after the collapse of the Stalinist societies, which too few understood were not only non-socialist but anti-socialist — there are activists within them who are consciously anti-capitalist. Although the weakness of independent working-class organization creates distinct problems, the growth and radicalization of the global justice movement presents an important opportunity to renew anti-capitalist politics internationally. It is for this reason that it is especially worth debating Luxemburg's legacy today.

In my view, Luxemburg's legacy today is a socialist political strategy which takes as its starting point struggles, however small, in which working-class and oppressed people assert their needs against employers,

governments and other instances of domination. Building such struggles in ways that foster democratic self-organization, solidarity and militancy makes for movements that are more effective at achieving tangible gains in the face of neo-liberalism. Such movements are also more likely to be transformative for their participants, allowing them to develop and enhance their abilities to understand and change society. Such collective action can be conceptualized as conducive to building working-class capacities to act and think against and beyond capitalism.[10] This is the indispensable basis for politics that are counter-hegemonic, rather than just attacking the status quo, however spectacularly. Such an approach is also necessary because of the extent to which since the mid-1970s the working class in many countries has been decomposed. While they have not ceased to exist, many radical and militant working-class traditions have been seriously eroded, and workers' mass organizations weakened (this has included the strengthening of bureaucracy within them).

It is impossible to predict the future of the struggles and self-organization of the world's workers (urban and rural), peasants and oppressed groups. Without doubt, we should not expect a cataclysmic "breakdown" of capitalism, as forecast in Luxemburg's *The Accumulation of Capital*, and we should not hope for one. Economic crises are assured. However, this ought not to be seen as providing a sure ground for radical politics, since economic crises guarantee only intensified exploitation and suffering, not working-class advance and a crisis of class rule. In the early 21st century, teleological predictions that capitalism will inevitably or even probably be surpassed are intellectually unfounded and almost as unhelpful for a renewal of emancipatory politics as the fatalistic certainty which has become so widely accepted (whether with contentment or resignation) that capitalism is the unsurpassable horizon of humanity. For this reason, it seems to me that in the "post-Seattle" moment we should fashion from the legacy of Luxemburg (and other liberatory thinkers and activists) a renewed politics of socialism from below that starts from today's struggles, refusing sectarianism and opportunism and spurning both certainty and despair in order to make more likely the future possibility of socialist democracy and the transcendence of the alienated social forms of market and state power.

NOTES

1. This Marxist approach is concisely and eloquently restated in Michael A. Lebowitz, "Reclaiming a Socialist Vision," *Monthly Review*. (June 2001), 41-47.

2. Rosa Luxemburg, *Reform or Revolution*. (London: Bookmarks, 1989), 75.

3. Norman Geras, *The Legacy of Rosa Luxemburg*. (London: Verso, 1983), 160.

4. Rosa Luxemburg, "The Russian Revolution," in Mary-Alice Waters, ed., *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks*. (New York: Pathfinder, 1970), 393-394.

5. Ibid., 384. Whether this assessment was accurate is debatable.

6. Geras, 186. In my opinion, Geras's analysis that Luxemburg's prison pamphlet missed the point that the closing of the Constituent Assembly was "the liquidation of a

bourgeois-democratic institution by and for a democracy of the masses" and that she in practice repudiated her earlier position by advocating in Germany a multi-party republic of democratic workers' councils to replace parliamentary institutions is convincing.

7. JP Nettl, *Rosa Luxemburg*. Vol. II (London: Oxford UP, 1966), 700, 718.

8. Luxemburg, *Reform or Revolution*, 41. Three notable relevant works on the state are Mark Neocleous, *Administering Civil Society: Towards a Theory of State Power.* (London and New York: Macmillan and St. Martin's, 1996); Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer, *The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985); Werner Bonefeld and John Holloway, eds, *Global Capital, National State and the Politics of Money.* (New York: St. Martin's, 1995). James C. Scott's *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. (New Haven: Yale UP, 1998) contains much interesting material, although its theoretical framework is, in my view, weaker than that of the above-mentioned books.

9. See the examples discussed in various articles in *The Socialist Register 2001: Working Classes, Global Realities*. (London, Halifax and New York: Merlin, Fernwood and Monthly Review).

10. See Sam Gindin, "Socialism With Sober Senses: Developing Workers' Capacities," *Socialist Register 1998*. (Rendlesham, New York and Halifax: Merlin, Monthly Review and Fernwood), 75-101, although I differ with Gindin's specific suggestions for capacity-building. Two recent attempts to develop strategy informed by this kind of analysis are Kim Moody, "The Rank and File Strategy: Building a Socialist Movement in the U.S." at <www.solidarity-us.org> and "Working-Class Politics in the Canadian State 2000" at <www.newsocialist.org/group>.

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Rosa Redux: A Reply to David Camfield and Alan Johnson

Stephen Eric Bronner

AMONG THE ASSORTED PLEASURES OF WRITING FOR *NEW POLITICS* is the knowledge that so much of its audience actually reads the articles and intellectually engages them. But I found it particularly flattering when I received two responses to "Red Dreams and the New Millennium: Notes on the Legacy of Rosa Luxemburg," originally delivered as a speech to the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation in Berlin, which appeared in the last issue. Admittedly, I was somewhat startled that the first response by David Camfield was roughly the same length as my short article while the second, by Alan Johnson, was even longer. Both are clearly serious in their intentions, however, and I would like to address their arguments in a sequential fashion. They overlap at given points, which may make for a bit of redundancy on my part, but proceeding in this way will allow me to deal better with the points they make and the logic they employ. Noteworthy about these replies is their political character, their lack of invective, and the conviction with which they argue their theoretical perspectives. It's safe to say that we all stand on the left side of the barricades. But there are also some real disagreements along with some mistaken interpretations of both my work and, in my opinion, issues pertaining to the socialist tradition. This makes a somewhat lengthy political response necessary. I hope the reader will bear with me.

•

LET ME START WITH DAVID CAMFIELD. He begins by criticizing my claim that socialism should no longer be conceived as a utopian "other" to the status quo. In my view, however, such an assertion ultimately leaves the left with nothing more than an indeterminate critique of the whole, which lacks both analytic power and popular appeal, unless an agent for realizing this "other" can be determined from within capitalism itself. This point of theory was shared by Marx and Luxemburg. It enabled them to link reform and revolution, socialism and democracy, and the growth of capitalism with the growth of its "grave-diggers." The question is whether

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the same assumption holds under contemporary capitalism and, if it doesn't, what this implies for contemporary politics.

David, if you will permit me to use your first name, you completely ignore the type of ideological assumptions generated by the context in which Luxemburg was writing. It only made sense for her to think that the conquest of political power by the proletariat — or what Lukács would term the "objective potential" for that conquest — was inscribed within the workings of capitalism. Her belief was justified not simply by the remarkable growth in the numbers of the industrial proletariat,[1] but by the even more remarkable growth of its socialist parties — all ideologically subscribing to Marxism — virtually everywhere in Europe: German social democracy, for example, "polled 10.1 percent of the votes in the Reichstag elections (in 1887); in 1890, 19.7 percent; in 1893, 23.3 percent; in 1898, 27.2 percent; and in 1903, 31.7 percent."[2] This continuing growth, in her mind, *ultimately* guaranteed the democratic character of the coming revolution. But things didn't work out as Luxemburg had planned. Somehow, David, I don't think you would any longer be willing to say with Wilhelm Liebknecht "that we can see the (socialist) future appearing as present."

Just this certitude, which was understood in *scientific* terms, placed Luxemburg on the side of Liebknecht, Kautsky and Plekhanov in their attack upon revisionism. Without such certitude, which her contemporary defenders like to deny, socialism becomes nothing more than a contingent enterprise and, therefore, necessarily based on ethical assumptions: this was precisely the position of Eduard Bernstein. I fully admit that the socialist "other" can usefully serve as a *regulative ideal* informing practical activity, but understanding the "other" in this way involves the realization that it can never be fully actualized. Simply *hoping* or *believing* in the eventual appearance of the socialist "other" without "objective" justifications is another matter entirely. That has less to do with Marxism and Luxemburg than with the construction of a religion and the prophecies of its priests. The leading force within the Frankfurt School, Max Horkheimer, was on the mark when he located the "longing for the totally other" within the religious realm.

Rosa Luxemburg was, by contrast, a materialist. Her critique of revisionism was indeed motivated by the fear that "economism" would result in abandoning the "final goal" of abolishing capitalism. But, first, she believed that realizing this aim was a *real* possibility — not simply an arbitrarily introduced utopia — and, second, that the abolition of capitalism would require a political revolution. We blithely throw terms like revolution around all the time. But Luxemburg knew what she wanted. And what she wanted was the same that everyone else on the left wanted, including Lenin and Trotsky, in 1898. The "revisionism debate" in *practical terms* centered around whether to emphasize the establishment of a liberal *bourgeois* republic, which would enable the working class to se-

cure its aims, become the majority, and act as a *socialist* majority.

To misunderstand this is to misunderstand both the character of the socialist movement and why it was able to rally all democratic forces on the continent during what Leszek Kolakowski termed its "golden age" from 1889-1914. The characterization is completely appropriate: there was not another period like it. During this time, under the banner of Marxism, the first democratic mass parties grew into a genuine political force. These *socialist* parties introduced a public sphere that we, today, can only envy. They raised the dignity of working people, they provided the vision of the modern welfare state and they turned class consciousness into an international phenomenon. Never before or after would such a flurry of intelligent socialist literature appear on so many subjects with such tremendous mass appeal. The "great betrayal" of 1914, when socialist parties supported their respective governments in the first world war, presupposed that there was something to betray.[3]

Perhaps I can use this occasion to challenge some cardinal points of orthodoxy concerning 1917 and its aftermath. The great moment was less the Bolshevik Revolution, which had already become an intractable and bloody party dictatorship even before the suppression of the Kronstadt Rebellion in 1921, than the establishment of republics with socialist majorities in so many nations of Europe where none had existed before. It was with them that a useful political legacy was created. It was with these republics that the process of democratic education took its first faltering steps. And the Weimar Republic was the most radical of them.[4] Its base was a social democratic party that, like its sister parties elsewhere in Europe, was the *only* force on the continent that retained an ongoing commitment to both political liberty and economic justice in the inter-war years. There is no straight line that leads from 1914 to 1933 or 1945.[5] Indeed, while it's easy to criticize the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) for its commitment to a "republic without republicans," suggesting a viable alternative is somewhat more difficult.

With which movement or party in Germany would you, David, have worked during the 1920s and early 1930s? Liberalism was disintegrating and communism was becoming increasingly authoritarian following the expulsion of Paul Levi in 1921. With the suppression of the Spartacus Revolt, and the reactionary radicalization of the middle strata and the peasantry, there was also not the least *practical* glimmer of hope for introducing councils. Whatever its vacillations, and timidity, social democracy was not the principle "cause" for the victory of fascism.[6] It steadfastly resisted the totalitarianism of both left and right in the name of republican democracy and it produced the most radical welfare state of the time.[7]

By contrast, even today, what does the ultra-left have to offer? You would probably answer, while making a perfunctory nod to the preferability of the liberal capitalist state over more authoritarian forms of government,[8] "socialist democracy." But, David, just what is that? The Paris Com-

mune had already become anachronistic in the western nations when Lenin and Luxemburg began to take councils seriously after the Revolution of 1905 in Russia. As for the revolts of 1919, they were less about the creation of a "dictatorship of the proletariat" or even purely decentralized councils *(Räete)*,[9] than about a "republic of councils" or a "socialist republic."[10] The dividing line between these two ideas was fuzzy. But *either of them* would have differed from a "bourgeois" republic only insofar as its partisans would have hazarded the possibilities of civil war and/or invasion by the allies in the name of purging the old judiciary and civil service, splitting up the Junker estates in the North, and nationalizing some basic industries.[11] These were laudable goals at the time and I like to think that I would have supported them. But they do not exclude commitment to a republic predicated on liberal principles and norms. Quite the contrary. The "socialist republic" (*république démocratique et social)* was understood from the first, that is to say from the July Revolution of 1848,[12] as an extension rather than as an abolition of the principles underpinning the liberal republic (*république démocratique)* introduced in February of that same year. The historical experience of this failed revolution ironically, or "dialectically," led to the quite correct belief of the future that democracy in the form of a liberal republic must serve as the precondition for socialism, and not the other way around.

Speaking frankly, David, I think your critique of liberal democracy is deeply flawed. Not the institutional structures of liberal-democratic states, but rather the elites within those states, erect barriers to addressing exploitation, oppression, and ecological destruction. The abuses you mention testify to the existence of anti-liberal elements within the liberal state, but they do not impeach its principles or even the way in which it should act. Liberal states allow for the expression of diverse interests. Reactionary elites can win out and, for any number of structural reasons, they often do. But this says nothing more, again, than that the achievement of socialist goals has no teleological or scientific assurances. There is, of course, an alternative approach in dealing with diverse interests. Squash them so that only the interests of "workers" can be articulated. In turn, however, this will require an authoritarian or totalitarian party standing above the rule of law. There is no reason to believe that the workers' council provides a different solution to this problem or that it can dispense with the need for an independent judiciary or other bureaucratic institutions to safeguard the civil liberties of conservative critics and opponents.

Rosa Luxemburg found herself torn between republics and councils at the end of her life: she supported calling for a National Assembly in Germany and yet, when her own motion insisting that the Spartacists should participate in it was defeated, she chose to stand with the masses when they rose in 1919. I have said on any number of occasions that the only justification for the Bolshevik liquidation of the Constituent Assembly was the belief that more radical institutions, namely soviets, would

be instituted.[13] That Luxemburg withdrew her original criticism of the Bolsheviks for abolishing the Provisional Assembly in Russia should be seen in context. She was soon to become President of the fledgling German Communist party, she wished to rally Western support for the Soviet Union, and she still (mistakenly) believed that the soviets or councils had a role to play in the homeland of the revolution. But you mention none of this. Thus, you confuse her tactical response to a single historical event with a point of principle that relates to her political theory.

What makes the political theory of Luxemburg *salient for the present* is not her retraction on the matter of the Constituent Assembly, which is why I didn't go into it in "Red Dreams," but her insight that terror always produces a dynamic that, once turned on, can't be shut off like a water faucet. Not in the section concerning the Constituent Assembly of her pamphlet *The Russian Revolution*, but in the section titled "The Problem of Dictatorship," would she write: "But with the repression of political life in the land as a whole, life in the soviets must also become more and more crippled. Without general elections, the free struggle of opinion, life dies out in every public institution, becomes a mere semblance of life in which only the bureaucracy remains as the active element."[14]

Doesn't this highlight the dynamic of repression? General elections and the free struggle of opinion, which naturally involves freedom of speech and assembly, are furthermore liberal "bourgeois" values. And, if that is not enough, her notion that "freedom is only and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently," crystallizes the equally "bourgeois" idea — underpinning the liberal rule of law — that the freedom of the individual cannot be arbitrarily subordinated to the whims of the state or the exigencies of any institution. In this regard, from its inception, the European labor movement chose to shoulder what I have called a *dual burden:*[15] the commitment to liberal republican principles, which apply universally to all, and the particular class commitment to economic justice. Given the political weakness of the bourgeoisie, in Germany and in most nations on the continent, it had little choice. Most socialist parties were initially forced to operate under monarchical regimes and it is no accident that revolutionary radicalism was always weakest where "bourgeois" democratic institutions and norms were strongest.

You say, David, that you are concerned with addressing "exploitation, oppression, alienation and ecological destruction." You mention community-based workers' organizations and speak about anti-capitalist politics. But you don't seem to draw any implications from your own admission that they have not articulated an alternative either in terms of the economy or more importantly, for our purposes, the liberal state. You say that you wish to limit the power of the market. But how do you intend to do this without legislation? I completely agree with you that mass mobilization from below, arguably even against the organizational interests of reformist parties, serves as a precondition for the introduction of radical reforms.

And I also agree that your community-based organizations may be particularly transformative for their participants. Neither in their demands nor in their style, however, have these "mass struggles" or community-based worker organizations rendered the pursuit of legislative redress irrelevant or evidenced anything "other" than an *ethical* and *reformist* commitment to change. None of them to my knowledge either connects *revolutionary* theory with *revolutionary* practice or deals with existing problems in terms that make "bourgeois" democracy seem anachronistic. Your "other" hovers in the air without a foot in reality. It exists outside the famous "unity between theory and practice" that Marxism promised to provide. If you are content with that, well, fine. But I am not.

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WITH THIS LAST POINT IN MIND, perhaps I can now turn to the criticisms of my friend, Alan Johnson. I have always admired him as a writer, as a colleague on the editorial board of *New Politics*, and as the editor of the journal *Historical Materialism*. Alan's reply to my article raises some important questions. It is also informed by passion and a profound political commitment. But that very passion and political commitment have, I think, led to some very strange conclusions about my method and some fundamentally mistaken assumptions about my politics and values.

"Ransacking the legacy?" Alan, please! I didn't arbitrarily chastise Luxemburg for this or that fault and I didn't treat her legacy as a smorgasbord. I tried to do to her precisely what Marx did to Hegel: that is to say provide an immanent critique of her understanding of economic development, political democracy, and internationalism. I engaged these *core concepts* of her work in order to develop a perspective more appropriate to the present. You may think, of course, that the commitment to immanent critique is a "banality." But, if this is really what you believe, then how would you philosophically prevent any self-styled historical method from petrifying into a frozen trans-historical system? From your piece, in fact, I still don't even know whether you wish to retain the teleological moment of Marx or not. It doesn't help to speak vaguely about the need for a "creative confrontation with the present" unless you suggest how it should be methodologically undertaken.

Raymond Williams was a fine literary critic, in my opinion, but a very weak philosopher. And that is especially the case given the way you use him to justify the search for an "authentic Marxism" or, even more abstractly, "an authentic Marxist Marx." I will come back to this. But I can tell you now that, from my perspective, thinking of this sort creates a barrier to progress. Fleetingly you praise Korsch and Lukács, which is fine, but somewhat odd, since the roots of my general approach derive from them, along with various classical socialist thinkers including Luxemburg,[16] and certain members of the Frankfurt School. What inspires me about Lukács and Korsch, however, is precisely their ruthless appli-

cation of the critical method, or what is usually termed immanent critique, and their unrelenting emphasis upon historical context.[17] There is no fixed goal, there is no institutional form, there is no particular claim, there is *nothing* that escapes criticism. Thus, Lukács threw down the gauntlet in the famous opening passage to *History and Class Consciousness:*

> Let us assume for the sake of argument that recent research had disproved once and for all every one of Marx's individual theses. Even if this were to be proved, every serious orthodox Marxist would still be able to accept all such modern findings without reservation and hence dismiss all of Marx's theses *in toto* — without having to renounce his orthodoxy for a single moment. Orthodox Marxism, therefore, does not imply the uncritical acceptance of the results of Marx's investigations. It is not the "belief" in this or that thesis, nor the exegesis of a "sacred" book. On the contrary, orthodoxy refers exclusively to *method*.[18]

Passages such as this help explain why the "revisionism" of Lukács and Korsch should have been condemned at the Fifth Congress of the Comintern in 1924. Identifying orthodoxy with the critical method, of course, winds up ultimately destroying any form of orthodoxy. There is no place in Lukács and Korsch in particular, or critical theory in general, for "legitimating theory" let alone — given their assault on reification and instrumental rationality — attempts to "balance" it with "operative" theory. The method of Lukács and Korsch inherently opposes the invocation of terms like "authentic" Marxism let alone an "authentic Marxist Marx." No less than with Luxemburg, I applied the same form of immanent criticism to them, and my other favorite thinkers, that they applied to the icons of the past and the contemporaries of their time.[19] This indeed is in the spirit of their enterprise.

Lukács, Korsch, and the partisans of critical theory recognized that innovation is impossible when *any* calculation is undertaken with regard to how different interpretations of the tradition in different historical situations correspond to some abstract notion of "authentic" — a term that, by the way, has religious origins and was made famous by Kierkegaard and later the existentialists[20] — or "pure" Marxism. It is not simply that Marxism has "to be retrieved from layers of Stalinist filth" — who speaks this way any longer? — but, *more importantly,* of confronting the fundamental miscalculations and mistakes of Marx and other classical authors. Unless, of course, *they* are considered sacrosanct. But I have never had much use for Holy Scripture. Korsch knew what he was talking about in his classic work of 1923, *Marxism and Philosophy,* when he called for the rigorous "application of the materialist conception of history to the materialist conception of history itself."[21]

But, Alan, there is more: How you get from your defense of an authentic Marxism to the heresy of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe baffles me. To suggest that my approach has anything to do with theirs, moreover,

is really quite bizarre. I haven't written anything about their *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*. Any of my graduate students will tell you,[22] however, that I am sharply critical of their naive valorization of social movements, their anti-organizational stance, their communitarian impulse, and their postmodern interpretation of Gramsci — whose ideas, including that of hegemony, also never had any significant impact on my thinking. As for "radical democracy," Alan, you should know that I am one of the very few leftists who has offered an explicit critique of "democratic theory."[23]

A particular problem with "radical democracy" lies in its romantic roots: its earliest modern exponent was Rousseau. But there is also a romantic streak running through Marxism, which concerns me as much as any "economic necessitarianism," I use it as a point of departure in dealing with Luxemburg. Alan seems to believe that his quotation from Norman Geras undermines my claims concerning her "revolutionary romanticism." I believe it justifies my contention. The quote gives no hint about the importance of identifying the structural constraints in which revolutionary action takes place. There is no trace of organizational analysis in any meaningful sense of the term. Nothing is said about what institutional arrangements should be implemented when "the masses" become exhausted and leave the battlefield. Potential conflicts of interest between those classes comprising "the masses" are ignored. Then, too, there is no sense of what proved to be the disastrous costs of introducing the mass strike into the very different context of Germany or, putting it another way, just *how* one should "pose the question of power there in a serious way."

Luxemburg got clobbered on the question of the mass strike and, in her stubborn insistence upon turning it into an "offensive" weapon, she helped split the German left, diminish her own influence within the party, and pave the way not for Eduard Bernstein, but for the triumph of those genuinely right wing nationalist, imperialist, careerist bureaucrats like Friedrich Ebert, who would lead the SPD into its "great betrayal." The quotation from Geras provides nothing more than a defense of revolutionary will and voluntarism. It is as pure an example of political romanticism as one might find. If Luxemburg unified a theory of the bourgeois state, the character of proletarian democracy, and a viable socialist strategy — which I doubt she ever did successfully — historical reality sundered the connection between them long before I picked up a pen.

As for the discussion about teleology, well, perhaps we disagree about the meaning of the word. It need not imply the victory of socialism, although I believe it did for Luxemburg, but *any result* inscribed within a developmental process. The ultimate breakdown of capitalism is a case in point. Now, with regard to that breakdown, let's cut to the chase: does the development of capitalism generate its "grave-diggers" or not? If not, then socialism becomes a contingent enterprise or, putting it in the terms of the time, a purely "ethical" demand or project. Putting forward the abstract choice between socialism and barbarism, Alan, does not clinch your case. Quite the opposite. Every

Marxist of the time knew socialism would *ultimately* prove victorious,[24] which enabled the *choice* to fit neatly into the teleological framework.

Luxemburg was not alone in pointing to the alternative between socialism or barbarism. It was raised every time a major crisis occurred and essentially ignored with respect to the final outcome of history. None of these crises presaged the end of capitalism. By viewing the choice in this way, however, orthodox Marxists could demand vigilance and commitment and yet retain the certainties of teleology. But there is a larger question. Is framing the choice in this way relevant any longer? History has shown that there are other alternatives between "socialism" and "barbarism" in any given moment of crisis. If "the collapse of capitalism is guaranteed, the victory of socialism is not," moreover, the struggle for socialism again becomes contingent in character and "ethical" in form since its future success lacks any objective foundation. I don't think Luxemburg would have liked your interpretation.

Also moving from the claim, which Luxemburg indisputably made, that state terror retains its own dynamic to the claim that — therefore — I believe in the existence of a "simple continuity between Lenin and Stalin and between the revolution and the counter-revolution" not only evinces false causality, but attributes to me a position that I don't hold. There was no reason for me to develop an argument on communism in my talk, since it was about Luxemburg, but the fact is that I wrote a very long chapter dealing with the connection between Lenin and his successors that completely contradicts Alan's assertion. Check it out. [25] I have always been anti-Leninist in orientation but, in good dialectical fashion, I have also always maintained that the connections between Lenin and Stalin are marked by continuity and discontinuity on a number of issues. While all Leninist states have been authoritarian and repressive, I argue, Leninism does not *inevitably* lead to totalitarianism. But your cheerleading is woefully out of place. Leninism is as dead as a doornail everywhere other than among the sects that are reminiscent of antagonistic amoeba fighting each other to death in a drop of water. The "theoretical conquests" of the anti-Leninist and anti-Stalinist tradition were made less by ultra-left Bolsheviks than by the partisans of social democracy and critical theory.

With respect to nationalism, again, your critique is misdirected. I wrote in *Socialism Unbound* that Lenin was never a simple nationalist or a proponent of ethnic identity, and that his idea of national self-determination was tied to an internationalist vision. But, whatever one may think of it, his theory *assumed* the existence of a communist party and an international organization that would serve as a corrective, or a break, on nationalist enthusiasms and channel them into socialist internationalism. To believe that nationalism will somehow turn into internationalism *without* such an organization is a perfect example of the pseudo-dialectical two-step.

Ideology, Max Weber noted in "Politics as a Vocation," is not like a

taxi-ride that can be halted at any corner. Uncritically supporting national self-determination without insisting upon liberal republican commitments has only resulted in more extreme expressions of both nationalism and authoritarianism. That is why I think that, while Luxemburg was perhaps politically less acute on the subject in her own time, she was ultimately much more prophetic than Lenin on the subject of nationalism. She understood that nationalism had its integrity, a logic and a dynamic of its own, and that it could not simply be manipulated by organizational whims. You want me to take Lenin at his word on the revolution. Why should I? Whenever a communist party has identified socialism with industrialization, *which is all that it can do when the revolution takes place in an economically underdeveloped nation,* the result (in practice if not in theory) has been either authoritarianism like in Cuba or totalitarianism like in China. Should I have *faith* that it can be otherwise? You certainly don't justify your belief by providing much history beyond 1917-23. And that's a long time ago.

Don't take this the wrong way: I appreciate your kind words about Luxemburg and the Constituent Assembly. They serve as a useful corrective to David's view of my position. But I'm afraid that you don't draw the appropriate conclusions. Criticisms of communist "mistakes" undertaken in the name of soviets, which never ruled the Soviet Union in the first place or had a realistic possibility of doing so, may produce interesting information, but in theoretical terms it is yet another indulgence in revolutionary romanticism. How about instead looking at the institutions introduced by Lenin, the mechanistic transformation of his theory of revolution into a theory of rule, his inability to imagine the constraints imposed by economic underdevelopment, his substitution of not simply the party for the class, but his identification of the party with the state, and his willingness to unleash a dynamic of terror that began with other parties, extended to other institutions like trade unions, impacted upon anarchists and socialists of good will, and ultimately wound up destroying every critical "faction" within the party itself.

You write that the "institutional shape of the socialist polity is a radically underdeveloped area of Marxist theory." No kidding! But then why not start dealing seriously with the problem by looking back to the vagaries of Marx and the sophistries of Lenin? The separation of powers endorsed by Kautsky whose commitment to republican principles was unflinching,[26] by the way, is not exactly what you might call an intellectual breakthrough. It was already a mainstay of liberal republicanism and there is nothing in Kautsky to suggest that councils, which seek to overcome alienation by unifying the disparate functions of competing bureaucratic institutions, can better institutionally serve either the cause of economic justice or the defense of civil liberties than a republic.

You ask how I can dismiss the "soviets" when soviet rule has nowhere been tried. My answer is simple: because that's exactly what the Chris-

tians still say about Christianity. Its best and most radical offshoots, now lost in the mists of history, actually had more staying power than the councils. I have already suggested, incidentally, *not* that the liberal republic is the realization of Luxemburg's vision, but that at the end of her life she was torn between the republic and the councils. You don't mention any new ideas for resolving the tensions between them? I think I know why. Hardly a single serious theoretical development regarding the council has occurred since the 1920s. Indeed, with this in mind, the belief that *I* am closing down the debate over republics and councils is ludicrous.

My work endorses experiments with "secondary" or "associative" organizations that might provide a more direct form of democracy and I have even suggested that the council can be integrated into the liberal republican state.[27] But this is different than maintaining that the council can supplant the modern republican state. Embracing such a stance requires turning your back on political reality. That soviets have appeared for a few days or months whenever the masses have been in a revolutionary mood, does not exactly inspire me with confidence. It's also time to squelch that myth propagated by Hannah Arendt about "soviets" arising in *every* revolution — unless you identify revolution only with those you like. There were no soviets in India, or in Algeria, or in Cuba, or in the majority of other revolutions that shook the non-western world.

Without even a thought for any of this, however, you claim that the "liberal republican state exists nowhere." But, if I recall correctly, the last great revolutions — of 1989 —were undertaken not in the name of some fuzzy notion of democracy. They were instead undertaken in the name of liberal constitutional rule. I could, of course, be mistaken. In any event, let me ask you: Is there *anywhere* any mass based political organization that is seriously talking about a revolution or the move from a liberal republic to a "democratic" republic? Where on the planet, right now, is the question of councils or *socialist* revolution on the agenda? Tell me, as someone who believes in a Marxist "science," why I should trust your speculations on the subject without looking at reality? Should I — yet again — have *faith* that it can be otherwise?

Alan, from what I can see, your entire argument relies on *faith* — in councils, in revolution, in national self-determination, in socialism — that you dress up as "science." In doing so, however, you misconstrue the purpose behind establishing Marxism as a science in the first place. Of course, it was "positivistic"! The idea was to provide the claims and predictions of Marx with an objectivity akin to the "natural sciences," which are always to some degree "positivistic," and thereby differentiate his new materialism from all forms of metaphysics. Sidney Hook — who attended Korsch's lectures and used them for *Towards an Understanding of Karl Marx* [28] — employs a rearguard action in his use of "science." He understands Marxian science in Hegelian terms: as a "science of consciousness."[29]

But such a stance undermines the very attack on metaphysics that "sci-

ence" was supposed to provide since the times of Bacon and Kant. Unless a distinction is drawn between social theory and the natural sciences, which was the intent of Western Marxism and critical theory from the beginning, the door opens for some new version of the "dialectics of wheat." Once the basic questions of methodology involving evidence and falsifiability arise, moreover, partisans of the "new science" usually have little to say. This is not the place for yet another discussion of how the attempt to create a "new science" degenerates into cosmology.[30] There is perhaps a way in which the Hegelian understanding of science might influence a "theory of liberation." Nevertheless, this is not as easy as you make it sound.

If the use of "liberation" is not to result in yet another "banality" then it must be infused with a bit more imagination than is exhibited here. A "theory of liberation" requires more than the incorporation of "economic necessity" with "revolutionary will." Leaving aside the dualism, which incidentally can only be overcome if you privilege one or the other,[31] such a theory must insist upon transforming each objective moment of the "totality" and the subjective *experience* of that totality as well. This will necessarily involve introducing psychology to analyze the dynamics of the family, theories of symbolic interaction to understand everyday life, existentialism to provide categories for explaining the experience of reality, and an articulated utopia — that goes far beyond platitudes about "participation" and the vision of an endless political meeting — in order to inform the project. But that is only the beginning. What will happen to your "authentic" Marxism — and your "authentic Marxist Marx" — when your theory finds itself being forced to integrate insights from Freud, Husserl, Heidegger, and a host of thinkers with very non-Marxist methodologies, but who have actually dealt with problems that can, at best, only be teased from the work of the master?

I believe we must become a bit more modest with regard to both Marxism and socialism. My critique of the old theory is really quite simple: I believe that the political moment must take priority over the economic moment of analysis, that the contingency of outcomes must be emphasized over any kind of "scientific" assurances, that the ethical commitment to socialism must supplant any teleological understanding of its development. This philosophical position is, I think, warranted by historical reality. How it stands in accordance with orthodoxy, or whatever Alan understands by "authentic" Marxism, is irrelevant to me. By the same token: remembering the *real* achievements of the labor movement, the fight for time, and for the dignity of working people, gives *socialist* theory a hook in reality. It places modern socialists in an anti-totalitarian tradition of *radical* reformism. It forces young people both to recognize structural constraints and the kind of struggle that was required to introduce what is so often derided as mere "legislation." It creates the possibility for reconnecting theory with practice. And — most important — it raises a meaningful hope for socialist politics.

"Socialism has never seemed more like the *other* to me" sounds, by contrast, like a ringing endorsement of resignation and bitterness inspired by the failure of history and the labor movement to fulfill an inherently unrealizable desire. It seems, Alan, that the world has not measured up to your expectations. I understand your despair. Franz Biberkopf felt the same way in the great novel, *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, by Alfred Doblin. This character found himself condemned to hell and, upon finally meeting the Devil, he asked why he was there. The Devil had a great answer: "Because you believed that reality was created for you."

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MUCH IN THIS DEBATE HAS TAKEN US FAR AFIELD from the basic points of what was originally a short speech with modest intentions. My concern was with suggesting that the institutional analysis associated with Marxism is woefully inadequate and that it is now less a question of whether to privilege reform or revolution than whether to privilege the commitment to social democratic reform or the neo-liberal retreat from it. I sought to reinvigorate internationalism, rather than consider it as some sort of vague slogan or abstraction, by making reference to the only real international organizations that exist. In the same vein, I wished to provide a practical referent for socialism rather than leave it hanging as an "other" without concrete articulation or an agent to realize it. This does not mean that I have abandoned socialism, only that I understand it in different terms. I don't identify socialism with any particular institutional form, including councils, and I view its purpose today less as the pursuit of some utopian "other" than as the ongoing creation of economic and political conditions in which working people can expand the range of their knowledge, their experiences, and their private as well as their public pursuits. My position is in accord with the intention of "The Right To Be Lazy" by Marx's son-in-law, Paul Lafargue, and the suggestion by my former teacher Henry Pachter,[32] who was himself a student of Korsch, that socialism should be understood as "the highest stage of individualism — its realization for all."

There is no "final goal," in my opinion, only the asymptotic attempt to further freedom. And socialism has a role in that. But this requires a *concrete* understanding of its contribution. Over the last twenty years I learned we need a notion of socialism that is associated with what has been *concretely* achieved in the fight against capitalism and that retains a *concrete* sense of its original democratic impulse. This *concrete* sense, I believe, comes from identifying socialism with mitigating the whip of the market, embracing those movements and programs that helped foster that goal, and furthering democracy according to the most radical tenets of liberal republicanism. There is nothing in my thinking to suggest that unqualified support should be given to the United Nations or any other institution, only that the new transnational organizations will provide the arenas in

which future struggles will be fought. That tensions — even unresolvable tensions — exist between the liberal republican state and the imperatives of global capitalism does not constitute a serious criticism. Tensions will always arise between global and domestic imperatives regarding both economics and politics. There is no reason to believe that the introduction of workers' councils will resolve them. Isn't it time to stop looking at the future through a cracked lens inherited from the past?

Alan and David both labor under the same misapprehension. My point was not to interpret Luxemburg, as David put it trenchantly, by transforming her legacy into the thought of Eduard Bernstein. I hate to break it to you both, but my philosophical stance is not his.[33] Just as there is more than one theory of revolution, there is more than one theory of reform. My view highlights the *class ideal* as a basic organizing tool of *socialist* politics: classical revisionism seeks the liquidation of class identity in the name of a national party (*Volkspartei)* and trumpets the need for a "partnership" with other classes. My view underscores internationalism in theory and practice: classical revisionism basically presupposes a national form of political action. My view privileges the primacy of the political in fostering economic change: classical revisionism suggests that only with a "small minority" is it possible to consider non-economic demands. My view calls for intensifying a "creative friction" between the organization and its clientele; classical revisionism is technocratic in its orientation. My view accepts the need for revolution, *though as a tactic rather than the strategic goal,* when working people are incapable of having their most basic grievances addressed or their democratic rights recognized: classical revisionism does not. My view emphasizes the dangers of an "ideology of compromise": classical revisionism generates a position in which compromise is an end unto itself. My view worries over the degeneration of the reformist impulse: classical revisionism retained an unwavering belief in "evolutionary socialism." In all these ways, I consider myself informed less by the spirit of Eduard Bernstein than by the spirit of Rosa Luxemburg.

The lesson of historical materialism is that it must be used in a historical way with respect to both means and ends: it must deal with the situation as it exists. I never said that the working class was shrinking worldwide or that poverty was being eradicated in global terms; I have even said it's quite possible that many of Marx's economic predictions may turn out to be true. But I maintain that there is no longer any necessary translation of this economic development into *political power* and that, in turn, the power of capital still rests on the degree of *organizational* and *ideological* disunity among workers. If the two of you think that defrosting an institutional vision from the last century is the way to build this organizational and ideological unity, or that we can begin with the old assumption that "workers have nothing to lose but their chains" . . . well . . . good luck.

Keep defining "socialism" as you want without reference to the broader history of the labor movement. Keep maintaining that there is *no* connection between Leninism and Stalinism. Keep your anachronistic notions of national self-determination and workers' councils. Keep your irrelevant view of "science." Keep your insular beliefs. But then, when you glance at the world, perhaps you will consider everything as simply "false consciousness?" Was everyone an idiot except your "tiny minority," who still knows everything better, but to whom no one ever listens? Perhaps you will begin to think about why?

A great work of literature could provide a clue. I enjoyed how Alan used Charles Dickens to satirize me and now, in closing, perhaps I can be permitted to offer something equally satirical of you both from *A Tale of Two Cities*. I trust each of you know the passage and I also trust that each of you will get the point.

> The leprosy of unreality disfigured every human creature in attendance upon Monseigneur. In the outermost room were half a dozen exceptional people who had had, for a few years, some vague misgiving in them that things in general were going rather wrong. As a promising way of setting them right, half of the half-dozen had become members of a fantastic sect of Convulsionists, and were even then considering within themselves whether they should foam, rage, roar, and turn cataleptic on the spot — thereby setting up a highly intelligible finger-post to the Future, for Monseigneur's guidance. Besides these Dervishes, were other three who had rushed into another sect, which mended matters with a jargon about "the Centre of Truth": holding that Man had got out of the Centre of Truth — which did not need much demonstration — but had not got out of the Circumference and that he was to be kept from flying out of the Circumference, and was even to be shoved back into the Centre, by fasting and seeing of spirits. Among these, accordingly, much discoursing with spirits went on — and it did a world of good which never became manifest.[34]

NOTES

1. Marx fused three different moments in his conception of class: the empirical (which meant the industrial proletariat), the structural (those who sell their labor power), and the normative or political (class consciousness). I believe these three moments have fallen asunder and that it is the normative, or ethical element, that needs to be pushed into the foreground. For a more encompassing analysis, see: Stephen Eric Bronner *Socialism Unbound* 2nd Edition (Westview Press: Boulder, Colorado, 2001), pgs. 11ff.

2. Carl E. Schorske, *German Social Democracy, 1905-1917* (Harper & Row: New York, 1955), pg. 7.

3. The decision of social democracy to support the war must be understood, not excused, but understood in terms of what are today a set of forgotten constraints. Note the chapter titled, "In the Cradle of Modernity: The Labor Movement and the First World War" in Stephen Eric Bronner, *Moments of Decision: Political History and the Crises of Radicalism* (Routledge: New York, 1992), pgs. 13ff.

4. "The legend of Weimar's intelligentsia has grown like ivy over the fallen pillars of the Weimar state. But that state —which today is still the object of historiographical opprobrium — may one day share the fate of its world-renowned citizens; posterity may revise the judgment of those contemporaries who attribute all the glory of Weimar to its adversaries and all the infamy to the Republic." Henry Pachter, "The Intellectuals and the State of Weimar" in *Weimar Etudes* (Columbia University Press: New York, 1982), pg. 109.

5. The old stalwarts of German social democracy were not in control of the party

when its members chose to support their nation in the first world war and they were not even in the party when Friedrich Ebert and Gustav Noske (also known as the bloodhound), conspired with reactionary forces in the suppression of the Spartacus Revolt. Bernstein, Eisner, Haase, Kautsky, and most of their comrades had broken off in 1917 to form the Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany (USPD) over opposition to the war and the role of councils. The SPD and the USPD only reunited in 1922 when the councilist movement had clearly been defeated. See the classic study by David W. Morgan, *The Socialist Left and the German Revolution: A History of the Independent Social Democratic Party, 1917-22* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 1975).

6. See the chapter, "Working Class Politics and the Nazi Triumph" in Bronner, *Moments of Decision*, pgs. 33ff.

7. Note the illuminating studies by Gerd-Rainer Horn, *European Socialists Respond to Fascism: Ideology, Activism and Contingency in the 1930s* (Oxford University Press: New York, 1996) and William David Jones, *The Lost Debate: German Socialist Intellectuals and Totalitarianism* (University of Illinois Press: Urbana, 1999).

8. It was precisely this kind of resigned and cynical lack of conviction in republican institutions so prominent among the "liberal" intelligentsia of Weimar Germany, popularly known as *Vernunftrepublikaner*, which reinforced the "unpolitical" values of the German bourgeoisie and helped undermine loyalty to the regime and its republican principles. On the background see: Fritz Stern, "The Political Consequences of the Unpolitical German" in *The Failure of Illiberalism: Essays on the Political Culture of Modern Germany* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1971), pgs. 3-25.

9. Ironically, with reference to the anti-socialist claims of David Camfield, the principle supporters of the council movement was the USPD whose members included the original mainstays of the social democratic movement. See the excellent analysis of the council movement by Henry Pachter, "Was Weimar Necessary? The Räete Movement, 1918-21, and the Theory of Revolution" in *Weimar Etudes*, pgs. 285ff.

10. Sebastian Haffner, *Failure of a Revolution: Germany 1918-1919* trans. George Rapp (Banner Press: Chicago, 1986), pgs. 51ff and 106ff.

11. Arthur Rosenberg, *Geschichte der Weimarer Republik* (Europäiesche Verlagsanstalt: Frankfurt, 1961), pgs. 5ff.

12. Karl Marx, "The Class Struggles in France, 1848-1850" in *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Selected Works* 3 vols. (International Publishers: Moscow, 1969) 1:186ff.

13. Bronner, *Socialism Unbound*, pg. 139ff.

14. Rosa Luxemburg, "The Russian Revolution" in *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks* ed. Mary-Alice Waters (Pathfinder: New York, 1970), pg. 391.

15. Bronner, *Socialism Unbound*, pg.2ff.

16. Forgotten is my original claim, to which I still subscribe, that Luxemburg provided the basic impulse for Western Marxism, from which critical theory emerged. Stephen Eric Bronner, *Rosa Luxemburg: A Revolutionary for Our Times* (Pluto Press: London, 1981), pgs. 96ff.

17. With respect to the revisionism debate, for example, they were clear about the ways in which the defenders of orthodoxy — including Luxemburg — missed what was really at stake. Thus, Korsch could write: "Rosa Luxemburg did not direct her critical counterattack against the Social Democratic practice, but against Bernstein's theory, which was nothing more than a truthful expression of the actual character of that practice." Douglas Kellner was accurate in claiming Korsch understood this misdirected approach as contributing to the "crisis of Marxism." See Karl Korsch, *Revolutionary Theory* ed. Douglas Kellner (University of Texas Press: Austin, 1977), pgs. 179-80 and passim; in a similar vein, see, Georg Lukács, "Bernstein's Triumph: Notes on the Essays Written in Honour of Karl Kautsky's Seventieth Birthday" in *Political Writings, 1919-29* ed. Rodney Livingstone and trans. Michael McColgan (New Left Books: London, 1972), pgs. 127ff.

18. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics* trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1972), pg. 1.

19. Stephen Eric Bronner, *Of Critical Theory and Its Theorists* (Blackwell: Oxford, 1994), pgs. 12-62 and passim. Perhaps I can note here that a second edition of this work is forthcoming with Routledge.

20. The concern with authenticity is implicitly developed by St. Augustine while the term itself derives from Angelus Silesius, who wished to know whether any given "revelation" from God could be trusted. Sound familiar? I happen to know this piece of trivia because my dissertation dealt with precisely this concept. Stephen Eric Bronner, "Authenticity and Potentiality: A Marxian Inquiry into the Role of the Subject" (PhD Dissertation: University of California: Berkeley, 1975).

21. Karl Korsch, *Marxism and Philosophy* trans. Fred Halliday (New Left Books: London, 1970), pg. 92.

22. My emphasis upon a class ideal, which is articulated in most of my books, can be seen as a response to Laclau and Mouffe. The concept clearly influenced the fine work by my former doctoral student, Christine A. Kelly, *Tangled Up in Red, White and Blue: New Social Movements in America* (Rowman & Littlefield: Lanham, 2001).

23. See the chapter entitled "The Dilemmas of Democratic Theory" in Stephen Eric Bronner, *Ideas in Action: Political Tradition in the Twentieth Century* (Rowman & Littlefield: Lanham, MD: 1999), pgs. 17-25 and passim.

24. The classic work on this question has, unfortunately, still not been translated into English. See Max Adler, "Kausalitäet und Teleologie im Streit um die Wissenschaft" in *Marx-Studien vol. 1* (Vienna, 1904).

25. Note the chapter, "Leninism and Beyond" in Bronner, *Socialism Unbound*, pgs. 77-121.

26. See the chapter titled "Karl Kautsky: The Rise and Fall of Orthodox Marxism" in ibid., pgs. 33-53.

27. Note the section titled, "The Battle for Democracy," in Bronner, *Ideas in Action*, pg. 306ff.

28. Sidney Hook "did not know enough German to understand everything. He sat next to me in a private course which Korsch gave in 1930. I believe on his return to the United States, Hook published a reasonable account of Korsch's views on Marxism." The book in question is *Towards an Understanding of Karl Marx*. See the chapter titled "Autobiographical Fragments" in Pachter, *Weimar Etudes*, pg. 39.

29. The inspiration derived from Lukács and Korsch who directly criticized the attempt to extend the dialectical method to nature. The former approvingly noted the comment of Vico that the difference between history and nature results from the fact that human beings have made the one, but not the other. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, pgs. 112, and 24; also see the pamphlet by Karl Korsch, *Kernpunkte der materialischen Geschichtsauffassung: Eine quellenmaessige Darstellung* (Hamburg, 1973 ed.).

30. Note my debate with Loren Goldner, "The Enlightenment: An Exchange" in *New Politics* Vol. VI, No. 1 (Summer, 1996), pgs. 137ff.

31. Lukas attempted to deal with the problem when, in the chapter titled "The Changing Function of Historical Materialism," he wrote: "For the proletariat fought capitalism by forcing bourgeois society into a self-knowledge which would inevitably make that society appear problematic to itself. *Parallel with the economic struggle a battle is fought for the consciousness of society. Now, to become conscious is synonymous with the possibility of taking over the leadership of society*." Georg Lukács, *History and Class Struggle: Studies in Marxist Dialectics* trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1972), pg. 228.

32. See the wonderful essay, "The Right To Be Lazy" in *Socialism in History: Political Essays of Henry Pachter*, ed. Stephen Eric Bronner (Columbia University Press: New York, 1984), pgs. 3ff.

33. Note the chapter, "Eduard Bernstein and the Logic of Revisionism" in Bronner, *Socialism Unbound*, pgs. 55ff.

34. Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities* (Grosset & Dunlap: New York, 1948), pg. 133.

America Becoming — What Exactly?

Social Policy Research as the Fruit of Bill Clinton's Race Initiative

Adolph Reed, Jr.

REMEMBER THE PRESIDENT'S RACE INITIATIVE? Bill Clinton waxed on in 1997 about its importance for how he wanted his administration to be remembered.[1] The initiative featured a series of publicly staged "conversations" around the country — a classically Clintonesque combo of psychobabble talk-show and televangelical faith-healing, dressed up as serious reflection on public issues. Because this serial spectacle was hyped as originating from the White House, it seemed to imply far-reaching, if unexpressed, consequences for policy even though the "conversations" themselves reduced to the standard talk-show fare of pain, sensitivity, victimization, difference, healing and understanding. This sense was fueled by the President's gravitas in discussing his Initiative, which extended to his appointing a high-profile advisory board to shape and orchestrate it all.

There were rumors of disaffection among prominent advisory board members who had been seduced by Bipartisan Bill's cooing and cajolery, only to find their recommendations tightly constrained by the President's watchdog staffers overseeing the Initiative. The rule of thumb seemed to be to preempt any proposal that would cost anything or otherwise offend conservatives.

Then there were the moments when the public conversations veered to approximate the Jerry Springer show. Right-wing, professional anti-affirmative action shills like Ward Connerly and Abigail Thernstrom, showed up to let loose their predictable bombasts.

After all this hoopla dissipated what remained was a well-known formula. The Race Initiative staff commissioned the National Research Council of the National Academies to produce a study to — in the words of Christopher Edley, Jr., the President's special advisor to the Initiative (that is, its commissar) — "provide the nation with an authoritative assessment of where we are."

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WELL, THE STUDY WAS RELEASED AND ANNOUNCED at a symposium in New York in March, 2001. *America Becoming: Racial Trends and Their Consequences* is published by the National Academies Press and edited by prominent sociologists Neil Smelser and William Julius Wilson and Faith Mitchell, Director of the Division on Social and Economic Studies of the National Academies' Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. *America Becoming* contains nearly nine hundred pages in two volumes and features twenty-nine articles by a plethora of respected scholars on such topics as immigration, racial attitudes, and trends in education, neighborhood and geographic characteristics, criminal justice, health, labor force, income, wealth and welfare.

Putting to one side for the moment its merits and specific provenance, *America Becoming* is the latest installation of a familiar genre — the "scientific" (read ostensibly apolitical) study of American race relations commissioned by government or major philanthropic organizations. The most famous, comprehensive and consequential of these was *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, commissioned by the Swedish sociologist and economist Gunnar Myrdal in 1937 by the Carnegie Corporation and published in 1944.[2] Though it has become known as the Myrdal study, *An American Dilemma* was the product of contributions by a phalanx of scholars who submitted lengthy, topical memoranda which Myrdal and his assistants then massaged into a coherent, fourteen hundred page document.

In 1985 the National Research Council and its Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education commissioned a Committee on the Status of Black Americans to conduct a research project that would update the Myrdal study. The result was *A Common Destiny: Blacks and American Society*, edited by economist Gerald D. Jaynes and sociologist Robin M. Williams, Jr. and published by the National Academy Press in 1989. *A Common Destiny*, often described as "Myrdal II," was produced in a fashion somewhat similar to its predecessor. The raw material for the more than five hundred fifty page volume was generated by panels of scholars who produced research papers on education, employment, income and occupations, health and demography, political participation and justice administration, and social and cultural change and continuity. The editors and their staff constructed the volume from those research reports.

If *A Common Destiny* was Myrdal II, then *America Becoming* might be seen as Myrdal III, though its editors make no such claim. The new volume differs significantly from both the original and the update. It does not attempt to present a singular, coherent statement, and it reaches beyond the black/white dichotomy, presenting studies on conditions among American Indians (the study's conventional term of reference), Hispanics (likewise the reference of choice) and Asian and Pacific Islanders. Nevertheless, this lone substantive result of the ballyhooed Clinton Race Initiative shares more fundamental features with a long lineage of race

relations studies. Among these features is a naïve, often evasive pursuit of a notion of scientific objectivity that eschews political discussion of the sources of inequality.

Concern with the appearance of absolute impartiality had much to do with Myrdal's selection to direct the landmark study. The Carnegie Corporation explicitly sought a non-American — preferably a Swiss or Scandinavian — scholar to head the effort, on the partly strategic, partly academic premise that a foreign scholar would be free of obvious value commitments on the issue.[3]

In fact, the original Myrdal study wasn't even the first to be organized around that premise. In 1933 the Julius Rosenwald Fund commissioned Bertram F. O. Schrieke, a Dutch East Indies colonial official and anthropologist, to study black American life and education. The sponsors treated as a plus the fact that he, as he notes in the book's introduction, "had never visited the United States nor met an American Negro." Three years later he published *Alien Americans: A Study of Race Relations*,[4] which went beyond the original charge to include chapters on other populations of non-European origin in the U.S.

Not all these studies have gone to such obsessive lengths to project impartiality. A National Interracial Conference of sixteen philanthropic organizations, in concert with the Social Science Research Council, commissioned black sociologist Charles S. Johnson to conduct what was published in 1930 as *The Negro in American Civilization: A Study of Negro Life and Race Relations in the Light of Social Research*.[5]

In the 1960s, reflecting both the victory of the liberal approach to race relations propagated by *An American Dilemma* and the urgency of the moment, the strictures on maintaining appearances of rigid neutrality loosened dramatically, even in studies initiated and funded by the federal government. The most important expression of the genre during that period, the *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (commonly known as the *Kerner Commission Report*, after the Commission's chairman, then Illinois Governor Otto Kerner), in 1968 unhesitatingly identified "white racism" and persistent racial inequality and injustice as the ultimate causes of the previous several years' wave of civil disturbances in inner-cities.[6]

THUS IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT to get too excited about *America Becoming* even under the most exigent circumstances and if it laid out the boldest analysis or prescriptions. It is one of a long line of such projects, the vast majority of which have come and gone without leaving a trace.

The other studies and reports were sparked by perceptions of social turmoil and upheaval — race riots in Chicago in 1919 and New York in 1934, the tremendous shift in racial demography wrought by the Great Migration of black people from the South to the urban North in the first half of the twentieth century, the country's uncertain future in a post-

World War II world, intensified postwar civil rights activism and, finally, the urban uprisings of the 1960s. The Myrdal and Kerner Commission studies crystallized ways of framing American race relations and racial inequality that resonated widely in the society, particularly among opinion-leading elites.

Myrdal interpreted racial inequality as a deviation from the basic American Creed committed to ideals of democracy, liberty and fairness. In doing so, he provided a way to acknowledge the injustice of racial stratification while avoiding a more radical judgment of the sources of racial inequality. Defining the problem in that way also allowed Myrdal to propose remedies that mainly concerned changing whites' racial attitudes, even though *An American Dilemma* extensively documented white racism's foundations in structural economic and political relations[7].

Similarly, the Kerner Commission report explicitly identified white racism as the linchpin of American racial problems and black inequality, from colonial times forward. Like the Myrdal study, this diagnosis provided, on the one hand, a detailed account of the ways that racial inequality has been maintained and reproduced through social, political and economic structures and, on the other, a frame for discussing the problem that treats it as separable from the fundamental character of the American social order. Defining "white racism" as the source of racial inequality seemed like a bold move at the time, particularly as an explanation of the eruptions of serious civil disorder that had become a pattern in inner cities during the mid- and late 1960s. But doing so once again fingered an attitude as the culprit and preserved a sense that remedying inequality required only finding ways to overcome blacks' exclusion from an otherwise just and well-functioning society.

UNLIKE *AN AMERICAN DILEMMA* AND THE KERNER COMMISSION REPORT, *America Becoming* proposes no overarching diagnosis, no potentially crystallizing metaphor, no proposals for national action — no conclusions whatsoever. Despite the limitations of the earlier studies' diagnoses, they at least linked inequality clearly to injustice. The Kerner Commission document even concluded with seventy pages of recommendations for redress focusing on employment, education, housing and social welfare — all proceeding from an understanding that the bedrock in each area must be substantially increased public spending.[8]

The Race Initiative study's editors discuss inequality mainly in a morally and politically desiccated language of "unequal outcomes," which begs the question: Outcomes of what? They sedulously steer clear of sharp causal statements or overt judgments. Their introductory essay is dominated by narrow, technicistic discussion of problems associated with research methodology; it is shaped by problems of taxonomy — how to define groups — and issues complicating generalization from aggregate data.[9]

This "just the facts, ma'am" approach reflects a sophomoric, or cow-

ardly, notion of social science and its potential for contributing to the struggle against inequality. It was precisely because they were yoked to overarching, morally inflected diagnoses that the Myrdal and Kerner Commission studies had impact. Myrdal's vision reflected a faith in scientific "social engineering" that now seems to expect too much from professional expertise, but he recognized that to be effective in addressing social problems social science must be politically engaged. The evolution of a social policy research industry that accommodates and feeds into the neoliberal political consolidation of the last two decades has been driven by denial of that reality. *America Becoming* marks an ironic and unappealing comedown from Myrdal's certitude that the "American social scientist, because of the New Deal and the War, is already acquiring familiarity with planning and social action. He will never again be given the opportunity to build up so 'disinterested' a social science."[10]

In the absence of mooring to a clear political or policy perspective, the findings of the various studies that comprise *America Becoming* fall flat. Without some practical impetus no one but other academics will read or discuss them, and for that specialized audience there is little that is strikingly new or surprising in the data assembled. This is not to make light of this research; other social scientists who work in these areas will find much in these chapters helpful. However, most lie in the realm of learning more and more about less and less. From a larger perspective they mainly fill in details of a picture whose outlines are already well known: that nonwhites, including many immigrants, in the United States generally occupy disadvantaged and racially segregated positions in relation to whites in employment, income, occupational distribution, health, education and housing; that they are more likely to be victimized by the criminal justice system and in need of public assistance; and that racial prejudice still exists and has consequences.

Most of all, this apolitical approach to policy research is bogus. Assumptions about how the social world is fundamentally structured, what features of life are most crucially determinant, what patterns of social relations and institutional arrangements are appropriate or thinkable domains for intervention, shape all policy research. And these assumptions are profoundly ideological and political; they derive from and reflect notions of social arrangements that are "natural" and beyond the scope of social action, what power relations are proper or acceptable, what interests are normative and what constituencies are to be addressed. These assumptions and predispositions determine the formulation of questions that guide inquiry, what counts as evidence and how it is interpreted.

Astonishingly, discussion of politics and political choices is almost entirely missing from the Race Initiative study. Only the three chapters on trends among Asians, Hispanics and American Indians even discuss political participation as an issue.[11] Only the three chapters on criminal justice focus on the links between politics, policy and inegalitarian social

outcomes.[12] This is a striking departure from nearly all prior such studies, which discussed politics, the impact of public policies and the exercise of citizenship rights at some length.

The editors apologize for this all too revealing omission by noting that the author commissioned to write a paper — recall that the book has twenty-eight substantive chapters — on race and politics had to withdraw from the conference.[13] That simply doesn't wash. Political and ideological assumptions saturate the study; they shape the questions researchers ask and the kinds of evidence they look for. For instance, the chapters on Labor Force, Income, Wealth and Welfare Trends completely avoid examining the significance of federal trade policies, regressive tax reforms, a thirty-year corporate attack on unions and social wage policies and retreat from civil rights enforcement on patterns of inequality.[14] The chapters on health don't inquire as to the role of the corporate takeover of health care provision and of public policies in intensifying the health hazards of life in impoverished areas through lax environmental regulation, atrophy of public services.[15] Neither those nor any other chapters investigate federal and local governments' role in intensifying homelessness and the crisis of affordable housing by supporting redevelopment schemes that displace poor people and reduce the stock of affordable units. The education chapter asks about the effects of hip-hop and a supposed ghetto culture on educational performance — but not unequal school funding, too large classrooms and inadequate service support.[16] And, of course, concern with tracking out-of-wedlock births and teen childbearing looms far larger than any of those policy-related issues.[17]

The problem lies ultimately with the editors, who determined what mix of topics should be covered in the volume and who should contribute to it. It's not really surprising that the Race Initiative's study is biased in this way. One of the three editors, Wilson, has built his academic career on this kind of superficially apolitical research while at the same time acting as a policy advisor for Democratic politicians. In fact, the HOPE VI program, the main vehicle that Clinton's Department of Housing and Urban Development used to displace poor people from inner-city locations attractive to developers, has drawn its perverse legitimation as an antipoverty strategy largely from Wilson's theory that having too many poor people living around one another drags them into social pathology. The Chicago Housing Authority explicitly cited Wilson as justification for its plan to displace residents from the Cabrini-Green low-income housing project and raze the site for construction of upscale housing.[18] Other housing authorities, and even private developers, evoke his formulations in their proposals. Just as "blight" and "slum clearance" sanitized the destruction of poor people's housing as humane social policy under urban renewal a half-century earlier, Wilson's "concentrated poverty" and "isolation effects"[19] now provide similar rhetorical lubricant for a yet more concerted and more surgically extensive effort to remove poor people

from desirable central city locations and to replace them with upper-income occupancies. And this effort comes with the Federal government's official repudiation of its responsibility for direct provision of low-income housing, a commitment it had held since the New Deal. Wilson's apologists, all too many of them on the left, might object that it is not fair to hold him responsible for the ways that politicians and others use his ideas. However, despite his prominence and visibility as a Democratic policy advisor, and the ease with which he can gain access to all main public forums, Wilson has never deigned to object publicly to the way his wrong-headed theories are borne out on the backs of poor people.

And that brings us to the Race Initiative's initiator himself. How could Bill Clinton — who has been so deeply implicated in the spread of corporate health care, pursuit of trade and investment policies that accelerate the global race to the bottom, who intensified the racist war on drugs and criminalization of inner-city minority populations, exponentially expanded the federal death penalty, eliminated the federal commitment to public assistance to the poor, led a retreat from the federal commitment to provide low-income housing, temporized about affirmative action, pandered to racist sensibilities ever since he capitalized on the execution of a poor, brain-damaged black Arkansan during his campaign for the 1992 presidential nomination — accept a study that would raise any of those issues?

Political scientist Claire Jean Kim also discusses the significant shift the Clinton Race Initiative marked from the sensibilities undergirding the Myrdal and Kerner Commission studies. She argues forcefully that the real significance of Clinton's Initiative lay in its rejection of the post-war liberal orthodoxy on racial inequality, articulated in the Myrdal study and amplified by the Kerner Commission report, that "first, denied the existence of racial/cultural differences between Blacks and Whites and, second, identified White racism or prejudice as the most important barrier to Black advancement in American society." The Clinton Initiative, she argues, "repudiated this orthodoxy, essentializing racial/cultural differences and arguing that the race problem consisted not of White racism but of the threat these differences posed to national unity." [20] Moreover, the 1998 final report of his Initiative's Advisory Board, *One America in the 21st Century: Forging a New Future*, eschewed discussion of contemporary patterns of structured inequality and called instead for "overcoming 'racial and cultural barriers,' finding common ground 'despite racial differences,' and using dialogue to 'develo[p] new understanding among people of different races.'"[21] Not only do these formulations recall essentialist expressions of racial liberalism that predated *An American Dilemma*; they also mark, as Kim notes, a retreat from the conviction that public policy is the appropriate domain for redress of racial inequality. The multiculturalist notion of "difference," in fact, replaced inequality or racial injustice in the Initiative's report.[22] It is instructive in this

context that the editors' introduction to *America Becoming* similarly presumes fundamental racial/cultural difference.[23] It also shares with the Initiative's report a teleological view of racial progress, proclaiming their commitment "to tracking the progress of racial and ethnic groups toward conditions of equity and justice."[24]

Kim asks the pertinent question: "Why did the Clinton White House launch the Race Initiative in the first place?" Her answer, that it stemmed most immediately from the Clinton administration's poll-drivenness,[25] makes sense. I suspect that the fact that it came less than a year after he signed the odious 1996 welfare reform legislation, and at the same moment that his administration was pressing its attack on public housing, may also help to explain Clinton's motives and timing in calling for the vapid national discussion. The Race Initiative both deflected public attention from the real injuries his administration was inflicting on the largely nonwhite poor, while expressing empty concern through the therapeutic language of racial healing — a standard political ploy for his administration.

But what about the scholars and the integrity of their pursuit of inquiry? Well, here's where the development of a social policy research industry is pertinent. The firmest, most consistent and emphatic conclusion of these studies is that further research is needed. Now remember that: 1) the Race Initiative staff (including its commissars) and its editors set the parameters for the study; 2) academics as a race are vulnerable to fantasies of advising the Prince and like to be close to power; and 3) ideology is the mechanism that harmonizes the possible dissonance between principle and advancing personal interest.

NOTES

1. See Adolph Reed, Jr., "Yackety-Yack About Race" *The Progressive* (December 1997)

2. Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1944).

3. For discussion of these features of the Myrdal study's background, see, for instance, David W. Southern, *Gunnar Myrdal and Black-White Relations: The Use and Abuse of an American Dilemma, 1944-1969* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), pp. 1-27 and *Walter A. Jackson, Gunnar Myrdal and America's Conscience: Social Engineering and Racial Liberalism, 1938-1987* (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), pp. 10-35.

4. B. F. O. Schrieke, *Alien Americans: A Study of Race Relations* (New York: Viking, 1936). The book's front dust cover described it as "A notable study of conflicting races in the United States, made by an expert foreign observer without sectional or racial bias".

5. Charles S. Johnson, *The Negro in American Civilization: A Study of Negro Life and Race Relations in the Light of Social Research* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1930).

6. National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, Report (New York: Bantam, 1968).

7. This aspect of the Myrdal study was noted by some, mainly black, reviewers at the time of its publication. See Ralph Ellison, "An American Dilemma: A Review" in *Shadow and Act* (New York: Random House, 1964) and Oliver C. Cox, *Caste, Class and Race* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1948; reprinted Monthly Review Press, 1959), pp. 509-38. Stephen Steinberg discusses and amplifies these criticisms of Myrdal in *Turning Back: The Retreat from Racial Justice in American Thought and Policy* (Boston: Beacon, 2001), pp. 21-49.

8. National Advisory Commission, Report, pp. 410-84.

9. *America Becoming*, vol I, pp. 1-19.

10. *American Dilemma*, p. 1023.

11. Albert Camarillo and Frank Bonilla, "Hispanics in a Multicultural Society: A New American Dilemma?"; Russell Thornton, "Trends Among American Indians in the United States"; and Don T. Nakanishi, "Political Trends and Electoral Issues of the Asian Pacific American Population," all in volume I.

12. Randall Kennedy, "Racial Trends in the Administration of Criminal Justice"; Alfred Blumstein, "Race and Criminal Justice"; and Darnell F. Hawkins, "Commentary on Randall Kennedy's Overview of the Justice System"; all in volume II.

13. Neil J. Smelser, William Julius Wilson and Faith Mitchell, "Introduction," vol. I, p. 2.

14. James P. Smith, "Race and Ethnicity in the Labor Market: Trends Over the Short and Long Term"; Harry J. Holzer, "Racial Differences in Labor Market Outcomes Among Men"; Cecelia A. Conrad, "Racial Trends and Labor Market Access and Wages: Women"; Robert A. Moffitt and Peter A. Gottschalk, "Ethnic and Racial Differences in Welfare Receipt in the United States"; John Sibley Butler and Charles C. Moskos, "Labor Force Trends: The Military as Data"; Thomas D. Boston, "Trends in Minority-Owned Businesses"; and Melvin L. Oliver and Thomas M. Shapiro, "Wealth and Racial Stratification"; all in volume II.

15. Raynard S. Kington and Herbert W. Nickens, "Racial and Ethnic Differences in Health: Recent Trends, Current Patterns, Future Directions"; Vonnie C. McLoyd and Betsy Lozoff, "Racial and Ethnic Trends in Children's and Adolescents' Behavior and Development"; Renée R. Jenkins, "The Health of Minority Children in the Year 2000: The Role of Government Programs in Improving the Health Status of America's Children"; David R. Williams, "Racial Variations in Adult Health Status: Patterns, Paradoxes, and Prospects"; and Eugene Z. Oddone, Laura A. Peterson, and Morris Weinberger, "Health-Care Use in the Veterans Health Administration: Racial Trends and the Spirit of Inquiry"; all in volume II.

16. Ronald F. Ferguson, "Test-Score Trends Along Racial Lines, 1971 to 1996: Popular Culture and Community Academic Standards," volume I.

17. Gary D. Sandefur, Molly Martin, Jennifer Eggerling-Boeck, Susan E. Mannon and Ann M. Meier, "An Overview of Racial and Ethnic Demographic Trends," volume I. The book's index lists fourteen references to teen childbearing (seven in each volume), one reference to homelessness, one to trade unions, one reference to managed care, none to gentrification, capital flight or corporate welfare.

18. Larry Bennett and Adolph Reed, Jr., "The New Face of Urban Renewal: The Near North Redevelopment Initiative and the Cabrini-Green Neighborhood" in *Without Justice for All: The New Liberalism and our Retreat From Racial Equality* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1999), Adolph Reed, Jr. ed.. Also see Blair Kamin, "Public Housing in 1999: A Hard Assessment" *Architectural Record* (November, 1999), pp. 77f.

19. I have criticized these notions extensively elsewhere on substantive grounds as characterizations of the lived experience of poor people. See Adolph Reed, Jr., *Stirrings in the Jug: Black Politics in the Post-Segregation Era* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), chapter 6.

20. Claire Jean Kim, "Clinton's Race Initiative: Recasting the American Dilemma", *Polity* 33 (Winter 2000): 175.

21. Ibid.: 193.

22. Ibid.: 190-91.

23. *America Becoming*, pp. 7-12.

24. Ibid., p. 7.

25. Kim, 191.

Race and the Steelworkers Union: White Privilege & Black Struggles

Herbert Hill

Editors' note: The *New Politics* website, http://www.wpunj.edu/newpol, contains the full text of this article along with 160 endnotes (including more than a dozen extended quotations) and two appendices (letters from Roy Wilkins to Ben Fischer of the Steelworkers Union and Emanuel Muravchik of the Jewish Labor Council). For a printed copy of this version with endnotes and appendices, please send $4.00 to cover costs to *New Politics*, P.O. Box 98, Brooklyn, NY 11231.

JUDITH STEIN'S *RUNNING STEEL, RUNNING AMERICA* IS, in effect, two separate books: one on federal economic policy as it affected the steel industry, the other, on which this review focuses, on racial discrimination and the litigation initiated by black workers against employers and the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) under Title VII, the employment section of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Stein's attempt at a synthesis fails as the book lacks a substantive, coherent integration of the two themes.

Despite Stein's errors of interpretation, omission of relevant data, and distortion of the historical record, her book received lavish endorsements and praise in reviews from labor historians and union officials. "One of the most sophisticated treatments of race and the modern American economy to come along in years," gushed University of Illinois professor Eric Arnesen. "Stein's book is a triumph of heroic research. . . essential reading for anyone who cares about this country's festering race problems," enthused David Brody, the *doyen* of labor historians; and Lynn Williams, the former president of the United Steelworkers of America called Stein's work "the most complete and balanced account," written about the steelworkers union "particularly in race relations." Nelson Lichtenstein, a professor at the University of Virginia, wrote that ". . . Judith Stein's remarkable book is. . . important. . . and heroically ambitious. . . . Stein offers up a portrait of the United Steelworkers as a racially progressive institution, not only in Pittsburgh but in Birmingham as well."

It is understandable that Stein's account would win support from union officials and their academic supporters. Ever since its emergence in the late sixties, turning out sympathetic portraits of the former CIO unions has been a staple industry of the New Labor History. And union leaders rarely reject glow-

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ing portrayals of their fair-mindedness and wisdom.

Stein's thesis is that the steel industry's decline can be explained almost entirely in external terms. It is not that the corporations failed to invest profits back into research and new technology early in the development of the global economy. Or that the union favoring white workers over black, tried to retain the segregated world of the pre-1964 Civil Rights Act. It was, according to Stein, government policy that wrecked the steel industry: on the one hand, the government's free trade policy allowed cheap steel to flood the domestic market, on the other, in tandem with carpet-bagging organizations like the NAACP and CORE, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission harassed the industry with unfair law suits that actually made conditions worse for everybody.

Stein doesn't think there was a race problem in the steel industry. Black workers, she insists, were not aware of one. They were mostly stirred up by black nationalists and outside agitators. Furthermore, she denies the union's responsibility for maintaining the system of job segregation, and she ignores the extensive documentation in both the judicial record and in the history of black workers' protest against the racial division of labor in the steel industry. Stein denies the record of union racism in order to sanitize labor history. For her, as with many other labor historians, they find it necessary to minimize or deny racism in the labor movement because its existence conflicts with the useable past that they are constructing as labor history.

Litigation Record Refutes Stein's Arguments

STEIN'S EXTENSIVE DISCUSSION OF SOME OF THE IMPORTANT CASES involving discrimination in employment in the steel industry concentrates on three cases initiated by black workers who charged that, because of their race, they were denied equal job opportunity in Bethlehem Steel operations in Lackawanna, New York, and Sparrows Point, Maryland, and at plants of the U.S. Steel Corporation in Birmingham, Alabama. Named as defendants in each of these cases were the corporation and the Steelworkers Union. Stein contends that the charges of race discrimination were unjustified and that the black plaintiffs were persuaded to bring these lawsuits by misguided civil rights organizations and government bureaucrats. Of one civil rights group, CORE (Congress of Racial Equality), she says it consists of "Elite whites, possessing a potent brew of concern, guilt, and a desire to retain control of the social order. . . ." It is hard to provide evidence for such sweeping subjective descriptions as this and she does not attempt it. Stein fails to consider, however, that black steelworkers must have been fully aware of the racial division of labor in the steel mills, that many had a strong motivation of their own to advance beyond segregated dead-end jobs, and that, as a group they had long struggled against the pattern of company and union racism before seeking outside assistance. Indeed, the extensive record of litigation demonstrates that the Steelworkers Union repeatedly resisted the efforts of black workers to eliminate the discriminatory pattern, Stein notwithstanding.

In Stein's book the black voice is silent, replaced by the sound of celebration of the white male bureaucracy that has controlled the union since its founding in 1942. (From 1937 until 1942 it was the Steel Workers Organizing Committee.) Yet independent black organization within the Steelworkers Union has a

long history, dating back to a black caucus at the founding convention of the union in 1942. There were also local groups such as the Sentinel League, and the Eureka Club in Gary, Indiana, in the late 1940s. In 1957, the Fair Share Group in Homestead, Pennsylvania, was formed,[1] and in 1964 a nationwide caucus was organized, the National Ad Hoc Committee of Black Steelworkers. Although, by 1964, black workers constituted approximately 30 percent of the membership of the Steelworkers Union they had been consistently excluded from its national leadership. The organizing of separate groups within the Steelworkers Union was black workers' protest against the collaboration of employers and the union in a system in which their race determined low-level job status. Job assignments and promotions in the steel industry were traditionally decided by race, with blacks locked into segregated labor classifications established in union contracts. These issues were a major source of conflict between black workers and the leadership of the Steelworkers Union over a period of several decades.

The Negro American Labor Council: Black Workers Speak Out Against Discrimination

AT THE 1959 ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE NAACP, A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, called for formation of the Negro American Labor Council (NALC). Randolph insisted that black workers must now speak for themselves within organized labor. "We ourselves must seek the cure," he said; the new Council would, "make it possible for Negro workers to take positions completely independent of white unionists. . . . History has placed upon the Negro and the Negro alone this basic responsibility." Black steelworkers heeding such counsel were actively involved in the formation of the NALC, but as with the Trade Union Leadership Council, the independent black group within the United Auto Workers (UAW), black members of the USWA established their own organization within the union while simultaneously forging ties with the NALC.

The leaders of the National Ad Hoc Steelworkers Committee of Black Steelworkers, in their demands for a black presence in the leadership of the union, understood the direct connection between the exclusion from leadership positions and the discriminatory pattern within the industry. Nonetheless, the International Union failed to respond to their repeated demands for black partici-

[1]On page one of the January 19, 1957, issue of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, a leading black newspaper with editions in several cities, there appeared a resolution adopted by black workers employed in the Homestead Works of the U.S. Steel Corporation. They charged: "Whereas white workers have moved from labor gangs into electrical and machine shop departments with as little as one years service, Negroes have been forced to remain in the labor gang with as much as 14 and 16 years seniority." The news account reported that black members of the United Steelworkers of America had formed an organization called the Fair Share Group of Steelworkers. The *Courier* explained that the group's intention was "to get their fair share of jobs and benefits." Members of the union had written to David J. McDonald, president of the Steelworkers Union, and to George Meany, president of the AFL-CIO, to complain of "the neglect of the Negro's problems and conditions throughout the industry. All we ask is a fair share." It was reported that the group was establishing similar organizations in other locals of the Steelworkers Union with large black memberships.

pation in the leadership of the union and, consequently, at the 1968 convention of the union in Chicago, the Ad Hoc Committee organized picket lines around the convention auditorium. The extensive nationwide publicity embarrassed union officials. One leaflet handed out at the hall's convention doors demanded, "Change This Segregated System" and a leaflet entitled "An Open Letter to President I.W. Abel From a Negro Steelworker" stated, "The time has come for black workers to speak and act for ourselves. We make no apologies for the fact that we as black workers and loyal trade unionists now act on our own behalf. Furthermore we are fully prepared to do so. . . . Blacks were in the forefront during the formation of this union 25 years ago, through the acceptance of crumbs down through the years instead of our just desserts, we now find ourselves hindmost. . . ." Rayfield Mooty, a black steelworker in Chicago and a founder of the Ad Hoc Committee, called it "a black revolt in the unions."

Stein dismisses expressions of black worker sentiment such as these in the face of discriminatory treatment. But sentiment publicly expressed can play a crucial role in the shaping of public opinion and in the making of policy. It has thus long been the practice of civil rights organizations to urge black people to attend court proceedings where civil rights cases are being heard. Over the years the NAACP suggested this to its own members, especially in the South, and as Labor Secretary of the Association, I myself often did. Inevitably the public denial or distortion in testimony of what really happened on the factory floor provoked spontaneous expressions of dismay from black workers sitting in the courtroom. Stein's sense of propriety seems offended by such responses. She reports that, in one case in Alabama, a federal judge "frequently rebuked Grover Smith, currently working for Herbert Hill at the NAACP, for audible sneers." Smith, a black rank-and-file leader, had worked in Birmingham steel mills for many years until 1967 when he was invited to join the NAACP's staff as Southern Labor Field Director.

Organizing Independent Black Caucuses & NAACP Litigation Against Steel Corporations & Union

ALTHOUGH FOR MANY YEARS AT CONVENTIONS OF THE STEELWORKERS UNION civil rights resolutions were routinely adopted and stirring speeches given, such symbolic rituals were not translated into action on the factory floor and therefore, union practices that confined black workers to segregated job classifications routinely continued. Black workers came to see such civil rights rituals as an exercise meant to deflect criticism of the union's own racial practices. By the mid-1950s, in response to such union practices, black workers in steel, auto and other industries were organizing their own independent black caucuses within unions and seeking the assistance of the NAACP. A 1953 report by the NAACP Labor Department of unions in Birmingham, Alabama, concluded: "Many rank and file Negro workers felt a deep sense of frustration that CIO unions in the Birmingham area have not fulfilled the national commitment of the CIO on race. . . . Many Negro workers indicated a sense of despair and futility because the one important institution operating in the South that they hoped would provide the bridge across the divide of color was not doing so." Many reached much the same conclusion about the Steelworkers Union in the North.

After Title VII went into effect on July 2, 1965, the NAACP gave high prior-

ity to using the new law to eliminate discriminatory employment patterns, and close collaboration between black caucus groups within the Steelworkers Union and the NAACP made possible the Association's litigation against the steel industry. The 1966 NAACP Annual Report described its efforts in Birmingham, Pittsburgh, Columbus, and other cities, to make Title VII an effective legal instrument in the attack upon job segregation in the steel industry. According to that report:

> The NAACP documented the pattern of discriminatory seniority provisions in the basic steel industry and charged both the companies and the Steelworkers Union with violating Title VII. . . . The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission found "reasonable cause" to sustain the charges. As the Commission was unable to eliminate discriminatory practices by conciliation procedures, litigation on behalf of Negro workers was initiated against both the United States Steel Corporation and the United Steelworkers of America.

And the 1968 annual report said of steel industry employment practices,

> The United Steelworkers of America and major steel companies persist in defending the discriminatory seniority provisions in collective bargaining agreements. . . companies together with the Steelworkers Union are vigorously defending these practices in a series of lawsuits pending in Federal district courts. . . .

For the next decade, as Title VII law continued to develop, the NAACP intensified its attack upon the system of segregated seniority and job assignment based upon race. Black protest within the Steelworkers Union itself, especially of the Ad Hoc Committee, was significant in pressing for change on the exclusion of black workers from the leadership of the union and on the discriminatory job pattern in steel plants. If Stein makes any comment regarding such black protest activity, it is to dismiss it as misguided and of no consequence.

Promotion for White Workers; Dead-end Jobs for Blacks

STANLEY GREENBERG'S VALUABLE 1980 STUDY, *Race and State in Capitalist Development*, explains that "Though most of the industrial unions inherited their 'nigger jobs,' they later helped forge a labor framework that entrenched them. Rules for the work place—separate lines of promotion, black and white seniority lists, and departmental seniority—gave white workers security and control over the best jobs; they gave black workers security in the 'dead-end' jobs. These work rules became conventional practice in rubber, steel, and paper and were used extensively in coal mining, aircraft, retail trade, shipbuilding, dry docks, garments, and textiles." Greenberg describes how the United Rubber Workers, in Gadsden, Alabama:

> negotiated an agreement with the Goodyear Tire Company that took cognizance of local custom and locked blacks in the reclaim department in perpetuity. Though black workers might accumulate seniority, like white workers, it did not entitle them to bid on white jobs in the manufacturing sector . . . when black workers attempted to contest the discriminatory seniority procedures, the union maintained that "no contract violation exists."[2]

[2]Intervention by the National Labor Relations Board and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit was required to eliminate the discriminatory practices. *Local 12, United*

In discussing other contexts in which unions enforced systems of racial domination, Greenberg wrote that

> The industrial unions took their chances with plant-wide seniority only where there were very few black workers. The Communications Workers won 'seniority across the bargaining unit' at Southern Bell Telephone. Blacks were confined to positions as janitors and maids before the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and were somehow left out of the seniority system. A union officer observed. . . You hire in as janitor, you work for fifty years; you retire as janitor.

Greenberg also wrote that "[I]n a variation of the pattern of union racial practices, the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers, an old AFL union, maintained segregated locals, one for white workers in the pulp mill, recovery operation, and yard, and one for blacks in all sections of the plant. The structure of the union largely reinforced traditional segregation in the factory and white control of the industrial union." Timothy J. Minchen, in his later study of racial job segregation in the paper industry wrote that "Efforts to integrate the industry were hampered by. . . . white resistance to blacks gaining access to white jobs. The color of work was the central theme in the struggle for civil rights in the paper industry between World War II through the 1980s." Much the same can be said about the steel industry.

The Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), at its inception in the 1930s, accepted black workers into membership in order to organize industries like steel, auto, rubber, and packinghouse which had a significant concentration of black workers. Control over black workers was essential to conduct effective collective bargaining. Had blacks been forced to remain outside of organized labor or been limited to separate all-black unions they would have been a serious threat to the emerging industrial labor organizations. Therefore, admission into union ranks was the most effective means to control the black labor force. It is often forgotten that black activists played a crucial role in the early organizing campaigns of the industrial unions. But once control was established, many unions imposed a structure of racial inequality, denying blacks equal promotion and seniority rights and limiting them to unskilled jobs in segregated labor classifications.

The Steelworkers Union, with its substantial black membership, was willing to improve conditions for black workers within segregated job structures but not willing to eliminate the segregated structure itself. As a consequence, the union functioned primarily by and for whites, for decades using its power to preserve and expand racist job patterns. In so doing it guaranteed that the higher-paying, cleaner, and healthier jobs, offering opportunities for advancement into skilled classifications, were reserved exclusively for whites. Provisions in many union contracts stipulated that black workers' seniority would apply only in the segregated classifications, thus preventing competition with whites for better jobs. The union's major task was responding to white job expectations. The ex-

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Rubber Workers was the first case in which a federal court sustained the National Labor Relations Board's power to act against racial discrimination in employment as an unfair labor practice. See *Local No. 12, United Rubber Workers* v. *N.L.R.B.*, 368 F.2d 12 (5th Cir. 1966). For a discussion of this case, the context in which it was decided and its significance in labor law, see Herbert Hill, *Black Labor and the American Legal System*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), pp. 133-151.

tensive body of litigation against the Steelworkers Union and other industrial unions on racial practices is evidence that the primary obligation of the industrial unions was to its white membership.

A 1986 study by Robert J. Norrell of the role of the Steelworkers Union in developing discriminatory employment patterns in Birmingham noted, for example, that the union "agreed to a system of segregated lines of promotion that preserved white supremacy and expanded seniority rights of white workers. . . . Black laborers were put on occupational ladders that led nowhere. . . . Therein lay a harsh irony: the organization made possible by interracial solidarity now yielded greater restrictions on black opportunity than existed before the 1930s." A black steelworker at the Atlantic Steel Company in Atlanta, where the United Steelworkers of America had repeatedly negotiated agreements that limited black workers to segregated labor units with a dual raced-based system of seniority and job classification, explained that

> When the union first came, most of the whites were afraid, but we Negroes, we wore the CIO button. We were the first to come out for the union. We helped get it started here. . . . But now they—the whites—get all the benefits and we are left behind again. Turned out CIO meant one thing for whites and another thing for us. The union don't handle our grievances, we are stuck with Jim Crow seniority, back-breaking jobs and we get less pay than they do. We can't get promoted to the good white jobs. White boys just hired off the street get treated better than we do after twenty years. That's what we got for bringing in the union here.

Close examination of this history, especially the litigation record, reveals that what racial exclusion was to the craft unions, segregated lines of job assignment and seniority were to the industrial unions, and that casual informal discrimination in employment became more rigid and enforceable, as it was codified in labor-management contracts. Indeed, the disparity in wages between white and black workers often increased after unionization by CIO affiliates.

The relationship between unionization and the expansion of segregated job structures was demonstrated in a lawsuit by black workers against Pullman-Standard's Railroad Car Manufacturing Division and the Steelworkers Union. Litigation documents revealed that with the 1941 signing of a collective bargaining agreement, the number of one-race departments increased. According to briefs submitted by attorneys for the black workers,

> After the unionization of the plant, another critical period in the development of the seniority system occurred in the mid-1950s. At that time the importance of seniority increased substantially within the Steelworkers' Union. . . . Just before the important switch in 1954 to departmental seniority, the Steelworkers and the company created seven new one-race departments. . . . All of the departments were carved out of departments which contained both white and black employees. The seniority system which was 'fixed' by the mid-1950s had essentially developed. . .during two periods, the unionization process in 1941 and the major changes in the application of seniority within the Steelworkers Union in the 1950s. During both these periods the number of one-race departments was substantially increased.

By 1964, it was reported that "just before the effective date of Title VII, 96 percent of the employees in the Pullman-Standard plant were located in racially identifiable departments."

A confidential 1964 survey by the Steelworkers Union on the status of blacks

in unionized steel plants in Youngstown, Ohio, describing the disparity in the job status of white and black steelworkers, concluded that

> . . . given the same seniority and education, the white employee's chances for advancement are substantially greater than are the Negro's and this is true at all levels of seniority, at all levels of education, and at all job levels. Furthermore, each of the tables reveals that a white employee with little or no formal education has a better opportunity for advancement than a Negro high school graduate.

A study of black employment in the basic steel industry of Pittsburgh, prepared for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and released in April 1968, showed that "Negroes comprise 12.27 percent of the laborers, 12.93 percent of the service workers, and 10.86 of the semiskilled operatives, but only 3.21 percent of the craftsmen. They are, therefore, almost twofold over-represented in the lowest classification and equally disproportionately under represented in the most skilled blue-collar work." Nor was this pattern the result of random racial prejudice, but rather the direct consequence of discriminatory seniority and job promotion systems in collective bargaining agreements negotiated by the Steelworkers Union with employers.

In the decade between the merger of the AFL and the CIO in 1955 and 1965 when Title VII of the Civil Rights Act went into effect, the Federation and its affiliated unions could have taken seriously the complaints filed by black workers and the reports of civil rights agencies and could have initiated a vigorous program of internal reform on racial practices and moved against recalcitrant international and local unions. But instead they treated the issue as a mere public relations problem. As a result, when Title VII went into effect, labor unions were inundated with lawsuits and repeatedly, over a period of many years, they joined with employers against their own black union members in efforts to perpetuate discriminatory job practices, even though the federal courts declared such practices unlawful. In case after case, not only did AFL-CIO affiliates defend traditional forms of union discrimination that the federal courts had found to be in violation of the law, but the unions also tried to narrow the interpretation of Title VII and prevent its application to discriminatory seniority systems. These issues were to be the subject of extensive litigation in the federal courts for years to come. No one could learn this from Stein's, *Running Steel, Running America*.

The application of Title VII, the employment section of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to union seniority practices was a major development in labor and anti-discrimination law, and was to become the basis for much litigation, especially in the steel industry. William B. Gould, professor of law at Stanford University, has written that "no industrial union has faced more Title VII trouble than the United Steelworkers of America. Thousands of complaints have been filed against the union and employers with whom they bargain in basic steel, charging racial discrimination at plants in both the North and South." Yet Judith Stein tells us that when Title VII went into effect the Steelworkers Union was making great progress on behalf of blacks, and that "Some blacks did not take advantage of the changes because they did not understand the seniority system." Equally unfounded is her claim that the EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) "became a subcommittee of the NAACP."

An extensive judicial record refutes Stein's assertions regarding progress

on racial practices by the Steelworkers Union after Title VII became law. Two examples, both from northern steel plants, point to the discrepancy between her appraisal and the reality. In the 1970 federal court decision that found the union and the Bethlehem Steel Corporation in Lackawanna, New York, in violation of the law, the court observed that discriminatory contract provisions were embodied in nationwide master agreements negotiated by the union in 1962, 1965, and 1968. The court noted that "The Lackawanna plant was a microcosm of classic job discrimination in the North, making clear why Congress enacted Title VII of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964."

So, too, the *brief amicus curiae* of the EEOC in a 1969 case against the Steelworkers Union and the Timken Roller Bearing Company in Columbus, Ohio, stated:

> The seniority provisions of the current collective bargaining agreement are indicative of the long standing rules, jointly formulated by the Defendants, which effectively freeze Negroes into the low paying, dead-end jobs. Defendants have jointly adopted a "departmental" seniority system whereby an employee's seniority for purposes of promotion, transfer, etc., is based on his length of employment in a given department. If a Negro who was hired in 1952 as a janitor wishes to transfer to an all-white production department, he would lose all of his accumulated seniority and be treated as a new hire in the all-white department. Thus, under pain of losing their 'departmental seniority,' Negroes are effectively prevented from transferring from their menial jobs to more desirable departments.

Title VII and the Steelworkers Union

STEIN'S REPRISE OF THE HISTORY OF EVENTS IS REPLETE with misrepresentation and omissions. A reader would not realize that, by the end of the 1960s, when judicial enforcement of Title VII had become evident, organized labor was a vigorous opponent of the law. The leadership of the AFL-CIO believed that Title VII as enacted would protect the racial status quo of seniority systems for at least a generation. But the EEOC, in its *Second Annual Report*, declared that:

> A seniority system which has the intent or effect of perpetuating past discrimination is not a bona fide seniority system. . . . The fact that a seniority system is the product of collective bargaining does not compel the conclusion that it is a bona fide system. Seniority systems adopted prior to July 2, 1965 [the effective date of the act] may be found to be discriminatory where the evidence shows that such systems are rooted in practices of discrimination and have the present effect of denying classes of persons protected by the statute equal employment opportunities.

During the first year of EEOC operation, the AFL-CIO sought an agreement from the commission that the EEOC would not assert jurisdiction over complaints involving union seniority issues. On May 5, 1966, William Schnitzler, secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO, and Thomas E. Harris, its general counsel, together with the representatives of several major unions, met with the EEOC to insist that the commission refrain from acting on complaints of discriminatory job assignment and promotion procedures based on seniority provisions in union contracts. In response, the EEOC asked William B. Gould to conduct a study and report on its authority and responsibility on this issue. Gould concluded that "most seniority arrangements locked blacks into segregated job departments and were, therefore, unlawful under the statute," and that, "The AFL-

CIO policy of not agreeing to implement Title VII serves to postpone the effectuation of the statute's principles. Assertion of the leadership's innocence is simply the first in an arsenal of arguments that the AFL-CIO and its friends put forward to justify union misbehavior." Gould, who had participated in the EEOC meetings with union leaders, wrote later that the Steelworkers Union "played a leading role in the 1966 meeting . . . and in the AFL-CIO's rigid stance against any modification of seniority systems which would improve the lot of black employees."

In 1968, in *Quarles* v. *Philip Morris, Inc.*, the first case on seniority issues decided by a federal court under Title VII, one involving the Tobacco Workers International Union, the EEOC brief recommended a strong enforcement posture and rejected organized labor's interpretation of the statute. In *Quarles*, the court found that union-negotiated contracts had established racially segregated departments limiting black workers to the lowest paying, unskilled jobs, and that through the bargaining agreement, had sought to perpetuate the discriminatory pattern after the effective date of Title VII. The union contract also established that black workers who tried to transfer into departments from which they had been previously excluded would lose their accumulated seniority if they did so, and be required to start over again as new employees subordinate to whites with less seniority. In *Quarles*, the district court stated that "the legislative history indicates that a discriminatory seniority system established before the act cannot be held lawful under the act," and that "a departmental seniority system that has its genesis in racial discrimination is not a *bona fide* seniority system." "Congress," it said flatly, "did not intend to freeze an entire generation of Negro employees into discriminatory patterns that existed before the act."

In 1969, a year after *Quarles*, in the landmark decision of *Local 189, United Papermakers* v. *United States*, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, further advanced the position taken in *Quarles*. It was the beginning of a line of cases on union seniority under Title VII, each invoking the decisions in *Quarles* and *Local 189, United Papermakers*, until the regressive decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in *U.S.* v. *Teamsters* of 1977. (See below.)

The litigation under Title VII led to recognition that seniority rights are not vested and immutable interests but rather expectations of future employment status which exist subject to law. For example, in *United States* v. *Jacksonville Terminal Co.* the Fifth Circuit court ruled that a railroad seniority system that evolved over fifty years of collective bargaining agreements was not immune from remedial measures intended to provide relief to black workers. It held that work rules and other provisions in union contracts in the railroad industry were susceptible to court ordered remedies and relief under Title VII.

Stein devotes a large part of her book to Title VII litigation. She portrays the Steelworkers Union as a racially progressive organization, but the actual and extensive legal record, contradicts her portrayal. In a 1959 case, *Whitfield* v. *United Steelworkers*, a circuit court of appeals rejected the argument made by black workers in behalf of plant-wide seniority and sustained the union's insistence that a black worker permitted to transfer out of the all-black seniority line into a better job in the white line must lose his accrued seniority. Of this decision Stein writes, on page 110, "[T]he Supreme Court seems to agree, refusing to hear an appeal." But on page 119 she refers to the 1968 *Crown-Zellerbach*

case, in which the same circuit court ruled that mill-wide seniority should apply to black workers employed before January 6, 1966, a case decided after Title VII went into effect. This time the court recognized that plant-wide seniority was necessary for black workers to be able to move out of the all-black job classifications. As in *Whitfield*, the U.S. Supreme Court did, however, refuse to review the decision of the appellate court, and of this Stein writes: "The whites at Crown appealed the Fifth Circuit decision to the Supreme Court, but it refused to hear the case and did not say why other courts had come to different conclusions."

The Supreme Court's refusal to review in *Whitfield* meant, according to Stein, that it agreed with the court of appeals' decision to reject plant-wide seniority as the black workers had asked, but, nine pages later she says that the Supreme Court's refusal to review in *Crown-Zellerbach* does not mean that the Court agreed with the decision to allow plant-wide seniority. However, when the U.S. Supreme Court refuses to review, it simply means that they will not hear an appeal, period; it does not mean that they agree or disagree with a lower court ruling. The court does not indicate one way or the other or for what reason it has refused. If the Court wishes to review a case, it can, of course, do so and then decide the issue, but when it refuses the petition for review that is the end of the matter. To assume otherwise is contrary to the most elementary rules of the legal system. Stein seems to suggest that the refusal to review means one thing when it supports the white workers' position and the opposite when it rules for the black workers' position.

The Bethlehem, Lackawanna Case and Stein's Misinterpretations

IN HER DISCUSSION OF THE BETHLEHEM, LACKAWANNA CASE, Stein writes that the judge "found the flaw to be in the company hiring, not in the seniority system." But what Judge John O. Henderson actually said in his ruling of April 13, 1970 was the opposite, that because the company and the union admittedly discriminated against blacks before the effective date of Title VII, the seniority system then in operation reinforced and continued those discriminatory practices. "This means that the longer a Negro has worked in the hot and dirty department to which he was admittedly discriminatorily assigned, the more he has to lose by transfer." Henderson ordered that the seniority system be changed to allow plant-wide seniority, so as to avoid further penalizing of black workers. His opinion explained in detail how flawed the system really was.

Stein maintains that the company's problems with the government and civil rights organizations on its employment practices had begun over a rather trivial matter, "when a worker in the personnel office complained that summer replacements were monopolized by 'superintendents' kids, all the general managers' kids and all the foremen's kids. . . . The Justice Department transformed a class question into a civil rights investigation." She quotes, apparently sympathetically, a Bethlehem Corporation executive who complains that "the Justice Department came in like a herd of turtles, and the next thing we know this thing has expanded way beyond the summer bit to all our employment practices and suddenly we have the first major civil rights case."

But the basis for the government's litigation against Bethlehem and the Steelworkers Union was quite different from Stein's account of employment practices at the Lackawanna plant. In 1967, the U.S. Department of Justice

began to investigate charges by employees of the Bethlehem Steel mill in Lackawanna, New York, referred to it by the U. S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The EEOC had received many complaints against Bethlehem and the union and had found a pattern of employment discrimination in violation of Title VII, hence had certified the case to the Justice Department for litigation.

In *U.S.* v. *Bethlehem Steel Corp.*, the court stated: "In short, all the defendants knew of the racially discriminating assignment policies." The union, however, refused to accept the proposed change in the seniority system that would establish plant-wide seniority, permitting black workers in traditional black job classifications to retain their seniority if they were allowed to transfer to a more desirable job in the white line. The reader of *Running Steel, Running America* will not learn that the union refused the court's proposal. Stein writes that "Bethlehem refused, however, to institute the government demand for plant seniority." Not a word about the union's refusal. She writes that "Bethlehem took the position that seniority rights were protected, that remedies under Title VII were prospective." But the union took the same position and argued further that the proposal for plant wide seniority "would lead to unmitigated chaos within the plant." Stein says the union's position "was more nuanced," a deceptive interpretation of what really happened.

Stein argues that white ethnics were also discriminated against, and that blacks' hourly earnings, despite their segregated status, "in the eleven departments were 96.8 percent of the average of all employees throughout the plant." Stein does not give a source for this figure, there are no reference notes on this issue, just her assertion. Furthermore, she omits the comparison that is significant; the average wage of blacks relative to the average wage of whites in the plant. It is a glaring omission.

The reader of *Running Steel, Running America* will also not know that a federal district court found Bethlehem Steel Corporation and the United Steelworkers of America in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. That court's opinion stated:

> The pervasiveness and longevity of the overt discriminatory hiring and job assignment practices, admitted to by Bethlehem and the union, compel the conclusion that the present seniority and transfer provisions were based on past discriminatory classifications. . . . Job assignment practices were reprehensible.

Over 80 percent of black workers were placed in eleven departments, which contained the hotter and dirtier jobs in the plant. Blacks were excluded from higher-paying and cleaner jobs.

While the decision of that court and that of the Second Circuit Court of Appeals in *U.S.* v. *Bethlehem Steel Corp.* established the existence of a clear pattern of job discrimination, the relief the government obtained was clearly inadequate. The relief was termed "moderate" by the Court of Appeals in view of the government's refusal to seek back pay, adjustment of the recall and layoff system or of provisions for black promotions during general period of layoffs, similar to the relief obtained by the NAACP in the litigation against U.S. Steel and the Steelworkers Union in Birmingham. (See below.) Sorely dissatisfied with the results of the Justice Department's effort, the black workers at Bethlehem sought NAACP assistance and a new lawsuit was initiated against

the corporation and the union known as *Williamson* v. *Bethlehem Steel Corp.*

In 1972 the Steelworkers Union obtained an injunction against the U.S. Department of Justice to prevent it from distributing a list of 1,600 names of black workers who could benefit from certain provisions of the court-ordered decree in the original case. The list had been requested by the Employment Information Center, a federally-funded agency operating under the Model Cities Program and the Third World Workers Organization for the purpose of informing the affected workers of their rights. The action of the Steelworkers Union against their own black members in denying them access to legal information to which they were entitled, caused a storm of protest in the black community and stimulated much new support for the NAACP lawsuit and for the Third World Workers Organization, at the same time intensifying black discontent within the Steelworkers Union itself.[3]

An analysis of the history of litigation involving the racial practices of the steel industry reveals that the employers and the union spent enormous amounts of money to perpetuate the racial division of labor in steel plants and that the resources of both were used repeatedly to appeal decisions favoring black workers. A consequence of their interminable action in appellate courts were the long delays of any relief granted to black plaintiffs. The disparity in the resources available to black workers in Title VII litigation and that of corporations and unions was immense and often affected the final outcome of cases.

Stein makes no reference to the union's action in blocking information to workers of their rights under the court decree but simply states that "the Third World Workers Organizing Committee, a community organization, asked for lists of eligible workers. It assumed that it, not the workers knew their own interests. James Forman, the former head of SNCC, came to Lackawanna. . . ." What comes next in her discussion is all about James Forman, who, in February 1972, came to Buffalo to speak at a monthly meeting of the Third World Workers Organization. Stein reminds the reader that Forman was involved with the Black Panthers and that "he embraced the League of Revolutionary Black Workers." She quotes from some of his statements, declares him to be among those who "were tourists among the working class," and denounces the "new black left," although without identifying who or what they might be. But all this is a red-herring, leaving aside the matter of the accuracy or fairness of her comments. Forman had nothing whatever to do with the Bethlehem cases, let alone was he responsible for the union's action in denying black workers information

[3]The Third World Workers Organization was organized late in 1971 as a consequence of the dissatisfaction with the Steelworkers Union and with the results of the Justice Department's lawsuit against Bethlehem Steel and the union. The president of TWW was George Williamson, the lead plaintiff in the private litigation. The action of the Steelworkers Union in preventing the distribution of the names of workers entitled to benefits from the decree caused widespread support for both the NAACP and TWW. During the week of February 10, 1972, I visited Buffalo where most of the black workers lived and was amazed at the high level of interest. More than 600 workers signed retainer statements with the NAACP. Since the filing of the *Williamson* suit, the class members organized themselves for purposes of fund raising to pay legal expenses and to coordinate information with the lawyers. On my later trips to Buffalo it became necessary to schedule two or three presentations during each visit in order to meet with the hundreds of workers who came to the NAACP meetings.

that belonged to them.

The Bethlehem, Sparrows Point Case and Further Misreading of History

STEIN'S DISCUSSION OF THE CASE OF the Sparrows Point, Maryland, plant of Bethlehem Steel is similarly troublesome. She denies the role of the Steelworkers Union in the establishment and enforcement of the pattern of employment segregation and challenges the government's argument that black workers were singled out for relegation to the less desirable jobs. "Blacks were not," Stein writes, "the only groups assigned to what the government and court decided were 'undesirable' departments. And, desirability is in the eye of the beholder, particularly, in a climate of economic and technological change." To Stein as beholder it was all subjective, but in steel manufacturing, in the building trades, on the railroads, and in virtually every other industry, a clear distinction exists between desirable jobs and those that are not. An extensive body of law based on many court cases supports this. Federal courts have analyzed in great detail and described in various industries the jobs that have higher pay, that involve less dangerous and cleaner work, and that provide opportunity for advancement, comparing them with jobs that are more dangerous, that provide lower pay, and little or no opportunity for advancement. In the racialized steel industry labor force there was no ambiguity between "white men's jobs" and "nigger jobs." In his opinion in the Bethlehem, Lackawanna case, Judge Henderson made a clear distinction between desirable and not desirable jobs.

Stein's account of the Sparrows Point case does not tell the reader that the Labor Department order said that Bethlehem must "correct a seniority system that has been found to perpetuate the effects of past discrimination in the assignment of blacks to jobs and departments with limited advancement opportunities." Wage patterns, the order stated, evinced "a marked disparity which strongly favored white blue-collar workers." The union seniority system forced a worker who transferred to another unit for a better job to give up seniority and pay status and start all over again at the bottom rung of his new unit. With 32 pay grades in the Bethlehem master agreement with the Steelworkers Union, it was thus impossible for blacks to transfer to better jobs and retain seniority. As a result of the order of January 15, 1973, issued by the U.S. Department of Labor, workers in the predominantly black departments would now have a chance to transfer when permanent vacancies occurred on the basis of plant rather than departmental seniority. Plant service tenure would become the primary consideration in all future job promotions. This is what the NAACP and the Legal Defense Fund had argued in the proceedings with the U.S. Labor Department and later in the court cases.

Stein's book reports on none of these developments, nor on the union's rejection of these proposed changes in the seniority agreements with Bethlehem. In fact, the head of Steelworkers Local Union 2610 called the order "discrimination in reverse" and other white workers protested that blacks were being "pushed ahead" of them and one stated "You give a colored person a finger and they want the whole hand." The Steelworkers Union insisted on the continuation of the discriminatory system, whereupon the NAACP Legal Defense Fund pressed forward with the lawsuit against the company and the union,[4] arguing that "dis-

crimination in a job assignment can literally be a death sentence, that, as recent findings have demonstrated, a person who works on top of the coke ovens for more than five years is ten times more likely to get lung cancer than are other steelworkers. Coke-oven workers are almost all black." So much for "desirability" in the matter of jobs being "in the eye of the beholder."

The U.S. Steel case involving the Fairfield Works in Birmingham, Alabama is the most important of the three cases discussed by Stein. The 1973 decision in this Birmingham case, followed by the 1975 decision of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, went beyond the holding in Bethlehem, Lackawanna and the Labor Department's Order in Bethlehem, Sparrows Point. Taken together, all three cases established a clear legal basis for, indeed the necessity of, plant-wide seniority for black workers transferring to jobs in hitherto all-white departments.

Stein's treatment of this history omits any account of the long years of protest by black workers in the steel mills of Birmingham. The history of the Fairfield case, as black steelworkers tell it, provides a perspective missing from *Running Steel, Running America*.

U.S. Steel's Fairfield Works: The Struggle Against Racial Division of Labor

THE EXTENSIVE PATTERN OF DISCRIMINATION THAT EXISTED at the Fairfield mill prior to the adoption of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, continued long after the effective date of that law. In 1963, Clarence Duncan, a black employee of U.S. Steel's Fairfield Works and a member of Local 2122 of the United Steelworks of America, filed charges of discrimination against the local with the National Labor Relations Board, alleging that a pattern of discrimination had been rigidly enforced by the company and the union. Duncan explained that all Negro employees were employed only in Job Classifications No. 2 to No. 5, and that these classifications effectively formed a closed line of progression for Negro employees. Whites, on the other hand, were hired into Classifications No. 5 to No. 28 with a line of progression allowing them to advance from the lowest to the highest job. Negroes were effectively confined to the positions of janitor, laborer, "sweeper," helper, and similar other unskilled jobs. Even when a Negro assisted a white worker in the performance of his job there was no natural line of promotion from one job to the other.

Duncan himself had been employed since 1947 as a "coil trimmer" in the Cold Reduction Department. Among a crew of four workers, he had a job classi-

[4]Employment discrimination cases were litigated by both the NAACP and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. The NAACP Labor Department began developing employment discrimination cases well in advance of the effective date of Title VII and was soon confronted with a very large number of Title VII complaints from NAACP branches and organizations of black workers. Because the NAACP did not have resources to conduct a large-scale effective litigation program on its own, it shared cases with the Legal Defense Fund. At this time the major concentration of the Association's legal department was school desegregation. The "NAACP funneled many of the employment discrimination cases it initiated to LDF . . . while there were things the NAACP did that the LDF did not do." For a discussion of this history see Stephen L. Wasby, *Race Relations Litigation in An Age of Complexity* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), pp. 180-182.

fication that was the only one traditionally designated as a "Negro job." In September 1962, the mill was rebuilt to handle a larger capacity of steel coils, and although the function of his position was substantially the same, his job was reclassified and filled by a junior white employee. This reclassification occurred at each of the Department's six mills as they were rebuilt, thereby "rolling" all of the department's Negro employees from their jobs.

The September 1962 agreement between the company and the union made substantial changes in the large "labor pool," in which workers were all Negroes, performing a variety of menial jobs about the mills and accruing no seniority for purposes of permanent assignment. Duncan's affidavit stated that "This is to say that if he has pushed a wheel barrow for 10 years he has no seniority as a wheel barrow pusher but may be assigned to a job requiring the use of broom or a shovel." The 1962 agreement provided for the entrance of white workers into the labor pool when they had been "bumped" from their former job higher up in the white line of progression. Such white workers retained the right to return to their former classification when it became vacant, using their former job seniority and the seniority they accrued in the labor pool. Thus, white workers had direct access out of the labor pool and Negroes did not.

As early as 1957 Negro workers at the Fairfield mills had protested the separate, all-black, lines of job progression and the attrition of their jobs.

The black workers at the Fairfield Works unsuccessfully attempted to file grievances with the union, and, in 1961, began appealing for assistance from outside sources. They proceeded methodically up the United Steelworkers organizational hierarchy seeking help in initiating a grievance with their local union. Writing to the United Steelworkers Sub-District Office in Birmingham, Duncan and other Negro workers expressed their frustration in dealing with Local 2122 and appealed for assistance in filing a grievance. After an unsympathetic response from their Sub-District Director, the Negro employees wrote to the Steelworkers District Director seeking aid. Obtaining no satisfactory response from the Sub-District Director or the District Director, the Negro workers wrote to United Steelworkers President David J. McDonald, but McDonald referred their complaint back down to their District Director's office.

Finally, Duncan and other black steelworkers began to seek aid outside of the union. In a letter to Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, they explained that since they had lost their jobs they now had "nothing to lose" by seeking outside assistance. Representative Powell referred them to the U.S. Department of Labor, which replied that "it is doubtful that this office can be of service to you but I am sending you a copy of the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959."

On March 23, 1962, in a letter to Vice-President Lyndon Johnson in his capacity as Chairman of the President's Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity, the Negro employees of U.S. Steel sought to file a formal complaint against the Steelworkers Union. Their letter stated in part that "Throughout this entire plant you will find Negroes working as laborers and as miscellaneous crews, not because we do not have the ability to perform other duties, but because of discrimination." Five months passed without any action and the black workers once again sought the assistance of the union leadership, this time in a letter to the executive director of the Committee on Civil Rights of the International Union. "We feel that we have exhausted all immediate remedies here.

There should be no doubt as to our patience, understanding and cooperation concerning this issue, therefore, before we ask for help outside of this organization. We again submit our complaint to you for relief and whatever action you may deem advisable." They received a formal acknowledgement of receipt of their letter, nothing more.

The NAACP Investigates in Birmingham

THE PATTERN OF SEGREGATED JOBS JOINTLY MAINTAINED by U.S. Steel and the union came under attack again in 1964, when, at the request of black workers, many of them members of the Birmingham NAACP Branch, the Association's Labor Department investigated the racial employment practices of companies in the Birmingham area, and found that the status of the black worker in the Birmingham steel industry was deteriorating rapidly as a result of the limitation to bottom-rung jobs and attrition of those jobs. At U.S. Steel's Ensley Blast Furnace, for example, local supplementary agreements to the national agreement between the company and the Steelworkers Union limited black workers to Job Classification Numbers 1 to 9, while classifications filled entirely by white workers included Numbers 9 to 18. The separate line of job progression to which blacks were confined embraced only menial positions like janitor, porter, cleaner, laborer, and utility helper.

At the Tin Mill of the Fairfield Works, the mill which was the subject of Duncan's complaints from 1957-1963, the NAACP's investigation showed that the displacement of Negro workers was continuing at an accelerated rate. During the period from 1964 to 1965, 16 Negro workers were assigned to the occupation of "coil dresser," Job Classification No. 3. When new equipment made the job simpler and easier, the job was reclassified into the white Job Classification No. 10, with a new hourly rate of $2.69. The Negroes had earned $2.17 per hour when the job was more difficult and in the Negro line. All of the 16 Negro "coil dressers" were replaced by white workers with less seniority. The displaced Negro workers were sent to the Negro labor pool. When they filed grievances with the union, the union refused even to process them.

The limitation of black workers to menial jobs, combined with technological innovation, resulted in the displacement of black workers in increasingly large numbers. The 1965 NAACP report concluded:

> Given the rapid introduction of new steel making processes based upon automated equipment, Negro workers with many years of seniority who have risen to the top of the all-Negro seniority line will be forced back into the lowest job categories as a result of the reclassification of jobs and eventually forced out of employment entirely. This development represents a potentially grave danger for Negro steelworkers throughout the entire southern steel industry. Negro workers have been limited to menial and unskilled job classifications and because these classifications are now being eliminated and Negro workers, as a result of collusion between the company and the union, are denied the opportunity to advance into production and skilled jobs, Negro workers may soon find themselves without any employment unless this traditional pattern is immediately reversed.

In conjunction with the Ad Hoc Committee, the NAACP organized demonstrations at the Pittsburgh headquarters of the U.S. Steel Corporation, as well as at its offices in Birmingham, and filed more than two hundred complaints

against the company and the union with the EEOC. The Office of Federal Contract Compliance was requested to withhold government contracts from U.S. Steel until the company complied with federal executive orders requiring nondiscrimination in employment.

Under public attack from the NAACP, the company protested that it had made "substantial progress" in advancing its black workers. A U.S. Steel press release answered that "there is no line of promotion that is not open to persons of any race, color, creed, sex and national origin." John Barnett, a labor reporter for the *Wall Street Journal*, wrote that the "carefully worded press release" failed to provide "details on precisely what sort of jobs the Negroes have been promoted to or any breakdown of the numbers of whites and Negroes in various further classifications. . . .[R]epeated requests for further information are rejected by a company spokesman, who explains: 'All this information is made available to appropriate agencies of the government.'" The NAACP countered the U.S. Steel claim; it had made only a "very limited, symbolic adjustment to the law," and had merely substituted euphemisms for the traditional racial designation of jobs.

A complaint filed with the EEOC by a black worker against U.S. Steel and the union soon after the company's press release refuted its claim of "substantial progress." Roland Smith, an employee of the company's Fairfield Works and a union member, filed charges against both the company and the union, alleging that because of his race, his job had been placed in an inappropriate line of promotion, limiting his opportunities for advancement. Smith's job at the mill was that of "Anode Conditioner" in the mill's Tinning Operation. All of the employees in the Tinning Operations were white and belonged to line of progression Unit 404, with the sole exception of the "Anode Conditioners," who were all Negroes and belonged to line of progression Unit 408. The latter line of progression embraced principally those employees in the Stock Department who worked over one quarter of a mile from the mill's Tinning Operation. But the Negro "Anode Conditioners" belonging to that line of progression did not work in the Stock Department. The lines of jurisdiction between 404 and 408 were thus so structured that the Negro "Anode Conditioner" could not be promoted within the Tinning Operation where they worked nor within the Stock Department where they were classified but did not work. The company and the union defended the structure of the lines of progression on the grounds that labor negotiations in 1963 had resolved that the occupation of "Anode Conditioner" was functionally related to the Stock Department, although geographically in the Tinning Operation facilities. In an unusually thorough investigation, the EEOC determined that the Negroes' jobs were not functionally related to the department of their classification at all, and that the false classification was racially motivated to prevent Negro advancement into the white line of progression.

After an exhaustive examination of both the Tinning Operation and the Stock Department, the Commission stated that the Negro "Anode Conditioner performs work which is directly connected to the tinning process . . . Examination of the Anode Conditioners' job description reveals that the Anode Conditioner performs virtually all of his work directly in conjunction with the employees in Unit 404. He is supervised only by supervisors and other personnel in Unit 404."

> It is clear from the foregoing that the Anode Conditioner has been excluded from the Line of Promotion to which his work is plainly technologically related, and placed in a Line of Promotion to which his work bears only a tangential technological relationship. Since Unit 404 is and always has been exclusively white, these facts compel the conclusion that Respondents' agreement to exclude the Anode Conditioner from Unit 404, a job performed solely by Negroes, was for the purpose of maintaining the all-white character of Unit 404.

The Commission also determined, in its "reasonable cause" finding, that the case was further evidence of a pattern of discrimination maintained by U.S. Steel and the union in violation of Title VII.

> This conclusion is buttressed by our previous decisions concerning the activities of these Respondents at the Fairfield Works. These prior decisions do show that Respondents apply no consistent criteria such as common supervision, geographic proximity, or technological relationship, when formulating Lines of Promotion that may involve the integration of white and Negro jobs.

Thus, in numerous "reasonable cause" decisions, a pervasive policy of discrimination had been documented at the company's Alabama mills by the EEOC. Despite protestations of "progress" from the company's public relations office, plant operations continued in violation of Title VII and federal executive orders.

Litigation Against Company and Union

SOON AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF TITLE VII, several lawsuits were filed against the company and the union by black steelworkers. After these suits had been pending in Federal District Court for more than a year without trial, the black workers petitioned Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach to expedite the cases.

Luther McKinstry and Robert Hubbard, two Negro employees of U.S. Steel's Fairfield Works, sued the company and the union, seeking an injunction to prevent further discrimination. McKinstry and Hubbard filed their complaint as a class action, calling their situation typical of the pattern of discrimination. They were "hookers" at the Fairfield mill, and it was their function to direct the movement of cranes operated by "Cranemen." The company had never employed Negroes as Cranemen and when McKinstry and Hubbard applied for training for the position they were denied. Their complaint said:

> Specifically, the defendants have structured the lines of progression so that "hookers" (a job classification occupied mainly by Negroes) cannot transfer to the job of "cranemen" (a job classification occupied by white persons) without a loss of seniority. The defendants have refused to merge these two lines of progression. The effect of defendants' conduct in this regard is to classify Negro employees in such a way as to discriminate against them, based upon race or color, in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

They also said that Steelworkers Local 1013, "As the statutory representatives of the employees of the company . . . have failed to perform their duty to fairly represent the plaintiffs and members of their class in order to secure fair treatment in their employment."

William Hardy, joined by nine co-workers, filed suit against the company and the union charging that because of separate racial lines of seniority in the

labor-management agreement, they had been deprived of promotions to functionally related jobs. Hardy and the others worked in the Stock House Department of U.S. Steel's Fairfield Works, where all Negro employees were classified in grade numbers 4 through 9 in an all-Negro line of progression. Whites in the same department were classified in grade numbers 9 through 14.

> Jobs in the Stock House Department are given grade numbers which determine the rate of pay an employee receives. The rate of pay increases with the job class number. Jobs in the Negro seniority Line of Progression are given grade numbers between four (4) and nine (9). Jobs in the Negro Line of Progression involves the more menial and lower paying jobs. Employment in the White line of Progression involves the more desirable and higher paying jobs. Both the Negro and White Lines of Progression include jobs with grade nine (9). Job grade nine in the Negro Line of Progression is a top classification in the Negro line. Job grade numbers nine in the White Line of Progression is the bottom job classification in the White Line.

There was a functional relationship between grade 9 positions filled by whites and Negroes but no provision for progression between the white and Negro lines of seniority. The complaint went on:

> As a result of the separate seniority lines based on race, Negro employees are in effect limited to the more menial and lower paying job classifications, whereas, white employees with less seniority than some or all of the plaintiffs can progress to the more desirable and better paying jobs in the segregated White Line of Progression. In the event there is a slow down or a shut down in the work performed in the Stock House Department employees in the White Line of Progression enjoy a more liberal lay-off policy than do the employees in the Negro Line of Progression.

Three days after the effective date of Title VII, the Negro employees in the Stock House Department filed a grievance with Steelworkers Local 189. After the union failed to process their grievance beyond the second step, they made the union co-defendant in their lawsuit. Their briefs said that through the collective bargaining process, "defendants have established a promotional and seniority system, the design, intent and purpose for which is to continue and preserve. . . . the defendants' long standing policy, practice, custom and usage of limiting the employment and promotional opportunity of Negro employees of the company because of race or color." In another Title VII action, Negro employees of U.S. Steel's Rail Transportation Department at its Fairfield Works charged that the company and the union jointly conspired to maintain the traditional pattern of discrimination. The Rail Transportation Department was a small railroad company owned and operated by the U.S. Steel Corporation, consisting of three subdivisions: Road Operations, Maintenance of Way, and Car Shops. Seven Negro employees in the Car Shops subdivision charged the company and the union with negotiating a continuation of the segregated job structure traditionally in operation in that department.

Until 1963, the company had maintained segregated seniority lines of promotion based on race. The Negro Line of Promotion was limited to Job Classifications No. 1 through No. 6, the White Line of Promotion to Job Classifications No. 5 through No. 14. In August 1963, the company and the union, in response to pressure from the Office of Federal Contract Compliance, agreed to merge these segregated lines of promotion. Black employees were to be allowed to bid for positions in the former all-white line, using the seniority they had accumu-

lated in the all-Negro line of promotion. But less than one year later, the company and the union revoked the agreement, and substituted a tripartite line of progression for the single, merged line that had never become operational. The new agreement established as lines of promotions: 1A, 1B and 1C. The 1A line included most of the former all-white job categories, line 1B, two all-white job classifications, and a line 1C, the job classifications that had always been limited to Negro employees. Although Negro workers were supposed to be given the opportunity to enter the 1A and 1B lines, they could have only entered the bottommost job in the lines and their seniority standing would have dated only from the time of initial entry into the 1A or 1B lines.

The company and the union enforced the segregated pattern using the threatened loss of seniority to dissuade Negroes from seeking to enter white job classifications.

Subsequent acts of discrimination imposed upon the railroad's black employees also confirm the racial intent of the 1964 revised agreement. Soon after its negotiation a committee of Negro workers seeking a copy of the agreement was told both by the company and by the union that no such agreement existed. "It was not until months later," said the Negro workers' complaint, "when a copy of the June 3, 1964 agreement was printed and distributed that the plaintiffs learned, as a matter of fact, that the August 3, 1963 agreement had been abrogated." In 1965, when a group of black employees filed a complaint about the union's grievance procedure, the grievance was returned by union officials who said that processing the grievance would violate the terms of the 1964, labor agreement. The workers' complaint says that "The failure of the Steelworkers Local 1733 to actively press the grievance was intended to deny. . . Negro employees fair representation as members of the unions on the basis of race.

When, in 1965, the company posted bids for job classifications in the 1A line of promotion, several Negro employees in the 1C line who had submitted bids were told by the company that they would have to take and pass a test before they could be considered for the job vacancies. The Negro plaintiffs' complaint said:

> Heretofore, no test had been administered for promotion purposes in any of the jobs currently listed in the 1A, 1B or 1C lines of promotion. . . . Plaintiffs believe and allege that the test is not professionally developed . . . and that the test, its administration and action upon the results, is intended to discriminate against Negro employees because of race and color.

It is clear that the U.S. Steel Corporation, acting in collaboration with the Steelworkers Union, had no intention of complying with Title VII.

In a 1969 case before the National Labor Relations Board, Ned Crawford, a Negro employee of U.S. Steel's Fairfield Works and a member of Steelworkers Local 1131, charged that the union violated its duty of fair representation by participating in destruction of Negro workers' seniority rights and by failing to process related grievances. Before 1962, all Negro workers were placed in Job Classes 2, 3 and 4, with workers able to accumulate seniority within those classifications for use in transfer, rollback and layoff, although they could not enter the white job classifications. In 1962, the company and the union agreed to abolish Job Classes 2, 3 and 4, and persons holding those positions were placed into a "job pool," where seniority rights could not be accumulated. White work-

ers, working in Job Classes 5 through 32, were not affected, but Negro workers were not only prevented from entering jobs held by whites, but could no longer accumulate seniority rights within their separate job classifications. Ned Crawford's seniority rights based on 22 years in Job Class 4, were destroyed by union and management collusion. When he filed a grievance with Local 1131, the union did not even process his grievance.

The EEOC Decisions on Seniority and Stein's Perspective

ON DECEMBER 30, 1970, THE EEOC MADE ANOTHER OF ITS MANY "reasonable cause" findings based upon charges filed against U.S. Steel and the Steelworkers Union at the Fairfield Works in Birmingham. At the time three private lawsuits were already pending in the federal courts against the company and the union from Negro employees who claimed that they had been recently promoted to formerly all-white jobs but on transfer had been forced to forfeit their years of accumulated seniority. As a consequence, they were laid off in advance of whites with less plant-wide seniority.

Three workers, Esaw Cook, Add Jackson, and Marion Bean, had been employed at the plant as driver's helpers for between 21 and 32 years. In 1966 they transferred to the formerly all-white job of truck driver but, in 1968, were laid off from their jobs while white drivers with far less plant-wide seniority but more seniority in that particular position retained theirs. The EEOC found both the company and the union in violation of Title VII.

This significant EEOC decision was one of a long line of decisions growing out of complaints against the union seniority system in Birmingham. Although a seniority system allowing blacks traditionally confined to all-black lines of progression to enter former all-white lines only upon forfeiture of their years of seniority is inherently unfair, this was the first case where such a forfeiture was actually imposed. The seniority system acted as a strong deterrent upon those seeking to improve their jobs, but until that time the mill had not actually experienced a workforce reduction. This was the first case under Title VII where blacks transferring to a white job had been penalized for their ambition.

Sixteen days before the EEOC decision, the U.S. Department of Justice, acting on charges filed by the NAACP, initiated legal action against the company and the union, charging the company, the United Steelworkers of America, and 12 locals of the union with maintaining a variety of practices that violated Title VII. The government's complaint stated that:

> United States Steel has had a policy of hiring and assigning its employees on the basis of race, with Negroes being hired for and assigned to the less desirable and lower-paying jobs with the least opportunity for advancement. . . . This policy was followed on a formal basis at least until 1963, and in substance has continued to be followed to the present.

When the Justice Department insisted that the black workers retain seniority credit for the time already spent in the black jobs as they transferred to the white line, the company and the union refused, and the case, consolidated with the five pending private lawsuits, went to trial in late 1971. In 1973, a federal court found that the seniority system, the product of collective bargaining between the company and the union, locked blacks into lower-paying and less desir-

able jobs, and the court ordered the elimination of the separate racial seniority system that had long prevailed at the Fairfield Works. Although in previous rulings the white seniority lines were opened to permit the entry of blacks, dual seniority systems had not been abolished. But in the 1973 case the dual seniority system itself *was* abolished and black workers could now cross departmental lines and without penalty apply for jobs as they became available. The decree ordered that "Plant Continuous Service at all plants of the Fairfield Works replaces Occupational or Line of Promotion Seniority with the result that an employee's Plant Continuous Service will be utilized as the measure of continuous service for promotion, demotion, lay-off and recall from lay-off."

Reading Stein's discussion of the Fairfield cases, the reader would not know of the years of black rank and file protest activity and of the dedication of the black workers who became the plaintiffs in these lawsuits. She offers instead as the hero of the Fairfield case the white union lawyer, who over many years repeatedly defended the discriminatory practices of the Steelworkers Union. He is a "liberal" with a "sharp mind," Stein writes. Her book even provides a photograph of the lawyer receiving an award and embracing a black judge. Stein quotes a white union representative testifying at trial as saying that "We did the best job that we could do under the circumstances. . ." and the white company lawyer as telling the court, "If blacks were still concentrated more in low-paying jobs, it was because they refused to bid on jobs open to them and because many were poorly educated."

There was, however, one black worker whom Stein does introduce to the reader: "Willie Phillips, a black in the wire mill . . . found a white in another part of the mill willing to teach him, although he was never comfortable operating cranes and eventually obtained other work." In the Birmingham steel plants, as elsewhere, the job of overhead crane operator was a white job. Arranging the materials to be moved and attaching the hook, the work of the "hooker," was a black job. This segregated pattern had been under attack from black workers in many steel plants for decades. Among the very first complaints filed with EEOC were those from black steelworkers who had worked for years as "hookers," but because of their race could not become crane operators, and this issue was the subject of early Title VII litigation. Stein reports that a black worker in the rolling mill became a crane operator, but she found one black worker, Willie Phillips, who allegedly didn't want to operate a crane. The book provides no quotation from or further identification of Phillips, no supporting citation, no source, no reference, no context for Phillips' discomfort. The following paragraph, quoted in full, is all that appears in her source notes on this matter.

> The Phillips incident reveals concretely that the behavior of white steelworkers cannot be explained by the concept of "whiteness." Whatever their ideological beliefs about race, steelworkers possessed other ideas and interests that explain their behavior. The sheer diversity of response demonstrates that the ideological approach to studying white workers begun by David Roediger in his *Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991) cannot account for the behavior revealed here, much less for the history of the American working class.

So much for the quality of Stein's "scholarship" in *Running Steel, Running America*.

Two years later, in an appeal carried forward by the NAACP and the Legal

Defense Fund, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals extended the relief granted in the Fairfield case to include back pay to the class of black steelworkers. Stein does demonstrate, inadvertently or not, how the Steelworkers Union, in conjunction with management, acted to maintain systems of job segregation in the steel industry. But she does not mention that black workers actively struggled against their racial oppression and it was they who forced the changes.

Stein's discussion of the cases also offers a picture at odds with the extensive judicial record: "The USWA had never challenged the principles underlying seniority changes or the interpretation of Title VII," Stein writes. "Initially, it did not believe that the law required changes, but after court rulings, it did not contest the judgment." In fact, from *McKinstry* and *Hubbard* v. *U.S. Steel* in 1966, to *Goodman* v. *Lukens Steel* in 1987, the Steelworkers Union, in case after case, resisted compliance with Title VII, and fought to preserve the advantages of white workers against the interests of blacks. Scrupulous accuracy as to facts and evidence is all the more obligatory when an author is a partisan. Stein has not met that obligation in *Running Steel, Running America*.

The Steel Industry Consent Decree

AFTER HAVING LOST MANY CASES AND PAYING OUT MILLIONS OF DOLLARS in court-ordered back pay, in 1974 the steel companies and the Steelworkers Union developed a new approach. They could resist future conciliation attempts and watch their discriminatory seniority systems be reshaped by federal courts, or they could participate in the revision of their racial practices and free themselves from further troublesome litigation and back-pay liability. There were 408 complaints against steel companies and the Steelworkers Union pending with the EEOC when the negotiations were begun that culminated in the consent decree of 1974, agreed to by nine major steel corporations and the United Steelworkers of America and representatives of the Department of Justice, the Labor Department and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission but with no participation whatever in the negotiations by the affected black workers or their representatives. The black workers were not asked to consent to the agreement that directly affected their lives.[5]

Stein discusses the Steel Industry Consent Decree from the perspective of the employers and the union. That the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Organization of Women, the NAACP, and the Legal Defense Fund all went to court in opposition to the consent decree she dismisses as "a typical expression of the new public advocacy culture." Stein terms the Ad Hoc Com-

[5]The steel agreement is contained in two consent decrees (Decree I and II), that were filed on April 15, 1974 in the U.S. District Court in Birmingham, Alabama, and approved by Judge Sam C. Pointer, Jr. Signers of the consent decrees were Allegheny-Ludlum Industries, Inc., Armco Steel Corp., Bethlehem Steel Corp., Jones and Laughlin Steel Corp., National Steel Corp., Republic Steel Corp., United States Steel Corp., Wheeling Pittsburgh Steel Corp., and Youngstown Sheet and Tube Co. (A tenth employer, Inland Steel Co., decided at the last moment not to sign the agreement.) In addition to the companies the agreement was also signed by the United Steelworkers of America. The consent decrees covered 249 plants, in every part of the country (three-quarters of the steel industry), and 347,679 workers. (*United States* v. *Allegheny-Ludlum Industries, Inc.*; 517 F.2d 826, (5th Cir. 1975), *cert. denied*, 425 U.S. 944, 1976).

mittee, which opposed the decree, "the radicalized remnant of the black dissidents of the 1960s." This is the language of a partisan defender of the union and its racial practices.

The NAACP itself comes in for bashing, especially the author of this review. Thus, Stein writes, "Hill had the field to himself to attack the decrees. The union succeeded, however, in preventing a formal condemnation." In Philip Shabecoff's front page report in the *New York Times* for April 15, 1974, the official position of the NAACP on the decree was put in this context: "the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has been seeking for 20 years to end racial discrimination in the steel industry." The Association's critical position was reaffirmed by Roy Wilkins, its Executive Director, in a letter to Ben Fischer, assistant to the president of the Steelworkers Union, September 2, 1975. (See Appendix "A" in the on-line version of this article on the *New Politics* website, http://www.wpunj.edu/newpol.)

The steel industry consent decree was the second major agreement entered into by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The context of the negotiations in the steel agreement and the role of EEOC were significantly different from the earlier AT&T case which was initiated by racial minorities and women. In contrast, it was the steel companies and the union that had initiated the proceedings with the government in order to prevent further judicial intervention on racial employment practices in the steel industry. Affected racial minorities and women were prevented from participating in the steel industry negotiations, as they were not in the AT&T case, and denied the right to protect their own interests and question the agreement by the government's signing.

According to Roy Wilkins, ". . .many months before the negotiations were concluded, requests had been made to the EEOC, asking for an opportunity to participate or simply observe the conduct of the negotiations. These requests were refused and there is no denying the fact that black rank and file steelworkers were denied the right to participate in the negotiations. Even Judge Pointer discounted the effectiveness of the union representatives in protecting the vital interests of affected class members." Early in the discussions that led to the negotiations that resulted in the consent decrees, lawyers for both the U.S. Steel Corporation and the United Steelworkers of America refused to meet with NAACP lawyers representing black plaintiffs at a joint session called by EEOC. Union and employer representatives explained that "the NAACP was a disturbing influence," and repeatedly objected to NAACP participation.

EEOC entered into an industry-wide agreement providing that all charges pending with the EEOC against the nine companies and the union were considered settled if such claims were decree-related. The Commission nullified the legal rights of workers seeking additional relief or if it found that a suit was inconsistent with the decree, EEOC would intervene with the court on behalf of the employer and union to advise that the relief requested should be denied. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights commented at the time: ". . . the requirement that the government appear on behalf of the industry in private actions is unusual, the inclusion of this provision in future agreements could result in an unfortunate alliance between government agencies responsible for enforcing anti-discrimination laws and corporate interests which violate them."

This agreement also provided that compliance with the decree was compli-

ance not only with Title VII but with the Executive Order 11246 prohibiting employment discrimination by government contractors. By entering into the decree, the nine companies and the union settled all pending claims against them with the Office of Federal Contract Compliance as well as with the EEOC. The EEOC had not, in effect, functioned as an enforcer of the law in this case, but rather as a negotiator making concessions and bargaining away the legal rights of charging parties without representation by the victims.[6]

As a result of the government's order in the earlier Bethlehem Sparrows Point case, workers in predominantly black departments were given an opportunity to transfer, on the basis of plant, rather than departmental, service. Plant service tenure was established as the priority consideration in all future jobs competition at a plant where, in 1973, almost one-third of the labor force was black. Although the steel industry consent decrees provided for departmental seniority, rather than plant seniority, "the change to plant service shall be ac-

[6]An examination of government files reveals that the Department of Justice and the Labor Department were amenable to negotiating a weak and inadequate agreement with the steel industry. The EEOC under its chairman, William H. Brown III, refused to join in this approach and insisted upon a stronger settlement. A November 30, 1973, EEOC internal memorandum suggests apprehension about the approach of the other government agencies and discusses the " . . . steel industry's refusal to consider back pay." The memorandum reveals concern for protecting the Commission's right to sue and also considers the initiation of new litigation based upon ". . . the number of existing charges and the possibility of a Commissioner's charge." The memorandum reported that ". . . EEOC Chairman Brown told K. Wm. O'Conner of the Justice Department . . . that EEOC could not participate if there were not a substantial amount of back pay. Brown told Cody to move steel up as a target Track I industry. Brown said he would not sign even if EEOC's right to sue was preserved; that it was better to get what we want or not sign at all. . . . Brown said that EEOC would not participate absent back pay and would go into court to attack the agreement if the government tried to go ahead without EEOC; we could also try to get all civil rights groups to join in" (Memorandum to Files, Katherine S. McGovern, Steel Negotiations, Number 16, December 3, 1973). It is of some interest to note that President Richard M. Nixon replaced Brown during the negotiations which had come to a halt because of Brown's insistence upon certain minimal standards of relief. On January 3, 1973, John H. Powell, Jr. became chairman. It has been suggested that the final decrees were in large part the result of political pressures from the Nixon administration which wanted a "soft" settlement. According to one reporter, "Shortly after John Powell's nomination, feelers went out from the steel industry and the United Steelworkers to the Justice Department and last September nine steel companies submitted what was in their view a fair offer. . . . Perhaps the most unusual part of the steel agreement was the one obligating the government to defend the industry by informing district courts that further relief from discrimination in the steel industry is unwarranted. Under this requirement, anyone who sues to obtain more relief from discrimination than is provided in the consent decrees will not only have to face the financial resources of the corporations, but the unlimited legal resources and shrewdness of the government as well. The next few years will see government attorneys sitting at the defendants' tables." (Jonathan Evan Maslow, "Is Title VII Sinking?", *Juris Doctor*, September 1974, pp. 35-36). Negotiations were resumed after Powell became EEOC Chairman and it was he who approved the decrees although they provided weaker remedy than EEOC had previously required in a similar case. The decrees excluded EEOC from the enforcement procedure and provided that the Office of Federal Contract Compliance (Labor Department) and the Department of Justice be responsible for monitoring compliance.

complished without that change in and of itself affecting the relative position of any employee within a seniority unit or line of progression." This meant that black workers could only transfer when "permanent vacancies" occurred in all-white departments at every level. There was no procedure for transferring to any but the lowest level of each department, a limitation that deterred older workers from even attempting a transfer. Previous judicial decisions had provided far greater change in seniority systems: most effective were those decisions that allowed black workers to compete with whites on an equal basis for higher paying skilled jobs by intermeshing functionally related departments. Under this approach, racially segregated lines of job progression were combined and each worker's position in the newly formed unit was determined by plant seniority.

The decrees called for some attempts at affirmative action with goals and timetables to be established by Implementation Committees in each plant or facility with broad powers; they could preserve existing seniority systems where they thought this necessary and they were responsible for informing employees about their rights under the decree and for processing grievances arising out of application of the decrees. The government's position, however, was weakened by the fact that a company's or a union's failure to meet goals and timetables would not be cause for revoking or suspending government contracts. A declaration that a "good-faith" effort had been made was sufficient to establish compliance, and, even if the Labor Department found a company failing to comply, the only remedy permitted was referral to the Audit and Review Committee of five steel company representatives, five union representatives, and one government representative. This committee was responsible for reviewing all implementation of the decrees and all unresolved matters. The government representative on this committee was from the Office of Federal Contract Compliance, historically a very inadequate and incompetent element in federal civil rights enforcement.[7] Unanimity was required for all decisions.

The decrees provided for division of $30.9 million among some 55 thousand minority employees working at the 249 plants affected by the decrees. In order to receive this back pay an employee was required to sign a release that terminated all pending charges or suits brought by the employee against the defen-

[7]In 1975 the General Accounting Office, the agency that audits and oversees the performance of the executive branch on behalf of Congress, investigated and found that the Office of Federal Contract Compliance was so lax in enforcing its orders requiring government contractors to comply with nondiscriminatory employment practices that it did not even have a list of all the contractors. The GAO found that "Compliance agencies are reluctant to initiate enforcement action when contractors are not in compliance with the Executive Order; instead they rely on extended conciliation and negotiations with contractors . . . . [C]ompliance agencies should take enforcement action against contractors found in noncompliance . . . and rely less on conciliation and negotiation. The almost nonexistence of enforcement actions taken could imply to contractors that the compliance agencies do not intend to enforce the program." (*The Equal Employment Opportunity Program For Federal Nonconstruction Contractors Can Be Improved*, A Report For The Joint Economic Committee, Congress of the United States, By the General Accounting Office, May 5, 1975, pp. 27-30. See also Herbert Hill, "Whose Law-Whose Order: The Failure of Federal Contract Compliance," in *The Black Experience In American Politics*, edited by Charles V. Hamilton (G.P. Putnam's Sons: New York, 1973), pp. 325-338.

dants and barred any future charges or lawsuits. A signed release meant relinquishing virtually every means of legal redress for future as well as past discrimination. A worker was barred from recovery of any damages for continuing effects of any discriminatory acts occurring before the date of the decree. Thus the companies could eliminate all claims against them by offering an employee a mere $250. Workers had to accept the back pay within 30 days of the offer or lose all claim to it.

Black Workers and Civil Rights Groups Oppose the Decrees

CIVIL RIGHTS GROUPS IMMEDIATELY PREPARED TO FILE PETITIONS on behalf of black and female steelworkers who opposed the decrees. On April 15, 1974, the National Organization of Women (NOW) filed a motion to intervene; on April 23, the NAACP, representing a group of black steelworkers employed by U.S. Steel at its Homestead plant near Pittsburgh, and the national Ad Hoc Committee intervened to set aside or modify the consent decrees. The NAACP asserted that the government was not adequately protecting the rights of minority steelworkers and that the decrees contain several illegal provisions, including the perpetuation of the recall and layoff structure. Also challenged were the inadequate notice given employees when releases were sent out, and the attempt to discourage workers from filing future charges with the EEOC and OFCC. Also that the decrees usurped the functions of the courts that may in the future be required to decide Title VII lawsuits, and that the exclusion of the workers affected from the committees to implement the decrees was a denial of the rights of victims of discrimination to assert and protect their own claims. And finally, that the back-pay provisions were extremely inadequate.

On April 24, 1974 the NAACP Legal Defense Fund in several courts intervened on behalf of plaintiffs in steel industry cases, and on May 20, Judge Pointer ruled on the four motions, holding that only individual workers could intervene, organizations not representing specific persons could not. The NAACP's motions to set aside the decrees themselves were denied. However, Judge Pointer said he was

> concerned that some of the wording of the consent decrees may unnecessarily impair or impede the maintenance of private action. . . . I am concerned lest this decree be utilized improperly to prevent and preclude other private litigation. I think this may require a clarification order. It may be that even some modification may be sought as necessary by the Court to assure this result. . . . I'm not saying that I would propose utilizing this decree so as to bring into this Court in a single hearing a way of correcting all the problems in all these plants. I do not propose it. I buy and accept the concept that there must be rights and rights of action in local forums where the plants are located and that this decree should compliment and not frustrate any such efforts.

Thus, the Court indicated that it did not intend to serve as the sole forum for all future actions against companies and the union, as defendant companies and union had insistently requested. Judge Pointer gave the defendants ten days to decide if they wanted to continue with the decrees or voluntarily abandon them. On June 3, in a letter to Judge Pointer, the nine companies and the Steelworkers Union stated that: 1) they would not abandon the decrees, 2) they conceded the Court's authority to alter or amend portions of the decrees, 3) the Court

would be informed of any and all communications with the class (they had initially excluded the Court from approving notices and releases to workers), and 4) any relief other than that provided by the decrees would be "unwarranted." It urged the transfer of all cases to the District Court in Alabama.

On June 7, Judge Pointer issued his formal order, allowing intervention, denying relief but saying "it must be kept in mind that resolution in this form of issues between the government and the defendants does not preclude additional—or even inconsistent—relief in favor of private parties in other litigation." The Court reserved for future consideration the modification of the notice and release objections of the groups that had sought to intervene on the waiver of claims in return for payment.

The NAACP and others petitioned for a stay of Judge Pointer's order pending an appeal to the Fifth Circuit. Judge Pointer denied a stay but again noted that "the Memorandum of Opinion of June 7, 1974, makes it clear that this Court does not consider that the consent decrees entered herein in any way bind either the private plaintiffs involved in other pending litigation or the Courts in which such litigation is pending. . . . Additionally, while some class members may choose to execute a back-pay release in exchange for a tender of immediate back pay, such would not prevent continued litigation by the existing class representatives. On July 3, the NAACP and the Legal Defense Fund filed notices of appeal, but the Fifth Circuit sustained the decrees.

While civil rights organizations representing individual workers failed in intervention, their efforts resulted in significant modifications of the agreement. The Fifth Court of Appeals accepted their arguments to permit the filing of new charges with the EEOC against the nine steel companies and the union. The original decree had relegated new complaints to the implementation committees,[8] but this was changed and it was established quite clearly that the federal courts would have proper jurisdiction in future charges of discrimination.

As a result, black workers, women, and members of other non-white groups were free to initiate new litigation. Minority workers would have been prevented from doing so by the original decree requiring that complaints be filed with the Audit and Review Committee, and denying access to the EEOC and the federal courts. The modified decrees are not the sole source of future relief from all discrimination in the steel industry, nor will one court in Alabama be the sole judicial forum for hearing all claims of unlawful discrimination. The Government was also forced to modify its original position that court ordered relief was unnecessary in future litigation. Finally it was made clear that the decree *per se* did *not* mean compliance with Title VII and the Executive Order—a condition

[8]The NAACP later charged that the local implementation committees were ". . . in utter chaos and confusion. . . . Representatives of the NAACP have held frequent meetings with minority steelworkers in many parts of the country, and the evidence is most clear on this point. . . . Complaints to the Committee have been lost, complaining workers are not notified of the progress of their complaints, complaints are filed and nothing further is heard from the Committee—not so much as an acknowledgement of receipt, and complaining employees are barred from being represented by private attorneys in presenting their claims to the Committee." Roy Wilkins to Ben Fischer, Assistant to the President, United Steelworkers of America, September 2, 1975. Complete text appears as Appendix "A" in the on-line version of this article on the *New Politics* website, http://www.wpunj.edu/newpol.

the original decrees had established.

The conversion of the industry to a plant-wide seniority system expanded job opportunities for minority workers, but the decline of the industry resulted in massive unemployment with the result that the lay-off and recall system had a discriminatory impact on black workers that was unchanged by the consent decrees. A quarter of a century later it is evident that the agreement with its inherent limitations denied full justice to an earlier generation of black steelworkers while holding out the promise of equal treatment to future generations.

The *Weber* Case and Affirmative Action

STEIN'S ACCOUNT OF THE MUCH PUBLICIZED *WEBER* CASE, in which the U.S. Supreme Court in 1979 validated a voluntary affirmative action plan negotiated by the Kaiser Aluminum Company and the Steelworkers Union, takes up the argument for the union in a case where, she writes "The stakes were high because a majority of the court, like the nation's elite wanted to encourage affirmative action programs which in one way or another involved black preferences." The next paragraph criticizes "liberal and academic elites" who support affirmative action and "black preferences" that are far more destructive apparently than racial discrimination itself. A remedy is thus transformed into the evil, which the evidence of American history demonstrates is *white* preferences. But the effort to redress the balance even in a minimum way is to Stein alarming.

Stein is dismayed that after the Supreme Court decision in *Weber* "liberals celebrated this as a victory over 'racists,' Weber was no racist." She describes Brian Weber, the white worker who tried to block the affirmative action plan, as "an active unionist" with a "good record on civil rights." She charges that Justice Brennan's decision supporting the affirmative action plan "required a certain amount of historical distortion which Rehnquist's dissent duly noted, calling it Orwellian." Yet in her next sentence, she complains that Brennan was "Practically plagiarizing the USWA brief," for which she has high praise. Stein does not mention that Brennan's majority opinion emphasized that the affirmative action plan was necessary to eliminate the pattern of racial discrimination at the Kaiser plant. "Affirmative action," Justice Brennan said, was "designed to eliminate conspicuous racial imbalances in Kaiser's then almost exclusively white craft-work forces. . . . [J]udicial findings of exclusion from crafts on racial grounds," Brennan continued, "are so numerous as to make such exclusion a proper subject for judicial notice."

Stein does acknowledge that "The trigger for the USWA-Kaiser plan was government pressure" but she does not report the record of the many complaints from black workers filed with the Office of Federal Contract compliance against both the company and the union. In response to such complaints, the U.S. Department of Labor had issued critical reviews of discriminatory practices that jeopardized the company's government contracts. Both the company and the union were concerned that the pattern of civil rights violations would lead to litigation by the EEOC. Furthermore, the local branch of the NAACP in Gramercy, Louisiana, had announced that it would file a lawsuit. The affirmative action plan had been negotiated with the company to ward off further judicial intervention and to protect the union's treasury against compensatory damages.

Herbert Hill and Roy Wilkins; Stein's Account and the Author's Response

SINCE STEIN DISCUSSES DIRECTLY MY OWN ROLE AS LABOR SECRETARY OF THE NAACP, active in the struggles against the racial practices of the steel industry, a brief response is in order here. Stein writes: "Although Hill's charges, often undocumented, caused Roy Wilkins some anguish and embarrassment, the championing of black workers served the interests of the NAACP. . . ." No example is provided of "often undocumented" charges, though she is certainly right that the NAACP purposes included "the championing of black workers." A source Stein cites regarding Wilkins' alleged "anguish" is a reference to Wilkins' concern with publicity issues not substantive matters of policy or "undocumented" charges.

When the Jewish Labor Committee, in 1962, made somewhat similar accusations in an attempt to defend the International Ladies Garment Workers Union against NAACP criticism of its discriminatory practices, Wilkins responded that Hill was "not for trade unions first and Negro workers second." My sole job, he said, was "to serve the interests of the Negro worker through the NAACP." (The full text of Wilkins' statement appears as Appendix "B" in the on-line version of this article on the *New Politics* website, http://www.wpunj.edu/newpol.) When Ben Fischer of the Steelworkers Union wrote to Roy Wilkins in 1975 taking strong issue with my role, Wilkins responded in a detailed defense of our efforts on behalf of black steelworkers. Wilkins concluded:

> You should know that for more than 20 years the NAACP has been engaged in efforts to eliminate the discriminatory practices of the steel industry. As far back as 1957, the Association's Labor Department submitted extensive memoranda to the Steelworkers Union on this matter and many conferences were held with the leadership of the union which gave us nothing but kind words and broken promises.

Stein does not refer to either of Wilkins' statements or to his response to a 1962 letter from David Feller, general counsel of the Steelworkers Union, who had complained of my action with the National Labor Relations Board seeking de-certification of the union at the Atlantic Steel Company in Atlanta. Wilkins wrote:

> The conditions existed long before they were brought formally to our attention. . . . Every possible method (short of NLRB proceedings) has been employed to try to redress the grievances. . . . Piles of correspondence with the USWA have accumulated. Numerous conferences have been held, high-level, low-level and in-between. . . . Nothing has produced a meaningful change.

It should be noted that for more than thirty years I had a close personal, as well as a productive and satisfying professional, relationship with Roy Wilkins and when he retired in 1977, I resigned as Labor Secretary of the NAACP and accepted a position as professor at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

U.S. Supreme Court Decisions in Light of Stein's Retelling

IN THE 1976 CASE OF *FRANKS* V. *BOWMAN TRANSPORTATION CO.*, the U.S. Supreme Court took a major step forward in providing relief to black workers in holding that retroactive seniority could be awarded to identifiable victims of illegal ra-

cial discrimination. While the Court recognized that awarding retroactive seniority could have a negative effect on the status of some incumbent white employees, it ruled that failure to provide such appropriate relief would frustrate the objectives of Title VII. The Court ruled that nothing in the history of Title VII prohibited the award of retroactive seniority; thus courts could no longer deny such relief on grounds of a potential adverse impact on other employees. Apart from the legal history, there is the moral justification of redressing the consequences of generations of unfair advantages for whites who solely because of their race have been the beneficiaries of a pro-white affirmative action system.

The dissents of Justices Powell and Rehnquist, on the contrary, emphasized the interests of white employees over the rights of the victims of discrimination. Their stance became the dominant approach as the composition of the U.S. Supreme Court changed in an anti-civil rights direction. One year after *Franks*, these dissenting opinions became the majority view in *International Brotherhood of Teamsters* v. *U.S.*, which reversed the extensive body of case law beginning with *Quarles*, in 1968, and *Local 189, Papermakers*, in 1969, interpreting the law to mean that even a seniority system that perpetuated pre-act discrimination was legal under Title VII. This new decision set high evidentiary burdens of original intent to discriminate and other matters before courts could find a seniority system in violation of Title VII. To the NAACP Legal Defense Fund the decision in *Teamsters* was a "devastating setback," and Justice Thurgood Marshall's vehement dissent pointed out that the Court was not only overturning the decisions in *Quarles* and *Local 189, Papermakers*, but also in more than 30 cases on Title VII from six courts of appeals. Organized labor, especially the United Steelworkers of America, after years of resistance to change, had succeeded in narrowing the interpretation of Title VII so that it could be used only seldom and with difficulty in efforts to overturn discriminatory seniority systems.

In commenting on the Court's decision in *Teamsters*, and the role of the Steelworkers Union in this history, Stein writes, as already noted above, that "The USWA had never challenged the principles underlying seniority changes or the interpretation of Title VII. Initially, it did not believe that the law required changes, but after the court rulings, it did not contest the judgment." This blatantly misleading sentence is contradicted by the extensive record of litigation involving the Steelworkers Union. In case after case, for more than two decades, the Steelworkers Union was found to be in violation of the law, after its defense of discriminatory practices and its arguments for a restricted interpretation of Title VII were rejected by the courts

Among the many cases that refute Stein's assertions on the response of the Steelworkers Union is a case late in the history of the statute, *Goodman* v. *Lukens Steel* in Pennsylvania. In 1987, Robert M. Weinberg, an attorney representing the United Steelworkers of America, in oral argument before the U.S. Supreme Court, defended the union's refusal to process the seniority grievances of black workers. The Court, in a 6 to 3 decision, rejected the union's defense and held that the Steelworkers, despite the *Teamsters* decision, violated federal law. Justice White, in the Court's ruling, held the union in violation of Title VII because of its refusal to press black workers' grievance claims against the company. The United Steelworkers, according to the decision, "in effect categorized racial griev-

ances as unworthy of pursuit." Stein does not mention this case, or the 1977 case of *James* v. *Stockham Valves and Fittings Co.*, in which the Steelworkers were again held in violation of Title VII.

Much of the focus of *Running Steel, Running America* is an assault upon governmental anti-discrimination agencies such as the EEOC, and on private organizations, especially the NAACP and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the agencies that brought the complaints of black steelworkers into federal court. Stein writes that enforcement of Title VII by the federal courts, "through adversarial combat and incremental court review, had worsened race relations and added to the insecurity of all workers." Again, no evidence is given for this broad and dubious conclusion. Of course, cases don't get into court without combat, and *all* combat is, by definition, adversarial. It is the nature of a system of justice. The cases got to court because, in not a single instance, did the Steelworkers Union act voluntarily to dismantle its longstanding system of racial job segregation. When compelled, the union made minimal adjustments but over decades continued to reject demands of its black members for equal job opportunity. After 1965, the effective date of Title VII, the courts became a center of battle for black steelworkers. Litigation had become a form of struggle joined to picket lines and demonstrations at corporate offices and union headquarters.

Segregated job structures greatly benefited white workers, who were the power base of the union. With blacks a minority within the Steelworkers Union, change in the racial distribution of jobs could not come from within. Legal intervention was, therefore, necessary and, with the enactment of Title VII, black workers turned to the NAACP and the federal courts to do what the leadership of their union would not do on its own. The NAACP had come to the conclusion after exhausting all other approaches over a period of many years that the compulsion of law was necessary to eliminate the discriminatory employment pattern in the steel industry.

Because the union leadership regarded Title VII as a federal version of the weak and ineffectual state fair employment practice laws, it believed union seniority systems were, therefore, insulated from attack. It was assumed that Title VII was limited to future acts of discrimination only, and would not disturb the racial status quo. When the federal courts rejected these interpretations and began to enforce the new law and to issue broad innovative remedies, the Steelworkers Union, like many other labor organizations, resisted compliance and defended existing discriminatory practices, joining with employers in efforts to cripple Title VII. In *U.S. Postal Service* v. *Aikens*, for example, a case before the U.S. Supreme Court in 1983, the AFL-CIO went out of its way in a case not involving unions, to join with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the Reagan Administration Department of Justice in attacking the rights of minority workers under Title VII.

Stein is convinced that the civil rights movement was in error in conducting struggles for equal employment opportunity for black workers, and especially for its criticisms of the Steelworkers Union. The real issue, she argues, was not racial discrimination but federal economic policy. But the economic policy Stein supports, a form of protectionism by whatever name, is an obsolete policy in a global economy. And even if permanent full employment existed, as it cannot in a capitalist economy, the traditional pattern of racial discrimination in steel and other industries would not disappear. White workers derive substan-

tial financial and psychological benefits from not being black and cannot be expected to surrender the "wages of whiteness" voluntarily, while employers want a black labor force available for jobs whites reject and for work involving dangerous and extreme exploitation.

A principal purpose of Stein's book is to eliminate race as a controlling factor in the history of the events she discusses, especially in the history of the Steelworkers Union. But race *has* been the central issue in this history. Stein has constructed a version of events to fit her defense of the Steelworkers Union, and as a consequence, her interpretations are often factually inaccurate and her arguments misleading and do not bear close examination.

Whatever other functions it performed, the Steelworkers Union also functioned to preserve white privileges that were increasingly in conflict with the demands of black workers and an emerging body of civil rights law. Stein repeatedly frames the issues in a way that the whites, who have long enjoyed an unfair advantage, are about to be victimized, and the legitimate rights of black workers disappear. On the one hand, she is too "understanding" of the problems of the Steelworkers Union in fulfilling the expectations of their white members; on the other, she is always ready to justify the continued denial of equal rights for black workers. In *Running Steel, Running America*, Judith Stein has egregiously distorted history, misinterpreted the litigation record, and omitted much relevant material that contradicts her arguments. It is also a mean-spirited attack on the civil rights movement and black rank and file workers who struggled for racial justice in the workplace against powerful corporate and union opposition.

Muckraking in the Low-Wage World

NICKEL AND DIMED: ON (NOT) GETTING BY IN AMERICA by Barbara Ehrenreich. New York: Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Company, 2001, 221 pp, $23.00.

Reviewed by Christine Kelly

"A BRAIN, A HOME, A HEART, THE NERVE . . . " — or so goes the wish-list of the famous four sojourners in *The Wizard of Oz*. If Barbara Ehrenreich had been along for the trip to the Emerald City, she would have certainly tacked on something like "and some laughs" to the refrain. And lucky for us, for it is in Ehrenreich's signature and savvy wit that her readers will find comfort as she walks them through the lives of those employed in the low-paying service sector. In *Nickel and Dimed*, Ehrenreich's humor eases the reader along as she goes undercover through the otherwise painful, frequently depressing and all too often starkly undignified worlds of "low-wage" workers in the United States. Indeed, one of Ehrenreich's greatest insights in this book is that terms like "low-wage" — in conjunction with a host of corporate-aphorisms like "associate" or "team-member" — do not convey what really is at stake in the life of someone who makes six to seven dollars an hour in the U.S.

What *is* at stake, Ehrenreich demonstrates to us by journey's end, is that in today's economy you can " . . . work hard — harder even than you ever thought possible — and still find yourself sinking deeper into poverty and debt." The "boom," for those who hadn't noticed, has been a bust for millions long before the latent official declarations of a recession. And what the recent torrent of job losses bodes for millions of America's "unskilled" workers who gross $280 a week (or less) and already live in poverty, may in fact be the next great social disaster to catch the nation off-guard. While the Congress debates the federalization of airport security jobs, the newly received wisdom that people who are paid a living wage are bound to perform jobs more consistently brings little comfort to those last-hired and now first fired — among them scores of welfare-to-work mothers for whom no bail-out plans are being considered. *Nickel and Dimed* is an eerily prescient primer for how bad things are about to become for the bot-

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tom 20 percent of American wage earners.

It takes a journalist and social critic as committed and as audacious as Ehrenreich to go into the trenches. Ehrenreich's project originated, she tell us in the introduction, with a question: How does anyone " . . . make it on $6 or $7 an hour?" Her query inspired a decision to do "some old-fashioned journalism" in which she turns herself into, respectively, a waitress, a nursing-home worker, a maid, and finally a retail employee (or more endearingly a "Wal-Martian" as she puts it). In each case, she tries to live on what she makes. And in each case, despite exceedingly valiant efforts, she finds herself strapped, stressed and simply unable to make the most frugal ends meet. This kind of journalism, sensitive to hardship and injustice, investigative — even undercover — in pursuit of the hard-to-get-to-truths, fits well into the tradition of American muckraking. Political muckrakers of the last "turn of the century," appalled by the ravages of industrial capitalism, employed journalism, and sometimes fiction, in the cause of socialism and progressive reforms.

Among the great muckrakers of the early 20th century was writer and social critic Upton Sinclair who reported on and fictionalized the deplorable condition of industrial workers in such precise and painstaking detail that his readers simply could not turn away — and they did not. Indeed, Sinclair's most well-remembered book, *The Jungle*, though fictional, gripped the masses with the graphic realities he recorded while working undercover in the meat-packing industry in Chicago. *The Jungle* exposed the filth and dangers of the meat industry in 1906 and so appalled readers that reaction won the passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act of that year. Even though it was Sinclair's intention to bring the plight of the workers (and indeed, the cause of socialism) into focus, and he instead gave the cause of sanitary food a boost, it was still a victory in making more visible the hidden, and often horrific, conditions of "unskilled" labor. A century later, Barbara Ehrenreich sets her radar on the lives of service workers in the era of globalization, in the wealthiest nation on earth, during what turns out to be the final days of its biggest boom period ever. Politically speaking, the two contexts bear some comparison, though some crucial differences, I worry, will end up snatching from Ehrenreich the satisfaction that Sinclair must have felt when his work spurred an outraged public to action.

What the two centuries' turns have in common is that each testifies to new patterns of capital accumulation premised on the utter disregard for workers rights. Each is a period in which public debates on poverty are gendered and racially and ethnically charged, and the poor are depicted as in need of discipline, simple English, moral straightening, and sexual/reproductive control. Each is also an era, though in oddly incongruent directions, in which federal commitment to poor-relief is either non-existent or paper-thin. Each evidences, in different degree, electoral instability brought on by voter threats around which third parties hold allure. But this time, those not directly affected by the ravages of the new economy seem relatively oblivious — even the paternalism of middle-class Progressivism, aiming to protect the pitiful masses, is preferable to today's upper middle-classers' "denial" of their self-interested dependence on the personal services Ehrenreich's subjects provide at subsistence wages. Today, the middle class, in all its precarious glory, shrinks from political stances in defense of low-wage workers, and the poor generally, on the unspoken understanding that so much of what low-wage workers do

and sell makes middle-class consumption cheaper. Housekeeping services, nursing care for the elderly, child care for the young, and affordable cloths and fast food for every age in between distract busy buyers from seeing the corporate profiteering and labor shake-downs along the way — because a bargain is a bargain is a bargain. After all, its not contaminated beef and tubercular pork we're talking about anymore.

Perhaps, though, the most crucial difference between the eras is that low-wage workers' consciousness today, caught as it is in the cogs of the "service" economy, is less politicized, more integrated, definitely more monitored and, seemingly, more insecure than those factory and railroad workers — immigrant, black and so-called "native" — who fueled the great strikes at the beginning of the last century. And this time, the labor movement is less articulated (work itself more segmented, flexible and dis-aggregate) and unions less radical. In other words, the political position of low-wage workers is weaker, and therefore their need for serious allies more pronounced. And while Ehrenreich's book is a courageous look at why a job in the low-paying service sector today cannot guarantee a roof over workers' heads, threatens their health, undernourishes them and leaves their children hungry and at risk, the book's success will depend on an engaged and caring readership willing to support unionization, electoral reform and, not incidentally, a true safety-net. For her part, Ehrenreich has provided an important mirror for those in the nation who are otherwise oblivious to the worker who "goes hungry, so you can eat more cheaply and conveniently." This is *the* lesson that globalized production processes can teach Americans — though in a necessarily international context. Ehrenreich's hunch, I'm guessing, is that if Americans can't care about other Americans, why will they care about women and children sweating out blouses and rugs in Ecuador or Pakistan? *Nickel and Dimed* is more than muckraking in the low-wage world — Ehrenreich is muckraking the conscience of the comfortable in America. I hope they buy her book.

The Low-Wage Squeeze Play: Housing, Gender & the Intrusive Workplace

DESPITE EHRENREICH'S HUMOR, THIS IS A PAINFUL SOJOURN. For anyone who has worked these jobs and seen up close how waitresses, elder-care workers, house cleaners, child care workers and even those in retail exert themselves without receiving the recognition, fair compensation or economic stability hard word is supposed to bring, it is particularly poignant. What she discovers is that the sometimes cowed, often depressed, occasionally enraged and, at times, astonishingly generous and conscientious workers she meets are not merely earning low-wages; they are struggling to survive — and the strategies, tactics and pitfalls of survival is the story. Over the course of her three-months, she unsentimentally and unapologetically reports on six low-wage jobs in three states — Florida, Maine and Minnesota. Ehrenreich honestly admits that she is playing poor — she knows that she has an out at any time and that she brings to the low-wage world certain assets that already privilege her — she is white, she has a car, she has no dependents, and she starts each new job search with approximately $1,300 in hand. It is perhaps this $1,300 that gives her the greatest single advantage over many low-wage workers (though I would suggest that the lack of children and her race play a close second and third) and she acknowl-

edges this. Her "reserves" provide the capital that can serve as a security deposit and save a worker from the kinds of dire living arrangements that permeate the lives of Ehrenreich's co-workers and chain many of them to the poverty trap of roadside motels or the alternative — sleeping in their cars. In fact it is housing, and housing costs, which account for the majority of stress weighing on Ehrenreich's co-workers and, in fact, on Ehrenreich herself.

Twice during her mission, housing costs force Ehrenreich into working two-jobs (she is not alone: in 1996, she reports, 7.8 million Americans worked two jobs with two-thirds of them holding one full-time job and one part-time). But working two jobs is not always possible — it almost always requires reliable transportation and a degree of time flexibility that, for example, mothers of small children, simply do not have. These kinds of bad choices — or the lack thereof — haunt Ehrenreich's co-workers not for weeks as in Ehrenreich's case, but for years, and maybe for an interminable future if they are "lucky" enough to remain employed. As for her co-workers without spouses or live-in boyfriends/girlfriends, Ehrenreich discovers them living everywhere from their cars and vans, to motels rooms with 3-6 roommates, who sometimes sleep in shifts. Those without others to share costs are unable, from Florida to Minnesota, to get housing on one $7-an-hour job. Even those "households" with two wage earners in the service sector struggle to make trailer park rent — a task made infinitely less possible with dependents in tow — from children to ailing parents. The inevitable human drama resulting from such constraints pepper the limited conversation Ehrenreich seems able to steal or squeeze into the break time permitted at work. These are real people and Ehrenreich brings them to us in stark, if not wounding, detail.

Their realness is not easy to walk away from. Like Gail, the fiftyish and competent Key West waitress who, we learn, shares a room with a male friend in a "well-known flophouse for $250 a week." He's begun hitting on her but she can't leave because she can't afford the rent on her own. But when it's finally time for Ehrenreich to leave Key West (though at times Ehrenreich seems so completely overwhelmed trying to budget her meager wages that she appears to forget she will indeed be moving on) she finds she cannot go without bequeathing Gail her trailer-park security deposit and key. The states change, the jobs change and the names change, but what remains the same difficult hurdle for Ehrenreich and her co-workers is matching low-wages to some kind of housing.

As a straightforward explanation of why one can work a full-time job and still not have enough for rent, food and gas/transportation (not counting clothes, movies, car insurance and repairs, medicine or any other cost of getting sick with no insurance) the relationship between wages and rising housing costs goes a long way. In the 1960's housing took up 29 percent of the average family income. In 1999, it took up 37 percent. Of course, if you are lucky enough to own a home, a generous mortgage-interest deduction comes your way at tax-time. But for Gail, who spends closer to 50 percent of her income on housing, there is no subsidy. What's more, all of this is concealed by a poverty rate that has remained mysteriously steady at 13 percent. Ehrenreich explains:

> The reason for the disconnect between the actual housing nightmare of the poor and "poverty" as officially defined, is simple: the official poverty level is still calculated

> by the archaic method of taking the bare-bones cost of food for a family of a given size and multiplying this number by three. Yet food is relatively inflation-proof, at least compared with rent. (p. 200)

This is not to suggest that there are no problems for low-wage workers getting food. On two occasions, Ehrenreich is forced to search out food-pantries while waiting out the obligatory two-week delay for first paychecks. But the hurdle now harder to clear is the cost of housing. Besides rising housing costs, wages for the worst off workers have actually declined. The big surprise in the service sector during the boom years was that the conventional wisdom which suggested low unemployment leads to a rise in wages never really materialized for lowest-wage workers. More jobs appeared (now evaporating just as quickly) but not the predicted higher wages — the rise in wages between 1996 and 1999 was about 55 cents/hour for the lowest 20 percent. This, Ehrenreich concedes, is celebrated by some economists but is more than paltry when compared with higher income Americans who really did see their wages rise substantially. More pointedly, when current wages are compared with 1973 *in real dollars*, we discover that real wages for the lowest 10 percent of wage earners have actually declined 9 percent. For the lowest-wage earners in America today, they make less in real dollars and pay a higher percentage of their shrinking income on housing than they did in 1973. Unemployment down, poverty up — that's globalization's dirty little secret and Ehrenreich exposes it in the nation that offers its best-case scenario.

BESIDES HOUSING COSTS, TWO ADDITIONAL THEMES EMERGE in Ehrenreich's narrative that captures the dynamics of the poverty-end of the service sector: gender and privacy-busting management policies. Caught between the pressure of meeting rising housing costs with shrinking wages, and the seemingly omnipresent reach of personal tests and surveillance in the digital age, we discover a low-paid service worker who is most likely female — both in Ehrenreich's world and empirically. One of the most striking aspects of Ehrenreich's experiences is the way that gender expresses itself — both in relation to the wages of jobholders and the types of jobs clustered at the low-paying end. Job growth in the service-sector has been most rapid in areas like food service, eldercare, childcare, housecleaning, and clothing retail sales. All of these "services" reflect a revamping, under the conditions of globalization, of the marketization of services traditionally provided in the home by women's unpaid labor.

In the endless search for new markets and cheap labor, global capital accumulation strategies exploit the "service" shortfall for middle and upper-middle class families where greater numbers of women are working out of the home. Corporate purveyors of the service economy score high profits by meeting these needs with the purchase of the labor of poverty-line women at below-subsistence rates. They then sell that labor back to middle-class consumers at "affordable" rates. The lowest conceivable wage is made possible by a more vulnerable female labor-pool resulting from the federal withdrawal of welfare guarantees since 1996. With a vengeance, the new "service" sector, as Ehrenreich's work vividly demonstrates, has reinvented the structural utility of gender (in combination with race and ethnicity) as a demarcator of "unskilled" and as a justification for low-wages. Indeed, the femaleness of poverty in the low-wage service

sector signals a return, however disguised, of the old "woman's wage" that was debated in the Progressive era. There employers rationalized lower wages for women by relying on gendered needs'- based arguments. As conveyed by late-nineteenth century economist William Smart, women's lower wages were justified " . . . because she does not require a high wage, whether it be because her father partly supports her, or because her maintenance does not cost so much."[1] Today, employers do not publicly argue that women require less sustenance — nor do they (currently) upbraid women for being in the labor market as full-time earners past the "marrying-age" on the mythological assumption that marriage and their husband's wage is all they will ever need. Instead, they recoil from needs-based arguments entirely (after all, the needs-based "living wage" demand is the tack of organized labor) and simply slap the more male mythology of homo-economicus onto the simultaneously real and prejudicial constraints of working-class women's lives. It is the desperation of poor women, and particularly those who are heads of households, that permits service-sector employers to successfully label these traditionally female services of the low-wage economy "unskilled" and deny both the needs and value of women workers at the same time. Otherwise how could all those tentatively middle-classers afford the services, food and clothes? It is a 21st century corporate make-over of the exploitation of women's skill and value under patriarchal family arrangements.

Nowhere is this more obvious than in Ehrenreich's chapter titled "Scrubbing in Maine." Actually, Ehrenreich is doing more than scrubbing in Maine — she takes on two jobs to make her $120.00 per week rent (requiring a low $100.00 security) for a tiny efficiency at the Blue Haven Motel near Portland. During her month-long stint, Ehrenreich will work seven days per week — she works weekends as a "dietary aid" on the Alzheimer's ward in a nursing home for $7.00 an hour and full-time at the corporate housecleaning chain "Merry Maids." At Merry Maids, a forty-hour week of what Ehrenreich calls "heavy labor with a high risk of repetitive stress injuries" grosses $266. Her co-workers women in various stages of life who are hard, hard workers, and seem painfully covetous of the homes and incomes of those whose toilets they clean. At the same time, they remain resentful of the actual customers (especially the stay-at-home mom who follows them from room to room). Whom they surprisingly do not resent is their boss — Ted, the franchise owner — or better yet the corporate chain who pays them $6.25 an hour while customers are charged $25 per hour per "maid." Ehrenreich reports that close to 20 percent of American households are buying these services, with the percentage of households purchasing cleaning services up 53 percent between 1995 and 1999. This "booming" category of service, she contends, is controlled by national and even international chains — among them Merry Maids, Molly Maids, Mini Maids, Maid Brigade and The Maids International.[2] The bizarre relationship between women's mass entry into the workforce largely assisted by the efforts of the women's liberation movement, and the exploitation of women in the service sector is not lost on one chain-owner, who, Ehrenreich tells us " . . . closes 30-35 percent of his sales by making follow-up calls Saturday between 9:00 and 11:00 am — which is prime time for arguing over the fact that the house is a mess.'" Another owner brags "We save marriages." But whose marriages?

Certainly not the postponed marriage of single-mom Maddy, who leaves her child with an untrustworthy relative-of-sorts because she can't afford any-

thing else. And then there is Holly who is " twenty-three, has been married for almost a year, and manages to feed her husband, herself and an elderly relative on $30-50 a week" (pp. 96-97). Thin, pale and always unable to buy lunch at lunch break, Holly is discovered one day by Ehrenreich slumped over a sink in a house they are cleaning; the problem: she had a fight with her husband — she's nauseous, probably pregnant, and terrified the boss will find out before she can find another, less taxing, $6-an-hour job.

MUCH OF WHAT EHRENREICH RECORDS IS NOT NEW, but appears more pernicious, widespread and deeply concealed by the uneven prosperity of recent years. What helps to conceal the exacting constraints on the working-poor is the intrusiveness of management "screening" and monitoring techniques. After all, management figures, when you are only paying $6 an hour, you cannot be too careful about who you are hiring. But the gate-keeping is more than a hiring device; employer possession of knowledge of the most intimate sort creates an atmosphere of compliance evident in the workers Ehrenreich meets in Florida, Maine and definitely in Minnesota where she is employed by the monstrous retail chain, Wal-Mart.

Like most management "techniques," the culture of personal surveillance and tracking lauded by service sector employers aims for a more compliant workforce in the face of labor violations. Widespread employer use of technologies aimed at gathering privacy data (including drug testing, personality tests, credit reports and video surveillance) further individuates work identity and consciousness and undermines the basis for any political rights — and certainly unionization rights — at work. As Ehrenreich puts it:

> When you enter the low-wage workplace — and many of the medium-wage workplaces as well — you check your civil liberties at the door, leave America and all it supposedly stands for behind, and learn to zip your lips for the duration of the shift. (p. 210)

It is precisely this atmosphere which has prompted the AFL-CIO under the Sweeney administration to initiate the *Voices@Work* Campaign to increase workers civil liberties on the job — including speech rights about unions.

From Florida to Maine to Minnesota, and from Winn-Dixie to Merry Maids to Wal-Mart, service-sector employers want to test your personality. They do so with those curiously conceived pre-employment tests, which Ehrenreich seems certain that anyone " . . . who has ever encountered the principles of hierarchy and subordination" can pass, though about 15 years ago I myself failed one applying for a waitressing job at a restaurant called "Stuff Yer Face," no less. It was the tricky way they force you to lie about things like drugs and alcohol. I must have taken the same one Ehrenreich passed to get the Merry Maids job but with less acumen:

> Among the propositions I am asked to opine about are "Some people work better when they're a little bit high," "Everyone tries marijuana," and bafflingly, "Marijuana is the same as a drink." Hmm, what kind of drink? I want to ask. "The same" how — chemically or morally? Or should I write in something flippant like "I wouldn't know because I don't drink?" (pp. 58-59)

Ehrenreich is correct, I think, to conclude that the real function of these tests is

to make workers feel owned. She suggests the real message to workers is "You will have no secrets from us. We don't want your muscles and that portion of your brain that is directly connected to them, we want your innermost self." (p. 59) This too is the effect of the entire Wal-Mart hiring process. For a Wal-Mart job not only are you subjected to the personality test, but you have to pee. Ehrenreich, who applies to two jobs that require urine tests, has to complete two in one day. Though one procedure (the one for Wal-Mart) would have been easy to beat with a little advanced planning, the other was more stringent and included leaving her purse with the stranger administering the test. Just in case the drug testing process — which Ehrenreich concludes is really designed to wear down workers' money, time and gasoline — does not completely cow prospective employees, certainly the Wal-Mart orientation will. What eventually follows a clean pee-test is an eight-hour orientation fueled by Wal-Mart videos celebrating the cult of Sam Walton, warning of "time theft," vanquishing "unions" and praising the Wal-Mart family with double-speak like "associate" for worker, and, unbelievably, "servant leader" for managers.

The privacy-data on workers, now owned by the employers, is buttressed by the use of video cameras — this is made clear to Wal-Mart workers during orientation when a produced video integrates clips from an in-store camera catching an employee stealing from the drawer. Perhaps it is more the suggestion, than the consistent use, of the technology of surveillance that effectively disciplines workers. In either case, the effects are, as Ehrenreich finds, battalions of workers who are incredibly worried about losing their jobs for even talking to other workers while on the floor. Fearful, perhaps more than "integrated" is the best term to describe workers' consciousness in the low-wage world.

With the belt tightening that chastens the current economic climate, workers' fears will have to turn to anger before it might receive political expression. But more immediately, the interests of these workers demands political support from other quarters — this might certainly provide some fortification for their hypothetical battle. Or perhaps, if their survival and rights as Americans are considered expendable by the many others living more comfortably, then they may simply be forgotten in the months ahead. If this is the case, then the giants of globalization will have succeeded in paving the future for new, lower definitions of fairness and new standards of poverty. Ehrenreich's work here reveals the pressing dilemmas facing America's working-poor. Ultimately, her exposé poignantly reposes the traditional labor query: Which side are you on?

NOTES

1. Quoted in Alice Kessler-Harris, *A Woman's Wage* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1990), p. 51.

2. See pp. 70-71 for a more complete explication of this trend.

A Large and Dangerous Movement

RIGHT-WING POPULISM IN AMERICA: TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT by Chip Berlet and Matthew N. Lyons. The Guilford Press, 2000. 471 pages, $21.95, paper.

Reviewed by Marvin Mandell

> "According to a recent study, Republicans have three times as many nightmares as Democrats."
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> — Peter Jennings, ABC -TV News, June, 2001
>
> Question: How many nightmares do Far Rightists have?

YEARS AGO ADMINISTRATORS OF OUR DAUGHTER'S BOSTON PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL brought charges against her history teacher. Questioning her, we learned that he was Far Right. "Does he allow students to disagree?" With her unequivocal yes, we went to the hearing to defend him. During a break in the hearing, I told him that his views were anathema to us, that I was a Trotskyist, but that his right of speech should be inviolable. He said, "Trotskyist? I have proof that as Trotsky was embarking from Halifax, Nova Scotia for Russia in spring, 1917, an emissary of the Rothschild family met him on the dock and gave him millions to start the October Revolution." I roared, "Jewish capitalist shtups Jewish communist to foment a revolution in Mother Russia!" "I have proof. I have a newspaper clipping with a photograph." His source? A 1918 *Journal American*, the equivalent, I suppose, of producing today a copy of *The Enquirer* to prove that aliens abducted and seduced Julia Roberts.

Not all the sources of Far Rightists are this shoddy, but their thinking is. Many Far Rightists are Anglophobes who believe that Jewish millionaires have been propping up the British throne. A revolution would — and did — pull Russia out of the Allied camp in World War I. How that would help embattled England was a mystery to me, but of course he explained it. Conspiracy theorists are very clever at fitting together the puzzle pieces of history; they have the diabolical cleverness of E. A. Poe's madmen. Conspiracy theory, like astrology, seems to me a shortcut to knowledge, a quicker way to get a handle on the world than serious scholarship.

In Victor Serge's novel *The Case of Comrade Tulayev*, a man goes outside on a bright day, feels good, and spontaneously kills a commissar. Stalin suspects conspiracy and arrests the commissar's relatives, friends, servants, acquaintances, and eventually enlarges the web to snare thousands. For the paranoid, spontaneous acts do not occur: all events can be explained; everything is connected, and everything is directed from a central source; there are no accidents; everything is planned and purposeful, even as God presumably arranged the earth and life on it.

Chip Berlet and Matthew N. Lyons have written a massive work (1,353

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footnotes!!), *Right-Wing Populism in America: Too Close for Comfort* covering a wide historical canvas, from the 17th-century Bacon Rebellion to the movement to impeach Bill Clinton. A major right-wing populist theme is the "producerist" narrative, the focus of Jacksonians, Henry Ford, Father Coughlin, the Birchers, etc. The producerist narrative usually includes as producers farmers, workers, and manufacturers struggling against non-producing parasites at the top like moneylenders and against non-producing parasites at the bottom such as welfare women and lazy people (usually, in this narrative, those of color).

IN TWO USEFUL APPENDICES, the authors distinguish among conservatives — the secular and the Christian Right and among the Hard Right the Christian theocrats and the Xenophobic Right, which includes overt fascists, neo-Nazis, etc.

Throughout, the authors insist that right-wing populists are normal people, our neighbors, our co-workers, our relatives. This is hard to swallow when one looks, for example, at one wing of the Hard Right, clerical fascism:

> The Reconstructionist conception of biblical law includes abolishing the welfare state and all public services, including the public schools, as well as labor unions and laws protecting civil rights, the environment, and workplace health and safety. 'A radically unfettered capitalism (except in so far as it clashed with Biblical Law) would prevail....
>
> Government functions, including taxes, would be primarily at the county level.' Only men from biblically correct churches could vote or hold office. The death penalty would be applicable as punishment for homosexuality, adultery, heresy, striking a parent, and, in the case of women, having an abortion or 'unchastity before marriage.'"(Right-Wing Populism, p. 249).

But Berlet and Lyons take a strong position against what they call the "centrist/extremist theory," which they attribute to Daniel Bell, Richard Hofstadter, and Seymour Martin Lipset, theorists who, they say, "drew parallels between McCarthyism and the Left and portrayed themselves as guardians of the rational, democratic center against both extremes." (Ibid, pp. 168-9). The authors give no example of Bell, Hofstadter, and Lipset targeting any left wing U. S. groups. (Unquestionably, all were opposed to Soviet imperialism, as were other liberals and radicals.) Their description is indeed true of Lipset, who, with Edward Shils, denounces ideological extremists of the Left and of the Right. ("Three Decades of the Radical Right," in Daniel Bell, ed., *The Radical Right*, Doubleday, Anchor, 1964, p. 374). Yet it is unfair to so characterize Hofstadter, who certainly did not see himself as the rational centrist poised against equally fanatic and equally dangerous Left and Right extremists.* And Bell opposed Truman's measures against the Left (Ibid., p. 57n).

What Berlet and Lyons try to refute without explication is Hofstadter's

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*Does positioning yourself against both Soviet imperialism and McCarthyism entitle you to the epithet "cold war liberal"? In 1964, Hofstadter wrote, "Like Goldwater, Kennedy had protested that we were seriously underarmed — and his admirers remember the bogus 'missile gap' issue with chagrin. Like Goldwater, Kennedy had stressed the theme that the U. S. had lost prestige abroad, and dwelled on the establishment of Castro in Cuba only 90 miles from our shores. Thus the Kennedy and Goldwater campaigns were both vigorously nationalistic." (Hofstadter, pp. 130-1) Does this sound like the rhetoric of a cold war liberal?

influential 1964 essay "The Paranoid Style in American Politics." Here Hofstadter distinguishes between clinical paranoids and politicians who use the paranoid style:

> [T]here is a vital difference between the paranoid spokesman in politics and the clinical paranoiac: although they both tend to be overheated, oversuspicious, overaggressive, grandiose, and apocalyptic in expression, the clinical paranoid sees the hostile world in which he feels himself to be living as directed specifically *against him*; whereas the spokesman of the paranoid style finds it directed against a nation, a culture, a way of life whose fate affects not himself alone but millions of others (in *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays*, (Harvard U. Press, 1965, p. 4, emphasis his).

AGAIN AND AGAIN BERLET AND LYONS stress many right-wing populists' sense of conspiracy against "producers" and their active scapegoating of such groups as Jews, Blacks, homosexuals, and feminists. Both the sense of a worldwide conspiracy and the activity of scapegoating seem to me, as they did to Hofstadter, aspects of the paranoid style. The authors insist, "Right-wing populists are dangerous not because they are crazy irrational zealots — but because they are not." (Berlet, Lyons, p. 3). They state that "Right-wing populist claims are no more and no less irrational than conventional claims that presidential elections express the will of the people ... that U. S. military interventions in Haiti or Somalia or Kosovo... are designed to promote democracy...." (Ibid., p. 348). It seems to me that there is a huge difference between, on the one hand, people who swallow the mainstream media's lines about democratic elections here and "benign" invasions abroad and, on the other hand, people who believe that Jews or Illuminati control all events and that gays should be punished. Another example: someone who reads the Bible literally and believes that homosexuality is a sin is different from someone who wants actively to punish gays. The authors say that right-wing populists are not "crazy, irrational zealots." Since every culture has its own definition of "crazy," let us leave that word out of this. But right-wing populists are not irrational? Many of them hate gays because they fear their own sexuality; many hate gays because they fear they are out to get their children. Are not these fears irrational? Is it not extremely irrational to believe that Rothschild gave Trotsky money to start the October Revolution? If the answers to these questions is "no," the word "irrational" loses its meaning.

Of course, not all or even most right-wing populists subscribe to a view as bizarre as that of the clerical fascists (above), but a paranoid style in varying degrees pervades.

In their bibliography, Berlet and Lyons cite *The Authoritarian Personality*, by Theodore Adorno, et. al., but they make no use of it in the book. And there is no reference to the works of Wilhelm Reich, who examined the irrational fascist character structure, maintaining that rigid character armoring was rooted in sexual repression and economic exploitation. I do not want to simplify. One fascinating, vivid exception to Reich's theories would have astonished Reich:

> [Christian Rightist Beverly] LaHaye and her husband, Christian Right leader Tim LaHaye,... wrote a frank sex manual, *The Act of Marriage: The Beauty of Sexual Love*, which declared that (married, heterosexual) women have a right to sexual pleasure — 'Your heavenly Father placed (your clitoris) there for your enjoyment'— encouraged women to be active in lovemaking, and even endorsed birth control because it enabled women to enjoy sex more fully. Ibid., p.232.

This must be the only time Far Right populists — people who fear a secular humanist conspiracy — advocated sexual pleasure for women, and it demonstrates the powerful influence of the feminist movement's articulation.

Berlet and Lyons do a commendable job of linking the various right-wing populist struggles across the centuries with a common thread of resistance to those above them — the real moneyed elite and imaginary conspiratorial figures — as well as resistance to poor people below them (Indians for the Bacon rebels and the Jacksonians, Blacks, Chinese, Mexicans, women, etc. for later right-wing populists). But while stressing the economic causes of unrest and resentment, they do not neglect the cultural: along with other chroniclers of right-wing populism, they see that "the charges against the Illuminati, the Freemasons, and Jews at heart embodied a backlash against the Enlightenment," (Ibid., p. 192) which right-wingers regarded not only as a threat to private property, but also to Christianity, morality, and national sovereignty. The Enlightenment was the door opening to what we think of as modernism, and, as the 1925 Scopes "Monkey" trial demonstrated, modernism was also a threat to the kind of education right-wing populists wanted and indirectly to the paternalistic family structure.

THE AUTHORS INDICT THE GOVERNMENT for its often unconstitutional attacks on both Left and Right, as well as on the 110,000 Japanese — two-thirds of whom were U. S. citizens — herded into concentration camps after Pearl Harbor. The authors note that President Roosevelt's jailing of the 18 Socialist Workers Party members "convicted in 1942 as part of a move to smash the Trotskyist radical wing of the Teamsters' Union" (Ibid., p. 154) was supported by the Communist Party, whose leaders, after the war, were jailed under the same Smith Act. A personal note: I remember when, in 1948, Henry Wallace, former Vice President under Roosevelt, appeared at a rally in Buffalo, New York, as a presidential candidate for the Progressive Party. Someone in the audience asked him if he now regretted once supporting the Smith Act. He nodded, but was quickly jerked back into a huddle by Stalinist handlers (including Lee Pressman and James J. Matles). When he returned to the microphone — hair disheveled— he said he wouldn't discuss the past, and he was roundly booed by an audience that knew who were pulling the marionette strings of the Progressive Party. Many walked out.

Berlet and Lyons are aware that at times the Government lashes out against the right wing (e. g. against the German-American Bund before World War II, against Lyndon Larouche in the '80's and against both the Weavers at Ruby Ridge and the Davidians at Waco in the '90's). But they also point to Government collusion with the right wing. They mention that an FBI informer was in the car carrying the Klansmen who killed civil rights worker Viola Liuzzo, that the FBI helped create and fund a right-wing paramilitary group called the Secret Army Organization, that the FBI helped plan the Greensboro massacre in which a hit squad of neo-Nazis and Klansmen murdered five members of the Communist Labor Party. To that should be added the fact that Cinque, leader of the Symbionese Liberation Army, was a police informant and possibly a provocateur. In fact we may never know the extent of provocateurism. After Nixon's "Plumbers" were caught breaking into both the Watergate and the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist, the maverick conservative Lowell Weiker was the only

Senator on the Senate Watergate committee who wanted to continue the investigation to see what else the Plumbers were up to. Those of us active in the peace movement during the Vietnam War often suspected that the wildest among us urging the crowds to bomb a post office or a courthouse were provocateurs. The Nixon Government had good reason to want to discredit the peace movement. But provocateurism is less readily suspected in the U. S. than in Europe. The word does not even appear in several abridged college dictionaries.

DESPITE THE COMPREHENSIVENESS OF THEIR STUDY, there are, in my view, three omissions:

• In their discussion of Radical Reconstruction after the Civil War, the authors point to the achievements such as free public education, medical and legal services for the poor, some rights for women, etc., but they fail to mention any excesses during this period. Yes, there were excesses. No people could live in slavery for 200 years without committing them.

• Berlet and Lyons make no mention of the May 31, 1921 Tulsa massacre, a pogrom against an entire Black neighborhood, the largest pogrom in American history, killing over 150 and leaving 11,000 homeless.

• In their summary of factors leading people to join right-wing populist movement, the authors cite

— anxiety over social, cultural, and political change;
— fear of losing privilege and status...;
— a sense of disempowerment...;
— economic hardships...;
— disillusionment with mainstream political choices;
— the weakness or nonexistence of leftist radical alternatives....(Ibid.,p.346)

But, characteristic of their shying away from emotional causation, they fail to mention fear of sexuality and fear of a threat to the family. And the reaction to movements of youth, Black civil rights, peace activists, feminists, and gays should be stressed, although mentioned in passing elsewhere.

A factual error: "It was Clinton... who insisted on a two-year cutoff point for welfare benefits...." (Ibid., p. 309) The authors mean a five-year cutoff point. Some states went beyond the federal requirement and instituted a two-year cutoff. Connecticut has gone so far as to limit welfare to 21 months.

ALTHOUGH THEY COVER A WIDE CANVAS, including social movements and their context, Berlet and Lyons are journalists, not historians, and their style reflects this — adequate but journeyman, devoid of allusiveness, imagery, and — alas — liveliness.

Nevertheless, this critique pales when stacked up against the enormous solid research that the authors have done. We are in debt to them for showing us the history and unraveling the thought of a large movement that is — though by no means homogeneous — indeed "too close for comfort."

A Provocative Study of the Constitution

THE VELVET COUP: THE CONSTITUTION, THE SUPREME COURT, AND THE DECLINE OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY by Daniel Lazare, New York, Verso, 2001, 160 pp, $23 (hardback).

Reviewed by Helen Kim

In the context of the current war in Afghanistan it is difficult to remember the tumult of the presidential election of 2000 and the degree to which the near collapse of Florida's electoral system raised sharp questions about the constitutional system as a whole. Daniel Lazare's *The Velvet Coup* offers a provocative assessment of how and why a document drafted at the end of the 18th century continues to shape and constrain American politics. Lazare writes not as an academic specialist in early U.S. history but as the quintessential outsider who sees the limitations of the present system in the way that only an outsider can. Although Lazare has written extensively on the decline of American democracy, this time he contextualizes his main argument within the framework of a post-Floridian political landscape.

In this book Lazare takes the reader through some of the more obscure corners of American history for the purpose of uncovering and debunking the myths that enshroud and protect our nation's Constitution. His main contention is that the system of government that is currently in place is archaic, premodern and fundamentally anti-democratic. For some, the debacle of the 2000 election helped bring this fact to light, pushing, in Lazare's words, a "teetering old stagecoach" to the brink of collapse. In an interview for *New Politics* ("A Real Constitutional Crisis," no. 30), Lazare summarized his conception of the Constitution in the following terms:

> The Constitution reflected the agrarian ideas of the great majority of the Founders who were afraid of things like capitalism and urbanization and who wanted to create an essentially agrarian kind of democracy, one which would be slow-moving, deliberative and conservative. This is the essence of the Jeffersonian theory of the republican polity . . . In a fundamental way, this is an anti-urban document that is against the interests of the urban majority in this country.

In *The Velvet Coup*, Lazare builds on this argument by tracing the Constitution's roots in small-c conservative, rural English politics of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This is, of course, a very different approach from that adopted by mainstream commentators, who tend, as Lazare notes, to depict the Constitution as divinely inspired:

> One of the unfortunate aspects of American-style constitution worship is that it takes a complex historical process and reduces it to a tale of Moses descending from

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> the mountaintop. Instead of real people trying to work their way through real problems, national mythology has given us a group of tribal patriarchs known as the Founding Fathers participating in what a 1960s bestseller described in all seriousness as the 'miracle at Philadelphia.'

LAZARE SPENDS A GREAT DEAL OF TIME DESCRIBING the sociopolitical and economic climate of Tudor England. He finds that the ideas and perceptions of rightful and proper government and rule that were prevalent in England during this period laid the foundation to the future American republic. The Puritans, deeply outraged by the crown's dissolution of parliamentary rule, began their mass exodus to the New World. They came with the intent to start a new political order, one that would reinstate the ancient principles of a divided and balanced government that would be separate and diffuse for the sake of freedom and liberty of the people it served. The reverence and the awe that many Americans feel toward the Constitution, and the nostalgia that many feel for the post-revolutionary period of nation-building, comes from a long history of what Lazare refers to as "democratic primitivism," i.e., "the belief that ancient times had been freer, that the modern age had witnessed a loss of liberty." Lazare suggests that this kind of thinking is a popular view that is "deeply engrained" and "colored all perceptions."

The book describes the hashing and wrangling out process of creating a new government and constitution of the post-revolutionary period as one of confusion and chaos. There was the ever-present desire to re-establish the principles of the ancient constitution, so a natural law that was violated by the British in combining divided powers would reign once and for all. Instead of a unified front of voices that demanded a strong and democratic federal government that would serve the masses, the overriding view of a proper government and the document that would ensure this framework came from a small, intellectually diverse group of privileged men.

> Rather than representing the people, the delegates were legislating in behalf of a hypothetical "reasonable man" whom they hoped that a new constitution would call into existence . . . The delegates deliberated behind closed doors while the people went about their business outside . . . While the Philadelphia delegates believed they knew what the people wanted (or at least what the people would accept), they could never be quite sure because the popular voice was scattered and muffled . . . A constitution was not something that the people created themselves, but something that a few outstanding men created for them.

This group of "tribal patriarchs" — who were afraid of the fickle, unstable and uneducated nature of the masses on one hand and who were frightened of an overly strong and tyrannical government that would give a great deal of power to one person or one branch of government or the other — hammered out a document that would neutralize both popular and governmental power. Political sovereignty was diffused and divided among the different branches of the federal government; between the federal government and that of the states; between state agencies and local agencies; and between governing bodies and individual citizens. In this way they achieved the mission of bringing government back to the ancient ways of the past, in harmony with nature and in perfect sync with natural law.

As Lazare points out, this conception of government raises an interesting

question: "if the leaders of the new republic were determined to banish sovereignty, then who, ultimately, would be in charge? The answer, it was everyone and no one. The essence of the American system was its fundamental ambiguity as to where ultimate authority lay."

When we look back to what happened in Florida, or Watergate, or the Civil War, we see that the government and the Constitution has endured according to Lazare mainly by pulling back on the promise of popular power and democracy. The confusion over power and authority within the government, the people or the Constitution was never clearer than in Florida this past election.

SO WHAT ARE WE TO DO ABOUT ALL OF THIS? After recounting the conception and formation of the Constitution and republic and analyzing how it manifests itself in a number of undemocratic ways, what solutions have we to eradicate corruption, decay and instead enact democratic progress and reform? The bad news of a constitutional crisis is dropped in our laps at an unprecedented time when the unthinkable has happened. Our nation's survival depends now more than ever on a strong government that will protect its people.

The Velvet Coup falls short in providing possible solutions. Instead, the book serves as description rather than prescription. Lazare spends so much time looking at our past that there is very little room for what he thinks is possible in the future. The last chapter seems out of place with the rest of the book. The transition from history in depth to a surreal future of the impossible is confusing and unnecessary. Lazare writes of a scenario in 2004 with the Democrats winning the presidential election and of Gore making his acceptance speech, which is, to say the least, strange and jarringly out of context. For all that Lazare talks about large-scale reform and progressive political action, why does it have such a relatively weak presence in the book? While there was much mentioned over why the current system and constitution is flawed, and quirky prose over the possible and much improved future, little is said on how we can get past the history and toward the future. Instilling a sense of urgency among readers is woefully undermined by the scarcity of discussion over possible methods of enacting said changes.

Lazare first mentions proportional representation as a step in the right direction. Proportional representation, he says, will allow for a greater number of political parties to choose from and will eliminate the unfair advantage and clout that a minority of states — mainly underpopulated and rural — would have on the rest of the country. There is mention of the fact that oftentimes, proportional representation may lead to corruption, immobility and gridlock between warring party factions, not to mention the instability of coalition governments with abrupt changes in party alliances. But even if we wanted it done, no one could say that they have the authority to do it. Or do they?

As for campaign finance reform, decriminalization, harsher gun control laws and even a constitutional convention, the presupposition is that the constitution must first be amended before any of these reforms can be implemented. Lazare says that this is all possible primarily through mass political mobilization. Lazare envisions mass campaigns to raise necessary awareness, with a radical intellectual movement involving a more comprehensive criticism than what we have now. Yet, this seems pretty innocuous and ineffectual because, as Lazare makes the point, the people's voices even two hundred years ago were

scattered and muffled. Disenfranchisement of minorities are widespread, and with one in every eight members of the black population unable to vote for being a criminal offender, that tips the scale in favor of those who want to maintain the status quo.

BUT I HAVE TO QUESTION THE WAY one would go about raising awareness. The layer of apathy that settles over us is made stronger because we are at war. *The Velvet Coup* discusses issues that could not have been more brilliant and timely. While we are waving our flags and saluting our soldiers and waxing nostalgic over our lasting and enduring democracy that serves as a symbol to the rest of the world of peace and freedom, the President and his administration are sending in troops to Afghanistan. We are worried but many of us feel helpless to do anything but wring our hands as we watch the evening news. This book was written before September 11, yet it seems to directly correlate to the events subsequent to the attacks. *The Velvet Coup* says things about our president's power to attack other countries that resonate deeply such as:

> In some ways, an American president is still weaker than a Canadian or European prime minister . . . in other respects, however, a U.S. President is a good deal more powerful. Surrounded by courtiers, intelligence agencies, and military units at his beck and call, he is free to launch invasions or order covert operations any time, day or night, without fear of contradiction from his cabinet or his subordinates. Indeed, he is expected to engage in such unilateral displays . . . Short of total warfare, a U.S. President has carte blanche to attack whom he pleases virtually anywhere in the world. The only check on his power is the fear that one of his targets might someday strike back, a fear, needless to say, that no imperial power can afford to admit.

But, if one were to look at the state of our political system in this way, with cynicism and long-driven laziness, we will continue to limp along, allowing and even helping the machinery that runs our country collect dust, die and rot. So perhaps Lazare has a point. Perhaps the most important thing currently is to make the public feel empowered and enabled. The old saying that knowledge is power comes to mind and it is a precious commodity, now more than ever.

Remembering Tony Cliff

A WORLD TO WIN: LIFE OF A REVOLUTIONARY by Tony Cliff. London: Bookmarks, 2000, 247 pp, $16.

INTERNATIONAL STRUGGLE AND THE MARXIST TRADITION: SELECTED WRITINGS, VOL. 1 by Tony Cliff. London: Bookmarks, 2001, 332 pp, $20.

Reviewed by Kent Worcester

ONE OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS REPRODUCED IN *A World To Win* features Tony Cliff and Chanie Rosenberg posing in front of Buckingham Palace. The year is 1946. Cliff and Rosenberg had married the year before, and they seem to be enjoying themselves. But they were no ordinary tourists. Behind their warm smiles lurked a steely sense of political resolve. I would wager that even as the shutter snapped they were thinking to themselves, "this looks like a nice building for a workers' council, or an old people's home, or a print shop." Some tourists fantasize that the Queen will invite them up for tea. Cliff and Rosenberg were more likely to have speculated about what would be done with the Palace's furnishings on the day of the workers' revolution.

Tony Cliff, whose birth name was Ygael Gluckstein, was born in 1917 in Palestine (which at the time was part of the Ottoman Empire). His family was Jewish, and for the most part Zionist; his father's partner in the construction business was Chaim Weitzman, the first president of Israel. Both Cliff and Chanie had relatives who perished in the Holocaust. In his autobiography Cliff reports that he became a socialist as a result of his early opposition to the poor treatment of Arabs. As a teenager he joined the youth wing of Mapai, the Party of the Workers of Eretz Israel, whose leader was David Ben Gurion. Before reaching the age of twenty he had migrated out of left-Zionist politics and into Trotskyism. Since revolutionary socialist activity was illegal in British-controlled Palestine, Cliff and his small group were forced to invent new ways of reaching Jewish and Arab workers with their message of inter-ethnic, class-based solidarity.

> One could not stand in the street and distribute leaflets," he reports. "I had to find a tall building, let us say of two or three stories, by the town's main road. I would then climb up to the roof and tie a string to the leaflets. The string would go through a candle, and its end would then be tied to something on the roof. The candle was inside a tin to protect it from the wind. After being lit and melting the candle away the fire would reach the string and burn through it, thus releasing the leaflets which floated down to the street below, hopefully to be caught and read by passers by. What a joy it was to stand in the street and see the leaflets be dispersed.

After a brief courtship, Cliff and Rosenberg married; "her good South African passport could subsume my rotten British Protectorate of Palestine one, and make travel for me easier." But poverty was as much of an issue as passports. On the eve of their journey to England Cliff's worldly possessions consisted of "a pair of

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short trousers, a pair of shoes, a shirt and books." They scraped up enough money to stop off at the headquarters of the Fourth International in Paris, where they met Ernest Mandel, who defended the position that world capitalism at the end of the War was highly unstable. In retrospect, this meeting takes on a certain symbolic resonance, given that Mandel and Cliff would come to define two of the three major pathways of Trotskyism after Trotsky — Mandel's degenerated workers' state orthodoxy versus Cliff's state-capitalist heresy (the third, of course, is the theory of bureaucratic collectivism). According to Cliff's account, his dissatisfaction with Mandel's arguments prompted him to rethink Trotskyism's entire theoretical edifice, and in particular Trotsky's analysis of the Soviet Union:

> My rejection of Trotsky's definition of Stalinist Russia as a 'degenerated workers' state' took place in 1947-48. For two months I was riven by doubts about this definition. I did practically nothing during the day or night but think about it. Poor Chanie suffered. We slept in a narrow bed, and she had to get up at six every morning to go and work far away in [the county of] Kent — in the worst winter for a long time. One early morning I jumped out of bed and told her, 'Russia is not a workers' state but state capitalist'. It took me more than a year afterwards to put flesh on the skeleton.

If this was a difficult period in Cliff's life — and Chanie's — it was also a productive one. In 1947 he critiqued Mandel's pessimistic assessment of capitalism's prospects, in "All that Glitters is not Gold." The next year he prepared a first draft of his revisionist analysis of the Soviet Union, which served as the basis for his widely reprinted book *State Capitalism in Russia*. Within a few years he had completed studies of *Stalin's Satellites in Europe*, and *Mao's China*, and had also sketched out an analysis of third world revolutions, which he depicted as a process of "deflected permanent revolution." In combination with work by Cliff and Michael Kidron on the arms race, these articles and books provided the intellectual foundation for what would become known as the International Socialist tendency.

Much of Cliff's analysis of the class nature of the Soviet Union was undertaken under conditions of desperate poverty in Dublin, where he settled in the late 1940s after being expelled from Britain as a political subversive. He was permitted to return to London in 1952. Five years later, drawing on essays by Vance that had appeared in *New International* and *Partisan Review*, he penned "Perspectives for the Permanent War Economy," which identified the basis of postwar economic growth in the military build-up of the Cold War. Since Cliff was determined to distance his small band of state-caps from the Shachtmanites, he soon adopted a slightly different term, the "permanent arms economy." This was neither the first nor the last time that Cliff, in his eagerness to differentiate his views from those of rival socialist currents, would in effect rewrite his own intellectual history.*

ALONGSIDE THE VALUABLE WORK OF REASSESSING TROTSKYIST DOCTRINE, Cliff immersed himself in the task of building a viable socialist organization. In the summer of

*An unusually rich source on the relationship between Cliff 's ideas, and political practice, and other critical tendencies within postwar Trotskyism, is the journal *Workers' Liberty*. For a biting critique of Cliff's "borrowings" see Paul Hampton, "Tony Cliff and Max Shachtman," *Workers Liberty* nos. 62 and 66, and *Workers Liberty: Reason in Revolt*, Vol. 2, no. 1.

1951 the Socialist Review group, committed to the theory of state capitalism, held its first convention. At the time the group consisted of fewer than forty members. In addition to publishing a mimeographed journal, the SR group targeted Labor Party youth for recruitment. Some of the most interesting passages in Cliff's autobiography are concerned with the challenges of recruiting students and workers to the socialist cause in the placid 1950s. His account also provides a vivid picture of how politics began to thaw in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament represented a clear break with the logic of superpower competition. The subsequent flowering of student, anti-war, and rank-and-file movements also receives a great deal of attention. For anyone interested in the development of the Socialist Review group (renamed the International Socialists in 1962, and the Socialist Workers Party in 1977), this period is of particular importance. Even as the group attracted hundreds and then thousands of new recruits, it also underwent a process of intellectual and programmatic redefinition, as an unusually relaxed approach to party-building and internal discipline gave way to a more explicit democratic centralism (with more weight given to centralism than democracy). Cliff manages to describe the group's shifting internal dynamics without slighting the larger forces at play during the radical upsurge of the late sixties and early seventies.

For some observers, the tendency founded by Cliff and company achieved its greatest successes in the context of the industrial and political turbulence of the 1970s. By the end of the decade the Socialist Workers Party had achieved a new level of recognition within the labor movement as well as among college students. The party was also responsible for launching the Anti-Nazi League, and the Rock Against Racism campaign, which helped push the far right to the margins of British politics. The forward momentum of the 1970s, however, soon gave way to Thatcherite revanchism and mass unemployment in the 1980s. Guided by Cliff's notion of a "downturn," in which socialists would need to concentrate on political fundamentals rather than street level agitation, the SWP was unable to make much of an impact on the ill-fated 1984-85 miners' strike. Yet by the 1990s, with Labor turning its back on its founding principles, and the collapse of the once-mighty Communists, the Cliffites could market themselves as the main option on the radical left. With the decline or redefinition of its long-standing rivals, competition to the SWP assumed the form of identity politics, anarchism, green politics, and/or single-issue campaigns.

CLIFF'S ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH of the Socialist Workers Party, and the IS tendency internationally, is difficult to overstate. Through his writings and speeches, as well as the sheer force of his personality, Cliff sought to both rally new members and ensure that party cadre stayed on their toes. Although he strived to maintain the tendency's ideological purity, he often used his position of leadership to announce sharp turns in strategy and tactics. At times, SWP activists would find themselves switching gears as a result of one of Cliff's overnight inspirations. Rather than placing a premium on steadfastness, Cliff encouraged an erratic approach to party-building that many critics, in rival groupings as well as ex-members, have regarded as an odd combination of opportunism and sectarianism.

On the other hand, under Cliff's tutelage the group created an entire machinery of socialist propaganda — magazines, bookshops, educational programs,

speakers' series, a publishing house, a mass-circulation newspaper, and so on — that lends the group a distinctive profile within a broader milieu. In addition, over the years the group has nurtured the talents a number of gifted writers and intellectuals, including Paul Foot, Chris Harman, Alex Callinicos, Duncan Hallas, Peter Sedgwick, John Molyneux, David Widgery, and others. Given the vast numbers of people who have passed through the organization at one time or another, more people in Britain are ex-SWP (or ex-IS) than are active in any of the major political parties (Tories, new Labor, and so on). His passing, in 2000, robbed the organization of its main strategist, its most enthusiastic recruiter, its best humorist, and its eminence grise. He is survived by Chanie Rosenberg, as well as their four children, three of whom are active in the SWP (the fourth is a working musician).

READERS INTERESTED IN THE HISTORY AND POLITICS of the European far left should try to track down a copy of Cliff's autobiography, which is consistently entertaining, if not always completely reliable. A serious intellectual history of the IS tendency, which has yet to be written, would hopefully expand on, as well as occasionally complicate or even contradict, Cliff's account of the evolution of the tendency. Some of Cliff's best essays — on Rosa Luxemburg, May '68 in France, and the Portuguese revolution of the mid-seventies — have been reprinted in *International Struggle* and *The Marxist Tradition*. Both titles may be ordered from the Bookmarks website (www.bookmarks.uk.com).

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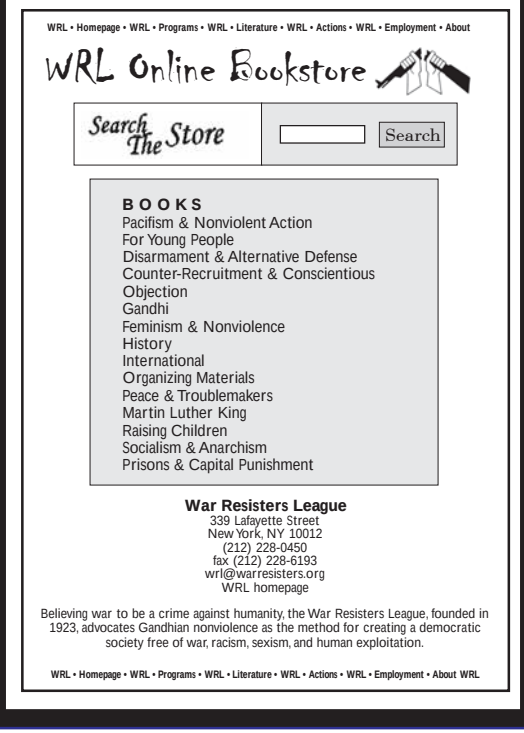

CORRESPONDENCE

More Discussion on the Democratic Party

To the Editors:

I AGREE WITH MUCH OF WHAT WAS SAID about the Democratic Party in the last issue of *New Politics*. But something still troubles me. I agree that the Democrats are a capitalist party, beholden to corporate interests, and that only a party willing to challenge these very interests can ultimately bring about essential changes. But what I didn't see was a consideration of short-run versus long-run goals. For socialists, there is a constant tension between short-term and long-term goals. If one focuses exclusively on the former, one will never achieve the latter. But if one totally ignores the former, we might — while waiting for the latter — all be incinerated (after all, capitalist parties can differ on nuclear war policies), or see women or racial and ethnic minorities or sexual minorities, or workers, or the poor, suffer grievous loss of their rights or added oppression. Ignoring this potential harm is bad both for its own sake and because no left that is indifferent to human suffering today, that ignores current reformist struggles, can hope to inspire people for the long haul. When a socialist participates in a reformist struggle, it is different from the participation of liberals, for we always include as part of our message the inadequacy of the reform and the ultimate need for more fundamental change. But this is not the same as eschewing reform altogether.

So while acknowledging that the Democrats are terribly unreliable advocates of even our short-run goals, and that their positions are often indistinguishable from and occasionally even to the right of those of the Republicans, I don't see how it can make sense to declare it *a matter of principle* to *never* vote for a Democrat. It seems to me one has to weigh both the likely long-run and the short-run consequences of our actions and judge accordingly. What are the differences between Democrats and Republicans? How close will the election be? How much can our votes contribute to the building of a viable third party? To be sure, our calculation has to include the fact that a vote for the lesser evil encourages the lesser evil to move to the right, harming people even in the short term. But still, a calculation is required.

Won't we mislead people by sometimes voting Democratic? We would if we suggested to them that the Democrats offer an ultimate solution to our problems, or if we failed to emphasize, along with any voting recommendation, the limitations of the Democrats. But I don't think the slogan "Democrats suck, but in this election vote Democratic" is too complex for people to follow — certainly not more complex than many other arguments the Left has to make, on issues like affirmative action or civil liberties or war and peace. So let's build third party challenges to the two capitalist parties, and let's not become slaves to the quest for short-run improvements. But let's not make our rejection of the short run into a religious absolute.

STEPHEN R. SHALOM

Joanne Landy Responds

STEVE SHALOM IS QUITE RIGHT when he says that socialists have to be concerned not only with the long-run achievement of a just, equitable society but also with reforms in the here and now. Because we recognize this truth we intensely involve ourselves in struggles for reforms — minimum wages, the right to abortion, universal health care, nuclear disarmament, environmental regulation, affirmative action, electoral reform, to mention only a few. We do so because these are critical reforms: we are concerned about the conditions under which we and our fellow human beings live today. We also do so because we see these struggles – with their victories and defeats — as indispensable to the process of building a self-conscious, self-confident people's movement that can democratically transform society.

But Steve's argument isn't really about whether to fight for limited, short-term reforms: it's about whether, when it counts, to vote for Democratic Party candidates, since the Republicans are a worse evil. Steve's ad hoc approach — sometimes vote for Democrats, sometimes don't — ignores the fact that the corporate two-party system is *the central problem* of American politics. With very few exceptional moments, the Democratic Party has for decades absorbed into its business-dominated umbrella every major progressive movement — labor, women, civil rights, environmentalists, anti-war, etc. It has thereby profoundly weakened these movements and their resolve to win gains at the expense of business, with disastrous *short run* as well as long term consequences.

It's been precisely the calculus Steve recommends that has led progressive activists and movements into the arms of the Democrats. "We can't support an independent candidate this time," they say, "because look at the Republicans – they're even worse!" It's never the right time to make the break, since it's guaranteed that the Republicans will practically always be worse. If an independent political party gains support, the consequence of voting for it might well be the victory of the greater evil. But while electing Republicans is certainly not our goal, we'll never succeed in building an independent party and moving American politics forward if we run back into our rabbit holes every time we might hold the balance of power and risk a Republican being elected.

The two-party system has had massively destructive consequences for the vast majority of people in this country, especially for the most vulnerable, who face grotesque conditions unparalleled in other industrialized countries, with their labor-based and historically socialist-oriented parties. (Unfortunately, with globalization these countries are generally being dragged down by business' attraction to low American standards.) The greatest contribution we can make to the quality of life in America and the world in both the short and the long run is to help the movements we're active in to escape from the suicidal trap of choosing between corporate parties, so that they have a chance, with a political vehicle of their own, to be effective in making this country a decent place to live.

On the Case for Reparations

To the Editors:

THIS IS IN REFERENCE TO THE ARTICLE, "Slavery, Racist Violence, American Apartheid: The Case for Reparations," by Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua (*New Politics*, Sum-

mer 2001). While I find the article highly instructive, I take issue, not with the many points Cha-Jua makes, but with what I gather to be the political orientation of the case he makes. That case is politically divisive, and the divisiveness would be intensified in so latently racist a society as still exists in the United States. The late Bayard Rustin, one of the outstanding civil rights leaders, was correct in asserting that, "as a purely racial demand, its (the demand for reparations) effect must be to isolate blacks from the white poor, with whom they have common economic interests." At least for old socialists like myself, common economic interests argue for solidarity or action, hence suspension and, hopefully, attenuation of racially based animosities.

It remains true nevertheless that such politically motivated arguments do not address the facts bearing upon the far greater injustices and injuries suffered by the forebears of today's African-Americans than by poor whites and large disadvantaged groups of white workers. These injustices and injuries did not consist in slavery alone. Long after emancipation and the passage of the 14th and 15th amendments to the Constitution, those mandates began to be circumvented and, in effect, violated by Jim Crow laws and regulations, and thus the deliberate segregation of blacks. The little masterpiece by Boris Bittker (published by Random House in the early 1970s), *The Case for Black Reparations,* presents a powerful argument based on the political and social consequences of Jim Crow and the deceptive *Plessy vs. Ferguson* doctrine — consequences flowing from *recent* wrongs which have reached deep into the 20th century. The historically more remote wrong of slavery would seem to me to be far less calculable for purposes of reparations than the affects of Jim Crow and their influence (not least also in terms of their geographical spread).

However, neither the arguments of Bittker nor of more recent advocates of reparations can overcome a fundamental weakness: restitution for the violation of human rights cannot extend to past generations of men and women who, being dead, cannot benefit from it. The living generation of African-Americans, whatever its social and economic disadvantages, whatever trauma the heritage of slavery still causes, cannot be said to be suffering nearly as much from the denial of human rights as did its enslaved forebears.

In support of their case, Bittker and others have cited the restitution of material claims by post-World War II German governments to German Jews who survived deportation and murder, and who had been deprived of their property and employment and denied protection under the law. But such restitution was not extended to successor generations, and was based on confirmable losses sustained by individuals or families. Furthermore, the perpetrators of the Jews' victimization belonged largely to the same generation as their victims, so that opponents of the laws mandating restitution (enacted mostly during the 1950s) could not argue, as current opponents of reparations to blacks would, that they were not part of roughly the same generation, even though now members of a humane successor state.

In addition, the German government made large financial resources available to the state of Israel, based on estimated material losses of Jews who had been deported and murdered. It could indeed be argued that these resources indirectly benefited successor generations of persecuted and murdered Jews.

It is undeniable that the effects of Jim Crow, and the enforced segregation of African-Americans, while no doubt diminished and in large measure unlawful, have reached into the current generation. The lack of adequate education,

job opportunities denied and relegation to ill-paying work (the median income of black households runs one-third lower than that of white households), decent residential accommodations foreclosed, still impose on large parts of this generation low living standards, if not actual want, still engendering anguish and a diminished sense of self. True, poor whites often suffer no less in these respects. Yet, as Bittker wrote, "There are many shortcomings in our treatment of the losers in our society, but none matches the record of institutionalized deprivation of the constitutional rights of African-Americans."

That record would morally justify reparations, at least for the *collective* benefit of African-Americans. Such an outcome, if placed on the political agenda, would inevitably intensify separatist tendencies, and lead to competing (and not unjustifiable) claims by white working poor and other disadvantaged whites to equal resources. All this would lead to (probably fruitless) frictions, and stymie cooperation. I believe that Bayard Rustin was right in advocating a black-white coalition that would demand a reconstituted welfare state — one that would redistribute resources so as to diminish the abhorrent inequality between "winners" and "losers" so characteristic of latter-day capitalism. It would be a step toward a social-democratic society.

H. BRAND

Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua Replies

IN *TRAFFIC* MICHAEL DOUGLASS' CHARACTER IMPLORES members of the "antidrug" taskforce to think "outside the box." H. Brand's views regarding African American reparations are unfortunately confined within the box. His opposition to reparations suffers from a lack of imagination. Rather than examine the question anew, Brand reiterates the conventional wisdom. Unfortunately, he rearticulates liberals', conservatives', and the anti-black-nationalist left's universalist position. Consequently, his arguments traverse the path traveled by David Horowitz, Adolph Reed and the late Bayard Rustin.

At the heart of Brand's rejection of reparations is his opposition to the movement's "political orientation." However, his opposition derives from his discomfort with autonomous black self-activity. Brand cites three specific oppositions to the reparations movement. First, like Horowitz, Reed, and Rustin, he considers it divisive. Second, he believes a generational term limit exists for restitution of human rights violation. And third, Brand contends the movement accelerates "separatist tendencies" among African Americans.

One should take Brand's comment that he is an "old socialist" literally, at least theoretically. His position is the same as that of the Socialist Party of America circa 1905. Like contemporary conservatives, American socialists then contended they had nothing special to offer African Americans. By opposing African American self-activity or restricting it to common economic interests with white workers and impoverished whites Brand's position reasserts ancient Socialist Party reductionism. Black radicals like Hubert H. Harrison and C.L.R. James repudiated this type of reductionism many decades ago. It is this tendency among reparations opponents that I find perplexing — not because it is confusing but because it is paradoxical. The argument is inherently contradictory.

Brand's logic would lead one to oppose the Montgomery Bus Boycott, much of the civil rights movement, and especially Affirmative Action. In his terms, these

were and are divisive. Despite Rustin's participation the bus boycott was organized around Blacks' particular demands for social justice not common class economic interests. Somehow Brand has failed to see the myriad ways in which exploited and excluded Euro-Americans have received more than a "psychological wage" from racial oppression. Jobs, low cost housing, and insurance benefits are merely a few of the economic benefits that problematize the category of common economic interests. His myopic focus on universalist prescriptions blinds him to what James called the objective character of the Black freedom movement. Moreover, racial discrimination has been constitutive of all the United States' universalist reform movements. Racism and whites' defense of their privileges — profit, power, and prestige — is *inherently* divisive, not Blacks' organization around their collective social identity and their common interests as a racially oppressed group.

Second, Brand's generational limitation on reparations reflects the worst aspects of bourgeois law. This is the logic of power, which subordinates fairness and morality to theft and genocide, providing the imperialists and colonialists can elude justice for a generation or more. Despite the success of this principle in Zimbabwe and South Africa, U.S. and international practice often undermine it. For instance, several Native American tribes have received compensation for century-old human rights violations.

The analogy with Native Americans is an apt one because more than any other comparison it reveals the real basis of opposition to reparations for Blacks. What distinguishes the contrasting reactions to Native American and African American demands for reparations is not time, but Americans' concept of property rights. Native American arguments for reparations are largely, if not solely rooted in and argued within the framework of bourgeois property rights. Although millions of acres of land were stolen from African Americans, the crux of Blacks' demand for reparations are the issues of labor exploitation, racial violence, and social discrimination. I suspect that over the next decade several African Americans will win suits concerning the theft of their ancestors' land some generations ago. A few suits by descendants of victims killed by lynch mobs or in race riots may also be won. These issues can be framed within the confines of U.S. bourgeois law. But the major issue, the question of labor exploitation and unjust enrichment, remains a thornier issue. Restitution for labor exploitation and unjust wealth accumulation resonates with Blacks but not whites precisely because of the racial differential in wealth.

Brand's belief that reparations will accelerate separatism among Blacks is problematic. First, since he does not define separatism, we are not sure whether he is opposing a movement for independence or autonomous institution-building. Second, although it matters to which he refers, movements for self-determination are as legitimate and viable a response to racial oppression as are movements for integration, especially within the context of capitalism. Finally, the reparations movement neither isolates Blacks nor accelerates demands for separatism. In contemporary "America" the transformations wrought by global capitalism have already increased Blacks' geographic separation and social isolation.

The major problem with socialists like Brand is not just that their analysis is bound by history but, more importantly that their vision is myopic. Universalism was wrong in 1905 and it is wrong today. Moreover, despite the superficial adoption of African American cultural forms and the limited incorporation of Black elites, most African Americans are being pushed to the society's periphery.

On "Racism" and "Racial Oppression"

To the Editors:

I JUST READ STEPHEN STEINBERG'S PROVOCATIVE "The Problem with the Wrong Name." The article makes a strong case for the use of the term "racial oppression" over "race relations." I think that it is well done and I agree with that argument. However, just in case some readers think that this is also a good argument for replacing the term "racism" with "racial oppression" they should think again. The term racial oppression is fine for describing the actions and consequences of racism as a system. However, we also need a name for that system itself. That name is racism. This is consistent with Marxist scholars who use capitalism to refer to the system of economic oppression. There is no confusion about the fact that capitalism refers to an economic SYSTEM and not just a set of beliefs. The "confusion" about the meaning of the term racism is political, not conceptual. This can be seen in the fact that while it is the term of preference of racially exploited people it is fiercely disallowed by the white power structure. In both cases both sets of terms are useful (i.e., capitalism and economic oppression and racism and racial oppression). We are dealing here with an *and/both* situation, not *either/or*.

With this kept in mind I think we can best build on Stephen Steinberg's important insights.

NOEL A. CAZENAVE, Department of Sociology, University of Connecticut

Stephen Steinberg Replies

NOEL CAZENAVE IS NOT ONE TO MINCE WORDS when it comes to race and class. Several years ago he was embroiled in controversy for teaching a course entitled "White Racism" at the University of Connecticut. He and I could not agree more about the obfuscating language of social science, and the deceptive morphing of "racial oppression" into "race relations." Nor do I object to the use of the term "racism," especially when it is given institutional anchorage, as in the claim that the United States is "a racist society." However, it is not quite accurate to say that racism is to racial oppression as capitalism is to economic oppression. As Cazenave knows, "racism" has been so eviscerated by reductive reasoning that the term is commonly understood to refer, not to structures and institutions, but to disembodied beliefs and attitudes that need to be rooted out, presumably through education and good will. No such confusion exists with respect to capitalism: what comes first to mind are political and economic institutions that wield great power. But this is a minor quibble. The more important point on which we agree is that the Marxist tradition provides the most useful lexicon for thinking about race and class, in marked contrast to the evasions and circumlocutions that dominate social science discourse.

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Film Review

Boys as Toys:
Steven Spielberg's "AI: Artificial Intelligence"

Reviewed by Kurt Jacobsen

MARY SHELLEY'S FABLE, *FRANKENSTEIN*, SIFTS OUT THE DIRE RESULTS not of usurping divine power, as most movies piously portray the plot, but of irresponsibility toward our irksome creations, and procreations too. Creatures maintain a moral claim on their creators. "In Field of Dreams" lingo: If you build it, you must care for it. This subversive notion is unwelcome to elites who measure progress by the size of the price tags they stick on disposable fragments of nature. Yet here is a theme that won't slink away when told to. Even Brian Aldiss, author of the caustic anti-consumerist story "Supertoys Last All Summer Long," which forms the bilious basis for Stephen Spielberg's "AI: Artificial Intelligence" (by way of the late Stanley Kubrick's development scripts and storyboards), reverently cites *Frankenstein* as the first science fiction novel. So in AI corrosively acidic Kubrick meets sugar-plumy Spielberg — and Frankenstein meets Pinocchio — and their improbable merger ignites a grim (Brothers Grimm) dialectical spectacle that is weirdly riveting to watch.

In light deadpan style the Aldiss story lampooned an *über*-Yuppie couple at play in a high temperature world where ice caps melt and a majority starve. One suspects the couple attains their lavish lifestyle by bottling the fresh arctic water flow and peddling it to neighbors. Among the many technical blessings dispensed in their posh gated community are synthetic tapeworms that gobble excess calories and keep inhabitants enviably slim so they are "regarded as beautiful people, apart from their eyes." Spielberg glides over these delectable caricatures as gracefully as he can so as not to alienate some of his biggest fans but a dark thematic undertow remains, tugging audiences deeper than we ordinarily descend in a Spielberg flick. The Schindler project obviously still haunts him and he spills rueful allusions to his earlier films along the whole woeful journey of his misty-eyed mechanical refugee hero.

Is a carbon copy ever as good as the original? If so, can "it" be given the rights and respect many of us decline to grant people here and now? The replicants in "Blade Runner" were Miltonic rebels, proud Lucifers flexing their unearthly powers, and stirred our sneaking admiration for trying to staunch their ebbing energy and seize more time, even at human expense. Machines are ambivalent things that either promise more power or else place us at the mercy of power-holders. Unlike "Blade Runner" or Karl Capek's "RU" or Eugene

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Zamiatin's "We" or, for that matter, Kubrick's "2001," the contraptions populating "AI" are not interested in displacing us. They are out to please us, or those who can afford their tender micro-calibrated ministrations. The rub for robots is that, as their novelty flags and circuits fray, they become unrequited lovers who are stalked remorselessly by the objects of their affection. It's wonderfully tragicomic stuff and especially in the 1950s and 1960s science fiction seethed with rueful writers like Aldiss, Ellison and Bradbury who heightened human traits and social trends in Swiftian ways and then held up literary mirrors to audiences who might glimpse ugly images staring back. Spielberg takes a spectacular stab at taming this highly combustible story material but, to his everlasting credit, falters at every step except for the gooey climax.

IS IT SO HARD TO IMAGINE A WORLD where everything is for sale? Or one where technical wizards are obsessed only with what Robert Oppenheimer described as "technically sweet"? This felicitous phrase perfectly describes our robot boy David, not to mention his furry guardian angel of a teddy bear. In David, Professor Hobby (William Hurt) has devised the ideal Stepford child, a robot capable of feigning filial love to the point of oedipal trespass and seems only a few cleverly programmed flaws away from playground credibility. To comfort a grieving wife, whose ailing son is cryogenically frozen to await a miracle cure, a husband hauls Davis home and unveils him like a frisky replacement pet. David comes equipped with mimic capabilities, a nifty bonding mechanism, and all the extras. The film treats this extraordinary event as an ordinary market transaction in which the Professor Hobby filled a market niche. Spielberg irrepressibly proceeds to celebrate the lovely notion that nothing beats being a real child even if your chances of being born into poverty these days are roughly fifty-fifty even in technologically advantaged climes like London or Dublin or Chicago. Yet David (Haley Joel Osment, of "The Sixth Sense") sees real live people, and they aren't all that impressive.

His mother guiltily cannot discard David when her real son Martin is thawed, cured and returned home. What's the rate of depreciation on a surplus robot anyway? The emotional die is cast even if the giddy gadget does not catch on that it is not wholly human. So convincing is David that a scene of his "face" peeled back to clean him after he gums up the works by actually "eating" is almost shocking. Still, won't he find that the masks people wear conceal things just as mysterious and calculating as the most intricate machinery? David detects Martin's malice but cannot retaliate. He is the kind of child whom you fret about for being too good for their own good. Being real means being flawed: capable of evil, of indifference, of vengefulness, of selfishness, and insensitivity, doesn't it? In a routine riff on racism a gang of "orga" kids taunt the hapless "mecha." The sibling rivalry erupts inside the tense household and our artificial lad is cast out of maternal paradise. The conflicted mother drops him at the edge of a forest, where fairy tale adventures and transformations customarily begin, and sternly warns him to stick to his own metallic kind.

"AI" lurches into a series of misanthropic episodes that spur one to ask what David wants from the all-too-human assortment of thugs and con artists he encounters. The simpering Pinocchio theme can turn back on itself. Recall child psychologist Bruno Bettelheim's famous case of "Joey — The Mechanical Boy" who ingeniously (and psychotically) withdrew from life into a well-defended

imaginary world of automata. Mechanical devices, after all, are orderly; emotions are not always so easy to bear. And just what experience of the world might motivate this astonishingly inventive robotizing of self? Well, probably precisely the atrocious experiences that David undergoes. But throughout "AI" David doggedly yearns for what Joey scorned. Hard to say which one suffers from a severe learning disability.

Spielberg treats robots as if they are just a kinder, gentler species. Strike them and do they not make noise? Puncture their skin and do they not leak? Robots jerk but can't be jerks. David is plainly an abused and abandoned little boy, with circuitry. Everything that is admirably human is invested in a bathetic array of virtually Gandhian gadgets. Can Spielberg explore the obvious questions of what constitutes humanity, what it means, and how it is earned, accrued or bestowed? Spielberg won't tarry, but the nagging questions are there. What's so great about people anyway? Don't many people seem to transform themselves into impervious robots out of despair, fear, loneliness or laziness? Do you ever get the creepy feeling that a certain twangy, thin-lipped national leader is a Monsanto product or made by Mattel? (That model always was kind of twitchy.)

FOR THE STORY'S SAKE let's accept the dubious premise that artificial consciousness is possible, that ingenious improvisers can contrive a sense of selfhood. Robots have acquired egos and superegos and some special models even have rollicking ids. In the wild forest David and his teddy bear sidekick stumble on Gigolo Joe (Jude Law), a delightful stud puppet that is part pile driving dildo and part golden oldies jukebox. Gigolo Joe has fled the scene of a murder for which he was elegantly framed by a canny human. (Doesn't the dead trick in Gigolo Joe's' motel bed resemble David's mother?) Robots commendably help each other. People don't. People instead offload their inner turmoil onto a scapegoated servant class of compliant robots, who might as well have slipped over a geographical border and need only green cards from the Wizard of Oz to be deemed kosher.

In the moonlit forest flocks of fugitive robots scamper down into a junkyard ravine to scavenge spare parts. These rambling wrecks are imprinted with more pathos and poignancy than Spielberg can manage to muster for any human. You wish Father Flanagan would scoop David out of peril and tote him off to Boy's Town. Instead, scrap hunters suddenly appear in a garish neon bulb reminiscent of the alien craft in ET to snare them. Next stop is a gladiatorial Flesh Fair cum demolition derby — an abattoir for androids — that literally crucifies machines. The robots hopelessly huddle in cages like Warsaw Jews awaiting the fatal ghetto round up in "Schindler's List." (Momma told him there'd be days like this). An enchanting "nanny" robot, who gives David a warm facsimile dose of the love he seeks, is dissolved in a shower of acid as a redneck throng cheer with the same feeling that 7-year-old boys display when pulling wings off flies or frying ants on the pavement beneath a magnifying glass. The "orgas' possess not only the right skin colors; they possess the right skin. The old-time epidermis is good enough for them.

Despite his legendary knee-jerk sentimentality, Spielberg paints a deeply distraught (and, yes, Kubrickian) portrait of a sour human race who glory in their fallibilities and lack only SS insignia. The world is pretty much divided

between upper class specialists without spirit (as Max Weber once dubbed them) and a rabble swallowing any spirits in reach. Are these ghastly games the punishment exacted from robots because of a human fear of automation or, even worse, repulsion at beholding beings better than ourselves? The robots exhibit far more charm, courage, insight and loyalty than do their raunchy human captors. Yet did robots design their own fearful symmetries? Hardly. Do the slavering spectators in the stands know what manufacturers have wrought in their name regardless of their wishes? Spielberg evades the class issues but they are there all the same.

A little girl enables winsome David, Teddy and Gigolo Joe to escape the clutches of the Fair's promoters. The robots, we learn, have become so lifelike that even people with a practiced eye need a special X-ray to tell them apart from flesh and blood. So, then, is David becoming an autonomous automaton? Nope. David looks for love rather like a heat-seeking missile that readily will mistake a Girl Scout campfire for an enemy aircraft tail pipe. You can call it love, if you like. Spielberg wants to suggest that inside this delicate apparatus a mischievous spark has ignited an alchemical process that that will render David really real. Yet David already is a magical being, sparkling with fairy dust and machine oil. (So, for that matter, is Gigolo Joe even if his job as a whore is to be erotically unreal.)

David skedaddles to sublimely sleazy Rouge City — an updated Fritz Lang Metropolis brimming with obliging pleasure machines — where he tracks down his Wizard of Oz figure in the form of an impish Einstein-faced cartoon guru who augurs that the Blue Fairy will make a real boy out of him if he can find her. Gigolo Joe is nabbed by cops just as David plunges to the Blue Fairy statue in a corny Coney Island exhibit underneath flooded New York. Spielberg is every bit as fixated as David on the Pinocchio motif and pursues his little hero into the icy depths where David and his trusty teddy bear touch bottom and are mesmerized for two thousand years by a silly statue. I'd like to think Kubrick would fade out just about here. Spielberg, however, must introduce extra-terrestrials that stride sinuously and majestically like wingless angels into the glacial scene and release David from his thrall. Feckless mankind has vanished.

Only glistening string bean aliens fully comprehend David's solid state of anguish, and set out healing the scars that cruel or indifferent adults inflict on any unlucky child. Well, if Prince Charles can speak nurturingly to flowers then why can't creatures from outer space behave like wise child psychiatrists to an englaciated robot? They take responsibility and they break the spell David is under. David gets a chance to relive a single marvelous day with his mommy all to himself. She is fleetingly recreated out of DNA from a lock of hair David snipped earlier. It is meant to be a therapeutic triumph, but is it enough? Is a kiss, under these exotic circumstances, still a kiss? The robots are really grand, Stephen, but robots are, after all, programmed that way. In "AI" Spielberg, ultimately, gives us his own perfect audience, a little boy who never grows up, or becomes disillusioned.

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A Journal of Socialist Thought

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