Contents

IRAQ: THEIR REGIME CHANGE AND OURS, Barry Finger 5

STATEMENT: IN OPPOSITION TO SADDAM HUSSEIN AND AGAINST THE WAR IN IRAQ, From the Campaign 16

DISCUSSION AND DEBATE ON THE "WAR ON TERRORISM," Letters from Richard Greeman, John Halle, David McReynolds, Sam Friedman, Jason Schulman, Horst Brand, James Petras, Michael Parent!, Edward Herman/Response by Julius Jacobson 19

LIBERALS AMID WRECKAGE OF 2002 ELECTIONS, Michael Hirsch 43

RUNNING FOR GOVERNOR OF NEW YORK STATE, Stanley Aronowitz 47

CALIFORNIA: GREEN ELECTORAL PROGRESS, Eric V. Kirk 56

THE FUTURE OF CARETAKING, Betty Reid Mandell 61

ON FEMINISM AND GLOBAL JUSTICE, Johanna Brenner 78

DID PROJECT CENSORED WHITEWASH SERBIAN ATROCITIES? Letters from Bogdan Denitch, Peter Phillips, Diana Johnstone, Edward Herman & David Peterson/Response by David Walls 88

CLASS, GENDER AND RACE IN THE NEWARK TEACHER STRIKES, Lots Weiner 101

THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FORUM, Martin Thomas 108

THE RISE AND FALL OF SIDNEY HOOK, Christopher Phelps 112

VICTOR SERGE: PORTRAIT OF A REVOLUTIONARY, Richard Greeman 116

DYSTOPIA REVISITED, Martin Oppenheimer 128

REFLECTIONS ON *THE GREAT GATSBY,* Robert Woods Sayre and Michael Lowy 134

BOOK AND FILM REVIEWS, Nelson Lichtenstein, Kent Worcester, Reginald Wilson, Paul Buhle, Dan Geary, Daniel Lazare, Steve Early, Horst Brand, Kurt Jacobsen 141

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE: Martin Comack, Sacha Ismail, Michael J. Thompson, Stephen Eric Bronner on Rosa Luxemburg/ Dan Coleman, Art Myatt on electoral politics / Stephen R. Shalom replies to Jason Schulman 185

Their Regime Change and Ours

Barry Finger

WITH BIN LADEN, MULLAH OMAR and Ayman Al-Zawahri as well as other top al Qaeda figures still at large and unaccounted for more than one year since the September attacks and with Hamid Karzi's wobbly regime still under murderous assault by Afghan warlords, the remnants of Taliban and their al Qaeda allies, the Bush administration is in no position to proclaim "victory" or to reassure the American public that "victory" is within its grasp. As the once seemingly insurmountable Cold War gives way not to the oft hoped demilitarization of the West but to an open-ended War on Terror to quell national, regional and cultural forces resistant to or irreconcilable with the dominant hierarchy of economic dependencies — the imperialism of free trade — the moral and administrative ground for perpetual war and intervention is being deeply plowed. The American public is not offered a peace annuity, but five color-coded stages of perpetual insecurity as the spoils of empire.

The Bush administration's clumsy attempt to connect al Qaeda with Saddam Hussein in a run up to Gulf War II is transparent pretext. Defense Secretary Rumsfeld describes the evidence linking the two as virtually incontrovertible, with the minor caveat that such damning "proof" as he might have would not hold up in court. "We're not going to have everything, "he averred, "beyond a reasonable doubt." After months of trying to establish the existence of a relationship between the Iraqi president and bin Laden, the CIA itself was also forced to admit that it had come up empty handed. This is not surprising. The largely secular Baathist regime and Islamic fundamentalism, although united in their symmetrical opposition to every fundamental tenet of democracy and social justice, stand at political loggerheads with one another. The central political article of the jihadist faith, that secular Muslim regimes are a source both of oppression and ecclesiastical corruption, is hardly conducive to a long-term alliance. Since the birth of the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1920s, every Arab regime tainted by the import of ideology — political or cultural — from the West that renders it averse to subordinating its laws to Sharia, or which associate their existence with Western interests, has been targeted for destruction. The failure in particular of the secular Arab regimes to improve living standards and to provide more democratic rights to the masses is triumphantly portrayed by the fundamentalists as having exposed the bankruptcy of Western style modernization and development.

This, it is true, would by no means preclude in principle a temporary entente of convenience between Iraq and al Qaeda, provisionally united in opposition to a common enemy. It merely repudiates the *actual* political evolution of the past decade of Mid-East political history. Just such a hypothetical *working* alliance had an actual predicate. By initiating the war to contain and roll back the Iranian revolution in 1980, armed by the U.S. and bankrolled by the conservative Gulf states, Saddam Hussein (and the State Department) became the not so inadvertent shield of Wahhabi fundamentalism, one of the chief inspirations for al Qaeda, against its Shi'ite rival. Insofar as Wahhabism could remain domesticated in service to Riyadhi wealth, and Saddam recast as a military imam, this alliance could be maintained and Iranian fundamentalism prevented from penetrating the Arabian peninsula. It could be successfully recruited to destabilize the Soviet Empire at its soft underbelly in Afghanistan. This alliance was only then broken when, under the threat of Iraqi expansionism, Saudi Arabia flagrantly redeployed both its oil wealth and Islam in

BARRY FINGER *is a* New Politics *editorial board member.*

service to the United States during Gulf War I thereby squandering its imprimatur as defender of the faith in the eyes of the most unbridled and extreme ranks of fundamentalism.

This was the unintended, though not entirely unpredictable, consequence of the American military intervention. Had the sanctions against the Iraqi occupation regime prevailed, a telling precedent might have been set against the Israeli, Syrian, Turkish and Indonesian occupations, similarly in breach of UN resolutions, that could have strengthened the grip of democracy as an independent force within the Muslim arc. It might have pried open the Pandora's box encasing the inequitable distribution of Arab oil wealth, a question demagogically and self-servingly raised by the Iraqi annexation itself but resonating widely through the popularly held belief that this maldistribution is externally imposed and maintained. However, this was dismissed as a non-option insofar as such sanctions would not have been under the sole control of the U.S. Moreover, insofar as this would have laid the predicate for further sanctions that, with the exception of the hypothetical Syrian application, might have compromised America's allies, raised larger democratic issues and imperiled America's financial interests, this entire approach was summarily scotched. The Arab masses were thereby further polarized. Iraqi expansionism seemed to represent the sole alternative of freedom from Western domination and U.S. diktat, but a freedom devoid of any larger, meaningful emancipatory democratic content, an empty Third-Worldist anti-imperialism, and, in the end, no viable alternative at all.

So, while the Bush administration plans to conquer Iraq, it may soon find itself reckoning with an Arab street red-carpeted for al Qaeda.

Islamic Fundamentalism Steps into the Breach

YET THE BRIEF SUCCESS ENJOYED BY SADDAM as "champion" of the Arab have-nots was symptomatic of a seething political unease, a troubling sign of the tenuous consensus that holds sway in the Arab world. The unequal distribution of resources and the lack of rights of migrant workers in the oil-rich nations feed and sustain a simmering resentment against the Gulf centered ruling classes. Saddam's defeat shook loose from its discredited Saudi state moorings Islamic terrorist elements later to coalesce with similar non-state clerical forces in the wider Arab world as favored contender to the fallen mantle of Arab nationalism. These fundamentalists offer the Arab masses a claim to dignity rooted not in democratic openings with the promise of mass political power and social equality, but in an orderly, patriarchal, morally pure nationalism freed from outside domination and domestic corruption; a dignity in which both traditional and secular forms of authority and subservience are replaced by the paternal superintendence and guidance of the clerisy.

For all its grandiose posturing the American ruling class has utterly failed to grasp the method and purposes of this ascendant force. Obsessed with the bizarre notion that al Qaeda aims to conquer the West, to nullify our institutions and uproot our freedoms — fantastical flights of the imagination more suited to further stoking public fears and squelching political debate than to actual analysis — and intoxicated by grand pronouncements of a clash of civilizations, the American Establishment has blinded itself to the connection between the ends and means of mass mobilization arising from these terrorist assaults. Terror is a product of social dislocation, but where masses are passive, terrorism cannot activate them. Appealing to a wide strata of the urban middle classes marginalized by globalization, and peasant migrants of the shanty towns of the Arab cities, still operating on a pre-urban level of political consciousness, fundamentalist terrorism aims to expose and discredit the alliances between Western elites and the existing Arab ruling classes by driving a wedge between

Arab client elites and their inflamed subjects. Its actual platform is to dismantle secular education, end land reform, further subordinate women, destroy any and all independent working class organizations and to use the oil wealth to further entrench themselves as the new masters of society. But because Islamic fundamentalism is so flagrantly unable to mobilize this constituency on the basis of a concrete program of amelioration, it must rely on provoking ever more dramatic levels of repression and bloodshed in response to its carnage and to *reap and hegemonize* the traumatized outrage that will arise in the wake of these debacles. It aims to expose the link between the repression of the mass street resistance by the Arab regimes which will surely arise, and the political services such repression provide in the context of the broader American war effort.

The Bush administration was mesmerized by its quick victory in Afghanistan. But all that the collapse of the Taliban demonstrated was simply that they were a marginal force, reinforced if not imposed by the Afghani Arabs of al Qaeda and by Pakistan, with only the thinnest of domestic support. The U.S. commanders were, nevertheless, prepared to bomb Afghanistan for months and would not have flinched from jeopardizing as many civilian lives as victory might have warranted nor from turning over the country to famine and disease should a quick victory have proved elusive.

The U.S. fully anticipates a repeat performance in an upcoming war with Iraq. But Iraq is not Afghanistan and street to street combat through the city of Baghdad — covered every bloody step by Al Jazeera — promises a grisly and horrific show for the Arab East. The Iraqi military machine has garnered considerable experience in urban combat, not only in the war with Iran, but also in putting down its own domestic uprisings in the wake of the first Gulf War. It will, moreover, undoubtedly make every effort to open a second front against Israel, which, under Sharon, a total stranger to the weapon of self-restraint, may well parlay this aggression into a pretext for mass expulsions of Palestinians from the occupied territories. So, while the Bush administration plans to conquer Iraq, it may soon find itself reckoning with an Arab street red-carpeted for al Qaeda. Were there a vibrant and healthy Arab Left such masses in motion might offer socialists an opportune moment for revolutionary democratic struggle against both camps. Instead the forthcoming war can be expected to metastasize and entrench the spoors of Islamic terrorism through every city and town of the Arab world, completing the scenario inadvertently initiated by the first Gulf War.

Of this, American policy makers still seem blitheringly clueless. Cheney said on August 26, "Forcing Saddam from power would bring freedom to Iraq, bring peace to the region, boost Arab moderates, cause extremists to rethink violence and help the Israeli-Palestinian peace process." They remain fixated on tearing asunder a nonexistent relationship between al Qaeda and Baghdad, as if oblivious to the temporary symbiotic alliance that such a future war would immediately engender. Of the "larger" insistence that Iraq may furnish al Qaeda with weapons of mass destruction this, if sincerely believed, would be the height of political incompetence on the part of Iraq, a weakening of the instinct for self-preservation which Saddam has rarely exhibited. For it would allow a sworn enemy of Arab secularism, a twisted Arab secularism that Baathist Iraq surely embodies, to gain control over weapons which might equally be turned against the regime itself, were the war averted.

However, it is more likely that the Bush Administration does not believe any of this. It has had to manufacture this connection, where none exists, for a very simple reason. Iraq has no air force, no pilotless drones or navy. It has no intercontinental ballistic missiles. It has, in other words, no conventional delivery system whereby weapons of mass destruction could effectively terrorize the American public. Islamic terrorists, on the other hand, have succeeded where Iraq left to its own devices could not. How then, short of employing a team of Hollywood script writers, can Iraq, hitherto successfully deterred, be repackaged as a mortal threat to American life, other than by insisting that Iraq has the means — through its al Qaeda "conduit" — to deliver weapons of mass destruction by unconventional methods?

This goes to the question of how Bush has gone about selling the war. It is a curious, but oft noted fact that this Administration, for all its perfervid concern over Baghdad's real or imagined acquisition of a nuclear arsenal, has been woefully indifferent to actual, concrete measures which would halt the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. As Dr. Eric Chivian, cofounder of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War queried, "[I]f the administration is so concerned about the dangers of mass destruction, then how can we explain its lukewarm support for the Nunn-Lugar Act, which serves to dispose of Russian nuclear weapons-grade material so that it does not fall into the wrong hands; its sabotaging of the 30-year old Biological Weapons Convention by unilaterally rejecting the verification and enforcement provisions; and its cut by 93 percent of the funds sought by its own Department of Energy to guard American nuclear weapons, weapons material and radioactive wastes from terrorists?"

Weapons of Mass Destruction?

THE ADMINISTRATION HAS AT VARIOUS TIMES alluded to an Iraq that is less than a year away from building a nuclear device. Bush warned that

> Before the Gulf War the best intelligence indicated that Iraq was 8 to 10 years away from developing a nuclear weapon. After the war, international inspectors learned that the regime had been much closer. The regime in Iraq would likely have possessed a nuclear weapon no later than 1993. The inspectors discovered that Iraq had an advanced nuclear weapons development program, had a design for a workable nuclear weapon and was pursuing several different methods of enriching uranium for a bomb.

What is left out is this. Before the war Iraq had the use of fissile material in the reactors transferred to it by the Soviet Union and France, and which were under the inspection of the International Atomic Energy Agency. It was then indeed perhaps six months away from having the capacity to produce a nuclear device. This material was subsequently removed from Iraq. Today it does not have the capacity to produce material for a nuclear program or to enrich uranium with centrifuges, because all such facilities were destroyed in the first Gulf War or by the inspectors. It has no nuclear power and therefore no fissile material. Attempts to purchase such material in the quantity and quality needed for a bomb have failed in the past and there is no reason to believe that it could succeed in the future, especially if attempts to prevent their proliferation were zealously policed. The International Atomic Energy fact sheet of April 25, 2002, entitled "Iraq's Nuclear Weapons Program" recorded that "[T]here were no indications that there remains in Iraq any physical capability for the productions of amounts of weapons-usable nuclear material of any practical significance." This reaffirms its 1998 conclusion that it "has found no indication of Iraq having achieved its program goal of producing nuclear weapons or of Iraq having retained a physical capability for the production of weapon-useable nuclear material or having clandestinely obtained such material." Moreover, enriching uranium requires a substantial infrastructure and power supply that would be detectable by U.S. spy satellites. No information of any such detection was ever offered.

Arguments that Saddam's weapons' program constitutes a *casus belli* was tarnished further by the recent revelations of North Korea's acquisition of nuclear arms, a problem of added urgency, one might think, given that North Korea also possess long-range ballistic missile capability. It has a million member army equipped with chemical and biological agents. And it presents a direct threat to Seoul and to the American bases in South Korea. Despite all this, the Bush administration has yet to satisfactorily propound the political mechanics by which the imperative of "preemptive" war is required against one member of the axis of evil, when the wheels of diplomacy are fully expected to suffice in tackling the seemingly far greater threats of another member of that now famous axis.

Yet, what of the other Iraqi weapons of mass destruction? Scott Ritter who was the UN arms inspector in Iraq from 1991-8 wrote that "[u]nder the most stringent on-site inspection regime in the history of arms control, Iraq's biological weapons programs

were dismantled, destroyed or rendered harmless during the course of hundreds of no-notice inspections. The major biological weapons production facility — al Hakum, that was responsible for producing Iraq's anthrax — was blown up by high explosive charges and all its equipment destroyed. Other biological facilities met the same fate if it was found that they had, at any time, been used for research and development of biological agents." Anthony H. Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies reported that "[t]he shelf-life and lethality of Iraq's weapons is unknown, but it seems likely that the shelf-life was limited. In balance, it seems probable that any agents retained after the Gulf War now have very limited lethality, if any." Sarin and Tabun have a shelf life of five years. Even if the 20,000 munitions feared to have been filled with these agents had been successfully hidden by the Iraqis, they would be in Ritter's words, "nothing more than useless and completely harmless goo."

The two exceptions to the rule of biological weapons degradation are mustard gas and VX nerve agent. However, Unscom oversaw the destruction of all but 800 or so of Iraq's mustard shells. Iraq claims that the rest were destroyed by U.S./UK bombardment. This contention cannot be verified. But Ritter, again, noted that, "A few hundred 155mm mustard shells have little military value on the modern battlefield. A meaningful CW attack using artillery requires thousands of rounds. Retention of such a limited number of shells makes no sense and cannot be viewed as a serious threat."

Similarly, Unscom inspections revealed that Iraq had some, but not all the advanced equipment needed to produce VX agents. Although the Iraqis had denied the existence of production facilities for VX, Ritter's people unearthed remnants of just such plant and equipment in a field that had been buried during the Gulf War bombing and subjected it to forensic archeology to determine that whatever had been made was also destroyed. Ritter, again: "The research and development factory is destroyed. The product of that factory is destroyed. The weapons that they loaded up have been destroyed. More importantly, the equipment procured from Europe that was going to be used for their large-scale VX nerve agent factory was identified by the special commission — still packed in its crates in 1997 — and destroyed. Is there a VX nerve agent factory in Iraq today? Not on your life?"

What then are we to make of Bush's assertion that, "surveillance photos reveal that the regime is rebuilding facilities that it had used to produce chemical and biological weapons"? Even Ritter acknowledges that Iraq was technically capable of relaunching its weapons manufacturing capabilities within six months of his 1998 departure. It would, however, have had to start from step one, having been deprived of all equipment, facilities and research because of the work of Ritter's team. It would have had to establish new clandestine front companies to procure the necessary complex of technology and tools. Has Iraq succeeded in reestablishing these international links? Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld has oft noted in answer to such queries that "the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence." As if in answer to this stupefying casuistry, Ritter states that "[I]f Iraq was producing weapons today, we would have definitive proof" because chemical and biological weapons emit vented detectable gasses and nuclear weapons generate gamma ray emissions that are perceptible via satellite.

Iraq's Criminal Regime

THIS BY NO MEANS SHOULD SUGGEST that the criminal Iraqi regime should be taken at its word. It has oppressed its own peoples and menaced its Iranian, Arab and Israeli neighbors. It is, according to Samir al-Khalil's definitive *The Republic of Fear*, a direct offspring of European fascism borrowing from it its racism and anti-Semitism, its use of terror, its fuehrer principle and its deification of the warrior blood cult. Before the inspectors were expelled, Saddam had made every effort to misdirect, thwart and impede the verification process at every juncture. Iraq still maintains sufficient scud and al-Hussein missiles, with a range of 400 miles, to wield a credible threat to its neighbors. And it has been reliably reported that Iraq has built a new ammonium perchlorate plant with material illegally supplied by an Indian company and that a new rocket test

stand has almost certainly been completed in breach of UN sanctions.

This is just what should be expected and is all the more reason for an urgent and timely resumption of the inspection process. Saddam has, in the past, been ineluctably driven to the cause — if "cause" under these circumstances is not an exercise in self-parody — of Arab unification by the regime's own internally generated imperative; the cyclical need to loot and plunder beyond its immediate borders, despite immense reserves of oil, to extricate the regime from its last failed military misadventure at consolidation through expansion. Thus the regime by dint of its own fascist dynamic has an unbreakable addiction to aggression, war and to the acquisition and production of the implements of war. Capitalism, of course, exhibits the same tendency, but this remains relatively latent insofar as the impulse to war must be subordinated to the compulsion of capital accumulation. Fascism, at its most virulent, reverses the centrality of these two impulses because capital accumulation here exists primarily to propel the engines of war and repression. That is why Bush administration's detractors do themselves and their cause no service should they, in their haste to condemn the administration's rush to war, deny this inescapable fact and its equally unavoidable corollary that the only hope of finally dislodging these predatory social and economic impulses resides in regime change. The critical questions for socialists, indeed for consistent democrats, are regime change by whom and for whom. A peace movement that stands for peace and only for peace — one that disassociates itself from the cause of freedom and satisfies itself with juggling the status quo — invariably sows the seeds of its own later isolation and disillusionment.

Clearly the U.S. is manipulating world opinion by consciously distorting the actual concrete threat to world peace beyond any measure of reality. This distortion has in turn become the backbone for the imposition of new and crippling UN conditions on Iraq prior to the reintroduction of the inspectors, thereby threatening a devastating military strike against Iraq on the thinnest of "better safe than sorry" veneers. But if there is no clear and present danger — for an Iraq which is effectively trisected and no longer controls its airspace or its waterways, an Iraq which rests on an economy that has never recovered to the pre-Gulf War I level and which is hobbled by external debt obligations and imposed war reparations is surely, by every conceivable calculation, an Iraq that is contained— then why war and why now? And how is this expected to contribute to the "war on terror," against Islamic jihadists? War may be an effective means of disposing of a single ruler, of stopping the aggressive designs of one or more powers, but especially under these circumstances it is a much less reliable weapon against the spread of ideology. Yet this would, one might think, be critical to any sane calculation of foreign policy in which *public safety* was the first order priority. For at its conclusion the looming war will, if anything, only leave the American people less secure and less free if the uninvited victor is al Qaeda.

The critical questions for socialists, indeed for consistent democrats, are regime change by whom and for whom.

But this administration dismisses "containment" as an unnecessary concession to Cold War thinking; an anachronism predicated on the rough symmetry of military might that does not apply in the Middle East context. And it understands —whether it levels with the American public or not — that a quick victory over Islamic fundamentalism is quixotic, if not utopian. Its real aim is to seize the opportunity to secure American corporate interests and assets by a stark expansion of military bases and stations, beyond Western Europe and Northeast Asia, so that this, as well as other, regions might be directly policed. In Bush's words: "If we wait for threats to fully materialize we will have waited too long. We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans and confront the worst threats *before they emerge*" (emphasis added). The logic of "pre-

emption" which so dominates this administration is a logical outgrowth of this strategy. It is being simultaneously implemented with less fanfare in South America, where Special Forces advisors are to be deployed to protect the 500-mile pipeline across eastern Columbia that transports 100,000 barrels of oil daily for Occidental Petroleum. And it no doubt explains the rush to install American troops in Georgia and the Philippines. It has, in any case, also lowered the threshold against unprovoked transborder aggression, setting an ominous precedent easily translatable to the conflicts over Kashmir and Georgia insofar as they harbor Chechen rebels.

The Assertion of American Supremacy

WITH THE SOVIET UNION GONE, American foreign policymakers, under the Clinton White House, had operated on the principle that the United States is responsible for maintaining a stable world framework for global investment conducive in the first instance to its own economic and strategic interests. Under the Bush administration, with roots going back a decade to the senior Bush presidency, the pretense at nurturing multilateral structures and cooperative international relations, more felicitous to Democratic ears, has been decisively abandoned. This departure can be traced back to a series of publications produced under the auspices of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Defense Planning Guidance for the 2004-2009 Fiscal Years*; the *National Security Strategy* released this past September and a September 2000 document by the neoconservative think-tank Project for the New American Century entitled, *Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategies, Forces and Resources for a New Century*. Among the architects of this new Pax America are the usual cast of characters: Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, Dov Zakheim, etc. They lay out and reiterate, in clear and unambiguous language, the professed need "to prevent the re-emergence of a new rival" by "preventing any hostile power from dominating a region" of strategic interest or concern to the U.S. (*Defense Planning Guidance*); of preparing a "blueprint maintaining global U.S. pre-eminence, precluding the rise of a great power rival, and shaping the international security order in line with American principles and interests" (*Rebuilding America's Defenses*). American forces abroad are characterized as "the cavalry of the new American frontier" and the document warns that the U.S. must "discourage advanced industrial nations from challenging our leadership or even aspiring to a larger regional or global role." It foresees an "Iran" that "may well prove as large a threat to U.S. interests as Iraq has" and it singles out North Korea, Libya, Syria and Iran as treacherous regimes warranting the creation of a "worldwide command-and-control system." This, and not the neo-Wilsonianism of the Clintonites, is now the emerging face of bourgeois "internationalism."

It is therefore little wonder that this administration has offered the American public no exit strategy from this second Gulf War. It quite simply has no intention of any immediately foreseeable departure. Saudi Arabia is seen as having disqualified itself as the central prop of Western interests by virtue of its role in the 9-11 bloodbath. The direct superintendence of the Iraqi oilfields therefore presents itself as the best way to bypass this thorny situation and side-line Riyadh by transforming Iraq into an outsized military outpost, recentering it as the primary staging grounds of American power in the Middle East. Gulf War II would, then, mark the end of the client state role in the system of Western domination, now judged to require an unmediated hands-on approach. This United States has laced the region with a network of military bases extending from Saudi Arabia, to Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and Yemen, to the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia and as far north as to Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in the Caucuses. That is perhaps also why American officials stated that even if American pressure prompted a coup in Iraq, the United States military would still enter and secure the country (*NY Times*, October 11, 2002). Expanded Iraqi oil production would enhance American leverage over Saudi Arabia, break the cohesion of OPEC and, it is hoped, provide a powerful stimulus to Western economies freshly awash in cheap Iraqi oil. Regime change would position the

United States for an anticipated future confrontation with Iran and Syria while providing a living example of what may await them if they refuse to toe the American line. This rather blatant power play is evidently acceptable to a cash-strapped Russia insofar as the U.S. secures Iraqi compensation for the $12 billion in outstanding loans and the $4 billion owed Russia for transporting Iraqi oil.

And this lesson is not lost on the Syrians and Iranians, both of whom fully grasp that an occupied Iraq would provide a platform for the projection of American military might throughout the region. It is for this reason that they have, of late, begun an intensive collusion with Hezbollah to disrupt the upcoming conflict by amassing thousands of surface-to-air missiles along the northern Israeli border. In the likely event that hostilities intensify, pressure could be shifted from Iraq by miring the United States in quelling a burgeoning Arab-Israeli conflagration. Thus Iran, which is by every measure on the verge of shaking off its clerical straightjacket, is being propelled back by America's gunslinger tactics into an alliance with the very centers of Arab tyranny that forces authentically committed to the priority of democracy would otherwise be weaning it from.

And of a post-war Iraq? The Bush administration's track record is pitiable with respect to "nation building" if judged by its performance in Afghanistan. Until recently, the State Department remained close to the Iraqi National Accord, composed chiefly of defectors from Saddam's military and security services, because of its intelligence links with the CIA; while the Defense Department leaned towards the now monarchist-tinged Iraqi National Congress. For all its idealist posturing about sponsoring a representative democracy which would renounce weapons of mass destruction and emerge as a beacon of change within the Arab world, the "war party" has become increasingly wary about gambling with the disorder and anarchy that such commitments might entail. It has evidently dawned even on them that installing by American armed might exile leaders, with no roots in Iraqi society, would likely be received as a transparent farce. The interagency rivalry is therefore beginning to recede behind the emergence of a new realism, more consonant with the tenor of the emerging "internationalism" of the right. In its first stage this would involve a military occupation rather than a provisional government, with little role for the opposition forces that the U.S. had previously promoted. Robert D. Kaplan has captured the mood of the Bush administration with his call to "forswear any evangelical lust to implement democracy overnight in a country with no tradition of it." Instead, he proposes that the United States' goal "should be a transitional secular dictatorship that unites the merchant classes across sectarian lines and may in time, after building of institutions and the economy, lead to a democratic alternative." In the meantime of course, the occupation forces would control the second largest proven reserves of oil, nearly 11 percent of the world total. The transitional regime, which would presumably transplant the occupation in time, "would grant us the right to use local bases other than those in the northern, Kurdish-dominated free zone." Kaplan, in his November 2002 *Atlantic Monthly* article, worries only that the American public, spoon-fed the reassuring pabulum of Iraqi liberation, might not have the "stomach for imperial involvement" that the new "idealism" of the Bush administration and its ideological cohorts now want it to digest.

Neither Bush nor the "lesser-evil" Democrats have fully understood that American insecurity has increased at the same time that its military power has become overwhelming and unchallengeable. It is the American public that appears out in front of both insofar as it has been reluctant to support an American invasion enacted in the teeth of worldwide opprobrium. This might have given the Democrats leverage in raising substantive opposition to the Administration's war preparations, or to have at least provided the cover behind which it could raise the possibility of the crisis being stage-managed by the Republicans for crass electoral purposes. But these opportunities were spent solely in raising procedural objections that the Bush administration quickly neutralized. Democrats fled as if from a burning house at Washing-

ton Representative Jim McDermott's suggestion that the President had misled Americans to fashion support for its war initiative. Even the Spratt amendment, which would have required the President to return to Congress for authorization of a military strike if the United Nations failed to endorse the United States, went down to defeat. Ultimately it was apparent to all that the top Congressional Democratic leadership was in an alliance with the White House in propelling the pro-war resolution. From here the path ahead became obvious to the Administration. UN input was invoked to assuage public concern, that is recruited mafia style and strong-armed into the revelation that it could either endorse the American war initiative or abdicate altogether its say in the unfolding business of global affairs.

It is not that the Democratic leadership are scoundrels, or at least, not solely. It is rather that they take seriously their function as superintendents of the class interests of the American Establishment. This places them in a perpetual quandary. As that institution closest to the American rank and file — its trade unions, its oppressed minorities, its civil libertarian and peace movements — the commitment to democracy that this attachment necessarily entails stands in perpetual tension with American imperial interests that it also must defend. That circle has habitually been squared by championing a form of social imperialism unique to the Democrats and which has distinguished it from the more traditional military oriented imperialism of the right-wing. Democratic programs such as the Marshall Plan and the so-called "humanitarian" interventions in Haiti and Kosova, for instance, would have been inconceivable, and were often carried out in opposition, to the Republicans. Still, Clinton-era liberalism pioneered the way for recasting America as a potentially benign imperial power by their denunciation of U.S. military inaction when atrocities abroad occurred. In so doing, they contributed handily to the interment of the so-called Vietnam syndrome and paved the way for George Bush's America-as-global-vigilante. And as Democratic corporate commitments have grown to dominate and overwhelm its base, the tension that gave rise to social imperialism has begun to unravel ever rendering the party a simply less bellicose version of Republican unilateralists. This has left the Democrats conspicuously susceptible to the charges of waffling and inconsistency, which are not inaccurate assessments of the effect that this fragmentation has had on Democratic political coherency in the realms of both domestic and foreign affairs. Similarly, the decades long infusion of neo-conservative defectors to the Republicans has gradually reshaped that party into an activist interventionary caricature of liberalism, with a uniquely zealous program forthrightly committed to refashioning the world, or at least that part of the world deemed vital to American interests, on a market-oriented footing and to do so with conscious ideological indifference as to whether this advances democracy and human rights. Richard Haass, director of the State Department's policy-planning office summarized, "Supporting an authoritarian leader who is a modernizer and is willing to gradually loosen the reins — that essentially should be our policy."

Toward a Third Camp

THE DEMAGOGIC AND CONSCIENCELESS EXPLOITATION of the Iraqi "threat" cannot diminish its political potency. By any sober evaluation, Saddam Hussein is in no position today to terrorize anyone other than his own population. But corporate dominated communications empires, which continuously enforce a concept of reality that substitutes stereotypes and canned formulas for an awareness of the true meaning and source of the ills that plague the American public, labor overtime to refashion the American community into an elite driven mass. A recent poll attesting to a provisional victory in this regard has disclosed that 66 percent of the American population believes, in the absence of an iota of proof, that Saddam Hussein had something to do with 9-11. The corporate media more generally obscure precisely how this Administration is in the process, reinforced by the logic of imperial pre-emption, of fashioning a world increasingly incompatible with domestic public safety and individual security while ostensibly inscribing these very concerns on its

war banners. Rarely can be found even the suggestion that in its military response, the Bush regime is likely to provoke a bloody backlash of fear and hostility that will give aid and comfort not to the forces of enlightenment and freedom abroad, but to their most implacable opponents; a backlash that will then reverberate domestically in a tidal wave of suspicion and USA Patriot Act-inspired repression.

What is truly remarkable is that in an atmosphere so saturated with confusion and political tension — and absent virtually any organized oppositional forces — a spontaneous grassroots peace movement could still blossom. It all the more defies expectations because the blatantly imperialist contamination of the public domain should reliably be expected rather to reinforce the habits of servility and to ease the way for the militarist mentality to become the regulator of political discourse. This has of course transpired to a degree, as gauged by the recent election returns. More remarkable, on the other hand, for being wholly unanticipated were the avalanche of emails and telephone calls in support of Senator Byrd's anti-war Congressional peroration and the massive rallies and demonstrations arising on short notice in New York and Washington DC, and peppered throughout innumerable smaller locales across the nation. A sizeable minority it would seem is gripped by the healthy conviction that Bush's rush to war has more to do with his Administration's failings, its lack of legitimacy and the resulting insecurities with respect to its hold on power as it does with any imminent threat from Iraq.

For at its conclusion the looming war will, if anything, only leave the American people less secure and less free if the uninvited victor is al Qaeda.

Precisely because there is little or no permanently mobilized American opposition, its peace forces necessarily arise on an ad hoc, semi-pacifist and peacenik basis in response to circumstances not of its own making. They therefore enter the world in a spirit of resistance and moral condemnation, but lacking the ideological coherency needed to organize and structure that consciousness in the form of a systematic political alternative. The movement has, in other words, only partially and provisionally separated itself from the ideological orbit of the Establishment. It laudably embodies a latent Third Camp sentiment, of an alternative from below to the world of war and barbarism, that does not need to be created from scratch, but has still yet to become manifest. It is to the ongoing activity of resistance that socialists look to as a counterweight and corrective to the conservative and defeatist consciousness that lingers in the illusions that sections of the peace movement may retain in Democratic liberalism. The programmatic job for socialists is to show in concrete how the beginning and intermediate points of resistance can be fulfilled only by a more conscious anti-capitalist orientation. This means, in other words, to relentlessly expose the real nature and aim of all war blocs and to insist that only in joint struggle with democratic peace forces abroad and especially in the Middle East can a real Third Camp alternative find its voice. It is the only program in which peace and freedom are not cynical covers for the brutal realities of capitalism, fascism and jihadist fundamentalism.

The forces of the Left are miniscule, that of the peace movement merely diminutive. But on the shoulders of these opposition forces rests the responsibility of restraining the Establishment from its next horrific military adventure and the toxic political fallout that will surely ensue. Third Camp socialists cannot and must not allow the nascent peace movement to be lured into open or concealed solidarity with the other forces of reaction and war — Baathist Iraq or Islamic fundamentalism. This is a specific snare that reactionary and authoritarian forces — the Stalinist Workers World Party and the Revolutionary Communist Party, forces wholly alien to the ideals, sentiment and motivations of the emerging anti-war movement — may take advantage of a leadership vacuum and insert themselves into

the movement's front ranks as organizers and spokespersons. On this socialists must be abundantly clear. In a world dominated by predatory social alternatives, which engage and propel one another as if interlocking gears in a juggernaut of death, we must offer a consistent democratic alternative not only against our Establishment, but also against all who would hijack the movement for other, antithetical, aims.

Eleven years of U.S.-led sanctions have done nothing but deflect the anger properly inspired by Saddam's criminal regime toward the West. They have thereby transformed the West into the co-oppressor, along with the regime itself, of that beleaguered nation. We are therefore duty bound to demand, why after all this — and ignorant as one might be of the stated intentions of the occupation to come — would any Iraqi, any Arab, trust the motivation of an American-led coalition in his or her liberation? Why wouldn't the thought of Western armies on the march deposing Arab regimes and securing oil fields be less than awe-inspiring? Why should any Arab pay heed to the condemnation of Islamic intolerance by an American regime that embraces Christian fundamentalism at home and aligns itself with Jewish settler fundamentalism in the Middle East? Terrorized and betrayed in all directions, it is only to be expected that the Arab world would turn inwards. Islam is the only indigenous force, not completely disgraced, addressing the anxieties and fears of the Arab street.

Yet, the evidence demonstrates that political Islam is remarkably fragile and jealous of its position in the Arab world. As the Rushdie affair demonstrated, Islamists seize with panic when merely confronted with the prospect of ridicule or blasphemy. Like Stalinists, they repeatedly comb through the ranks to uproot ideas and attitudes that are incompatible with their dogmas or that challenge the authority of their leading lights. They cannot engage on the level of ideas and rational debate, where they risk ongoing humiliation and defeat. These are not the responses of a movement confident of its prospects. A religion, a belief, a creed that needs to resort to violence, loyalty, conditioning and coercion is telegraphing its own insecurities. This is why a Trotsky, as emblematic of all critical, revolutionary and free thinking champions had to be relentlessly hunted down and eliminated by Stalinism and why a similar inquisitional bent is hard-wired into the brittle jihadist worldview.

Left solidarity therefore plays a multidimensional role. In raising the flag of anti-imperialist solidarity, it must relentlessly expose precisely how the Bush administration is working in abject defiance and at complete cross-purposes with the legitimate security concerns of the American people. And to the Arab masses it must show a radically different Western face, one that unashamedly links together the democratic struggles of both peoples for a future free of coercion and oppression and which makes its pitch above the heads of Arab dictators and would-be Islamic tyrants, without accommodating to the social-imperialist residue of American liberalism. It must call for the dismantling of all U.S. military outposts. It must champion the national rights not only of Palestinians but also of Kurds, not only of the Lebanese but also of Sudanese Blacks and North African Berbers. It must demand the right of Arab workers to organize and it must carefully monitor and protect the free speech rights of all, including fundamentalists. It must abandon cultural relativism and align itself forthrightly with Arab feminists and it must demand the release of dissidents in the Arab world. And, insofar as Islamic fundamentalism has declared war on atheism, it is all the more incumbent that the Left champion the causes of free-thought heresy and freedom of conscience. Socialists and Western leftists must do everything possible to support conditions conducive to a religious Reformation in the Islamic world, to assist the Arab peoples in freeing themselves of Islamic afterlife fantasies and to expose the notions of sin and evil, of taboos and oppressive social codes that act as bulwarks of the religious power structure, not guideposts of human fulfillment. This is a tall order, but a Left that does not alibi, critically defend, or appease any form of reaction, Western or Third Worldist, can alone provide the peace movement with a clear, activist and internationalist program for change.

WE OPPOSE BOTH SADDAM HUSSEIN AND THE U.S. WAR ON IRAQ:

A call for a new, democratic U.S. foreign policy

The Bush administration has already taken advantage of its "War on Terrorism" to intimidate critics, undermine civil liberties and push through a blatantly pro-corporate agenda on a whole range of issues — from trade union rights to the environment. Now it is moving our country ever closer to an illegitimate and dangerous war on Iraq. The administration must not be allowed to get away with its claim that U.S. military aggression has anything to do with bringing freedom to Iraqis or strengthening global security. Instead, the antiwar movement must come forward as the true champion of democracy and peace in the Middle East, and the advocate of a new foreign policy. We invite *New Politics* readers to join us in this effort.

—Joanne Landy, Thomas Harrison and Jennifer Scarlott,
Co-Directors, Campaign for Peace and Democracy

We oppose the impending U.S.-led war on Iraq, which threatens to inflict vast suffering and destruction, while exacerbating rather than resolving threats to regional and global peace. Saddam Hussein is a tyrant who should be removed from power, both for the good of the Iraqi people and for the security of neighboring countries. However, it is up to the Iraqi people themselves to oust Saddam Hussein, dismantle his police state regime, and democratize their country. People in the United States can be of immense help in this effort—not by supporting military intervention, but by building a strong peace movement and working to ensure that our government pursues a consistently democratic and just foreign policy.

We do not believe that the goal of the approaching war against Iraq is to bring democracy to the Iraqis, nor that it will produce this result. Instead, the Bush Administration's aim is to expand and solidify U.S. predominance in the Middle East, at the cost of tens of thousands of civilian lives if necessary. This war is about U.S. political, military and economic power, about seizing control of oilfields and about strengthening the United States as the enforcer of an inhumane global status quo. *That is why we are opposed to war against Iraq, whether waged unilaterally by Washington or by the UN Security Council, unaccountable to the UN General Assembly and bullied and bribed into endorsing the war.*

The U.S. military may have the ability to destroy Saddam Hussein, but the United States cannot promote democracy in the Muslim world and peace in the Middle East, nor can it deal with the threat posed to all of us by terrorist networks such as Al Qaeda, and by weapons of mass destruction, by pursuing its current policies. Indeed, the U.S. could address these problems only by doing the *opposite* of what it is doing today — that is, by:

- Renouncing the use of military intervention to extend and consolidate U.S. imperial power, and withdrawing U.S. troops from the Middle East.
- Ending its support for corrupt and authoritarian regimes, e.g. Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states and Egypt.
- Opposing, and ending U.S. complicity in, all forms of terrorism worldwide — not just by Al Qaeda, Palestinian suicide bombers and Chechen hostage takers, but also by Colombian paramilitaries, the Israeli military in the Occupied Territories and Russian counterinsurgency forces in Chechnya.
- Ending the cruel sanctions on Iraq, which inflict massive harm on the civilian population.
- Supporting the right of national self-determination for all peoples in the Middle East, including the Kurds, Palestinians and Israeli Jews. Ending one-sided support for Israel in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.
- Taking unilateral steps toward renouncing weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, and vigorously promoting international disarmament treaties.
- Abandoning IMF/World Bank economic policies that bring mass misery to people in large parts of the world. Initiating a major

foreign aid program directed at popular rather than corporate needs.

A U.S. government that carried out these policies would be in a position to honestly and consistently foster democracy in the Middle East and elsewhere. It could encourage democratic forces (not unrepresentative cliques, but genuinely popular parties and movements) in Iraq, Iran and Syria, as well as Egypt, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States and Turkey. Some of these forces exist today, others have yet to arise, but all would flower if nurtured by a new U.S. foreign policy.

These initiatives, taken together, would constitute a truly *democratic* foreign policy. Only such a policy could begin to reverse the mistrust and outright hatred felt by so much of the world's population toward the U.S. At the same time, it would weaken the power of dictatorships and the appeal of terrorism and reactionary religious fundamentalism. Though nothing the United States can do would decisively undermine these elements right away, over time a new U.S. foreign policy would drastically undercut their power and influence.

The Administration's frantic and flagrantly dishonest efforts to portray Saddam Hussein as an imminent military threat to people in this country and to the inhabitants of other Middle Eastern countries lack credibility. Saddam Hussein is a killer and serial aggressor who would doubtless like nothing better than to wreak vengeance on the U.S. and to dominate the Gulf Region. But there is no reason to believe he is suicidal or insane. Considerable evidence suggests that Saddam Hussein is much weaker militarily than he was before the Gulf War and that he is still some distance from being able to manufacture nuclear weapons. But most important, unlike Al Qaeda, he has a state and a position of power to protect; he knows that any Iraqi act of aggression now against the U.S. or his neighbors would bring about his total destruction. As even CIA Director George Tenet has pointed out, it is precisely the certainty of a war to the finish against his regime that would provide Saddam Hussein with the incentive he now lacks to use whatever weapons he has against the U.S. and its allies.

Weapons of mass destruction endanger us all and must be eliminated. But a war against Iraq is not the answer. War threatens massive harm to Iraqi civilians, will add to the ranks of terrorists throughout the Muslim world, and will encourage international bullies to pursue further acts of aggression. Everyone is legitimately concerned about terrorism; however, the path to genuine security involves promoting democracy, social justice and respect for the right of self-determination, along with disarmament, weapons-free-zones, and inspections. Of all the countries in the world, the United States possesses by far the most powerful arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. If the U.S. were to initiate a democratic foreign policy and take serious steps toward disarmament, it would be able to encourage global disarmament as well as regional demilitarization in the Middle East.

The Bush Administration has used the alleged Iraqi military danger to justify an alarming new doctrine of preemptive war. In the National Security Strategy, publicly released on September 20, 2002, the Bush Administration asserted that the U.S. has the right to attack any country that might be a *potential* threat, not merely in response to an act of military aggression. Much of the world sees this doctrine for what it is: the proclamation of an undisguised U.S. global imperium.

Ordinary Iraqis, and people everywhere, need to know that there is *another* America, made up of those who both recognize the urgent need for democratic change in the Middle East and reject our government's militaristic and imperial foreign policy. By signing this statement we declare our intention to work for a new democratic U.S. foreign policy. That means helping to rein in the war-makers and building the most powerful antiwar movement possible, and at the same time forging links of solidarity and concrete support for democratic forces in Iraq and throughout the Middle East.

We refuse to accept the inevitability of war on Iraq despite the enormous military juggernaut that has been put in place, and we declare our commitment to work with others in this country and abroad to avert it. And if war should start, we will do all in our power to end it immediately.

See next page for list of signers

**List in formation. Affiliations of signers for identification only*

Michael Albert, *ZNet/Z Magazine* • Barbara Bader Aldave, National Chair, Gray Panthers, • Tanweer Akram, economist • Stanley Aronowitz, Professional Staff Cong, AFT, NYC • Mohammad Z. Babar, chemical engineer • David Barsamian, Alternative Radio • Rosalyn Baxandall, SUNY at Old Westbury • Radhika Balakrishnan, Marymount Manhattan Coll, NYC • Medea Benjamin, Global Exchange & Women's Peace Vigil • Michael Bérubé, Penn State Univ • Mel Bienenfeld, NYC • Jean A. Blackwood, Peace Awareness, Carthage, Missouri • Eileen Boris, Univ of Calif, Santa Barbara • Jeremy Brecher • Robert Brenner, UCLA • Richard J. Brown, MD, Physicians for a National Health Program-NY • Judith Butler, Univ of Calif, Berkeley • Karisa Butler-Wall, Students for Peace in Iraq Now, Seattle • James S. Cannon • Ramón Castellblanch, SF State Univ • Patrick Cavanagh, Harvard Univ • Daniel S. Chambers, Organizer, Illinois Education Assn • Noam Chomsky, MIT • Margaret W. Crane, The Write Formula • The Rev. Robert Warren Cromey, Episcopal Priest • Richard Deats, *Fellowship* • Bogdan Denitch, Transitions to Democracy • Patrick S. Diehl, Vice-Chair, Sierra Club Glen Canyon Group • Manuela Dobos, Bklyn Parents for Peace • Melinda Downey, *New Politics* • Laura Lee Downs, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales • Karen Durbin, writer • Melvin Dubofsky, Binghamton Univ, SUNY • Barbara Ehrenreich, writer • Carolyn Eisenberg, Hofstra Univ • Stuart C. Elliott, *Kansas Workbeat* • Daniel Ellsberg • Said Elnashaie, AU • Carlos R. Espinosa, architect • Gertrude Ezorksy, *New Politics* • Sam Farber, Brooklyn Coll, CUNY • Dawn Farrington, SW Colorado Peace & Justice Coal • Liza Featherstone, journalist • John Feffer, writer • Peter T. Ferenbach, Exec Dir, Calif Peace Action • Barry Finger, *New Politics* • David Friedman, Berkeley, CA • Mike Friedman, Berkeley, CA • Robert "Gabe" Gabrielsky, Green Party of NJ • Janeane Garofalo • Barbara Garson, author • Joseph Gerson, Am Friends Svce Comm, New England • Ted Glick, Independent Progressive Politics Network • Robert M. Gould, Physicians for Social Resp, SF-Bay Area, • Susan Griffin, writer • Leah Ida Harris, Jews for Peace in Palestine and Israel, Wash, DC • Thomas Harrison, Co-Director, Campaign for Peace and Democracy • Rev. Mark C. Harvey, Grace United Methodist Church, St. Louis • Howie Hawkins, Green Party, Green Alliance • Doug Henwood, *Left Business Observer* • Judith Hempfling, Yellow Springs, OH • William F. Henning, Jr., Vice Pres, CWA Local 1180, • Ed Herman, Wharton Schl, Univ of PA • Michael Hirsch, *New Politics* • Martin Hittelman, Vice Pres, Calif Fed of Tchrs • Adam Hochschild • Nancy Holmstrom, Rutgers Univ, Newark • Niels Hooper, Publisher, Verso • Charles, Carol and Allison Horwitz, Bklyn Parents for Peace • Marianne Jackson, Rescue Health Care NY • Julius and Phyllis Jacobson, *New Politics* • Marty Jezer, Brattleboro, VT • Alan Johnson, *New Politics* • Virginia Kay, Black Radical Cong • Robin D.G. Kelley, NYU • Mel King, Rainbow Coal. Party, MA • Alexander Kramer, Cellist, Charlotte Symphony • Tony Kushner, playwright • Joanne Landy, Co-Director, Campaign for Peace and Democracy • Greg Laynor, Sierra Student Coalition, NJ • Jesse Lemisch, John Jay Coll • John Leonard, NYC • Sue Leonard, NYC • Rabbi Michael Lerner, *TIKKUN* • Mark Levitan, Hoboken, NJ • Hal R. Leyshon, Pres, Washington-Orange Central Labor Council (VT) • Nelson Lichtenstein, UC Santa Barbara • Arthur Lipow, Peace Action Network • Gretchen Lipow, Peace and Justice Caucus, NEA • Martha Livingston, SUNY College at Old Westbury • Betty Reid Mandell, Bridgewater State Coll • Marvin Mandell, Curry Coll • Selma Marks, NYC • Kevin Martin, Peace Action, Wash, DC • Timothy Patrick McCarthy, Harvard Univ • John McMillian, Harvard University • David McReynolds, War Resisters League • Mark Crispin Miller, NYU • John M. Miller, War Resisters League • Ashkan Mojdehi, Students for Peace & Freedom in Palestine • Kim Moody, Labor Notes Policy Comm • Shams-Tabraiz Muzaffar, Dallas, TX • David Oakford, NYC • Jim O'Brien, Univ of Mass, Boston • Mitul Patel, President, Political Activist Club of Plano West Senior High School, Plano, Texas • Ros Petchesky, WEDO (Women's Environment & Development Organization) • Rima Phillips, Port Townsend Peace Movement, WA • Katha Pollitt, *The Nation* • Gina M. Portelli, Citizens Standing Against War, KY • Omar Qureshi • Janet E. Rafferty, Chair, Green Party, Mississippi • Barbara Ransby, Dept of African American Studies, Univ of Ill at Chgo • Marcus Rediker, Univ of Pittsburgh • Adolph Reed, Jr., New School Univ • Sonia Jaffe Robbins, Network of East-West Women • Leonard Rodberg, Queens Coll • David Roediger, Univ of Illinois, Champaign • Linda Rosenberg, NYC • Matthew Rothschild, *The Progressive* • Edward Said, Columbia Univ • Lydia Sargent, *Z Magazine* • Saskia Sassen, Univ of Chicago • Max B. Sawicky, Sr. Economist, Economic Policy Inst; Natl Exec Comm, Am for Dem Action; Local 70, Int'l Fed of Professional and Technical Engineers • Charles Scarlott, Tucson AZ • Jennifer Scarlott, Co-Director, Campaign for Peace and Democracy • Juliet Schor, Boston Coll • Ellen Schrecker, Yeshiva Univ • Jason Schulman, Co-editor, *Democratic Left* • Joel Schwartz, Pres, CSEA Local 446, Staten Island, NY • Lynne Sharon Schwartz, NYC • Timothy Sears, Democratic Socialists of America • Richard Sennett, NYU • Rabbi Gerald Serotta, Temple Shalom, Chevy Chase, MD, • Stephen R. Shalom, William Paterson Univ • Adam Shatz, journalist • Alix Kates Shulman, writer • Ann Snitow, Network of East-West Women • Sid & Sandy Socolar, NYC • Alan Sokal, NYU • Vernon M. Stevens, Veterans for Peace • Cheryl Stevenson • Timothy Stevenson, Brattleboro Area Peace & Justice Group, VT • Elizabeth Stinson, Peace & Justice Center of Sonoma County • Edward Strug, Queens Coll • Bernard Tuchman, NYC • Alan Wald, Univ of Mich • Robert Waldrop, Oscar Romero Catholic Worker House, Oklahoma City • Immanuel Wallerstein, Yale Univ • Judith Podore Ward, NYC • Lois Weiner, New Jersey City Univ • James Weinstein, Founding editor, *In These Times* • Susan Weissman, St. Mary's Coll of CA • Naomi Weisstein, SUNY at Buffalo • Cornel West, Princeton Univ • Reginald Wilson, Am Council on Education • Barbara Winslow, Brooklyn Coll, CUNY • Arnold Jacob Wolf, Rabbi Emeritus, K.A.M. Isaiah Israel Cong, Chgo • Ira J. Woodward, Reed Student Peace Action Network • Kent Worcester, Marymount Manhattan Coll • Michael Wreszin, CUNY (ret.) • Howard Zinn, historian

✂ *or rippity-tear*

☐ Add my name to the list of signers to the CPD anti-war statement. You may use my name when the statement is published.

☐ I am sending a donation of $_____ to help disseminate and publish the statement in various publications including, if sufficient funds are raised, *The New York Times.*

I am sending my gift __ by mail __ on line (see below.)

Your name .....

Organizational/institutional affiliation or city *(for identification only)*

.....

E-Mail .....

Phone .....

Address .....

Only name and affiliation or city will be made public.

NOTE: We won't change the statement's wording without consulting the signers, except that if full-scale war breaks out we will edit the text accordingly, e.g., by removing adjectives such as "impending" and "approaching" to describe the war.

For further information, write cpd@igc.org. To add your name on line, go to www.cpdweb.org. Updated lists of singers will be posted on this web site.

Make checks payable to Campaign for Peace and Democracy or donate on line by setting up an account at www.paypal.com. If giving through PayPal, your payment should be directed to cpd@igc.org

Mail to: Campaign for Peace and Democracy, POB 630245, Bronx, NY 10463

Debating Bush's "War on Terrorism"

An Expression of Socialist Internationalism

To the Editor:

BRAVO TO THAT NOTORIOUSLY UNREPENTANT third camp socialist Julius Jacobson for his levelheaded article "Left and Liberal Responses to the U.S. War on Democracy" (*New Politics,* No 33). It is refreshing to see a serious socialist and internationalist deflate the pretensions of leftist and liberal pundits who root for or against The Big One ("America the land of the brave and free" *versus* "AmeriKKKa.") and cut the facts and analysis to fit the image. Indeed, one is forced to admire Jacobson's patience wading through all that rhetorical drivel and taking the time to deconstruct each piece of it to reveal the prejudices and propaganda devices that lie behind seemingly innocent phrases. A fine job of painstaking media analysis.

More importantly, Jacobson reminds us of the two bedrock truths of socialist internationalism: 1) the enemies of our enemies are not necessarily our friends and 2) our main enemy is always the one we face at home. As I write, U.S. anti-war and anti-globalist forces are gathering to oppose Washington's aggression and to express solidarity with the homeless and occupied Palestinians, with the "liberated" Afghan women under a U.S. installed regime of rapist warlords, and with the doubly oppressed peoples of Iraq, terrorized by Saddam, starved and bombed by the U.S.

This may be an important opening at a moment when the U.S. political and economic system is in crisis. So who needs Smart Alec liberals to write apologetics for the sanitized terrorism of U.S. smart-bomb aggression? And what's the point of leftist/progressives relativizing the atrocities of dictatorial torture regimes, if not to discredit a healthy and growing movement of internationalist-minded and basically anti-capitalist Americans of various ethnicities, genders, occupations and creeds? A plague on both their houses. Today's peace and justice movements have enough enemies without liberal and leftist "friends." If ever the idea of a "third camp" made sense, it is now. I only wish the greater public could be exposed to socialist voices like Jacobson's.

RICHARD GREEMAN
Montpellier, France

A Necessary Lesson

To the Editor:

THOSE DEVOTING ONLY A CURSORY READING to Julius Jacobson's piece in the Summer *New Politics* may come away with the impression that it comes too close for comfort to the apologetics of Hitchens, Gitlin, Walzer and other newly minted neo-conservatives. This impression is misleading. Jacobson's piece contains an important and necessary lesson for progressives and for this reason deserves a close reading.

Jacobson accurately documents that in its immediate response to 9/11, certain sectors of the left were incapable of registering basic human sympathy, preferring to deal with the thousands of victims of the attack in abstract, almost clinical terms. Cockburn's and Petras's remarks quoted by Jacobson betray an unmistakable mandarin detachment as if the scores of incinerated bodies were pieces removed from a chessboard and the scurryings of terrified office workers those of a species of insect. It is absolutely essential for progressives to demonstrate that our activism has at its core the concern for individual men and women like these manipulated and paying the price for the pursuit of profit and power. Only after demonstrating a basic level of humanity are we in a position to contribute our perspective on the underlying responsibility of U.S. foreign policy for the conditions which made the attacks inevitable.

In short, progressives must learn (or relearn) how to combine human decency with intellectual honesty. It was my strong sense that for months, virtually no one with access to media (corporate or alternative) was able to navigate between these two poles. Jacobson's was one of the few pieces which attempted to do so.

Along these lines, Jacobson's piece also suggests a larger problem which the left fails to confront, specifically the tendency of certain leftists to define themselves by their alienation. Only a movement populated by, in George Orwell's words "neurotics working off a private grudge" would respond as with such affectless equanimity as the nostrils of thousands of New Yorkers filled up with the ashes of their friends and relatives on 9/11.

9/11 should have been seen as a horrific demonstration that the human costs of maintaining an empire are real and staggering, far exceeding the benefits which accrue mainly to corporate balance sheets. By sympathizing with the victims, we make this point.

By ignoring their suffering, we marginalize ourselves still further.

JOHN HALLE
Green Party Alderman, Ward 9
Assistant Prof. of Music, Yale University

An Important Contribution

To the Editor:

BECAUSE JULIUS JACOBSON'S ARTICLE (On Liberal and Left Responses to the War on Democracy, Whole Number 33) bears on issues that have been discussed elsewhere I want to post my response more widely than just to him.

I felt that Jacobson made some rather "pro forma" comments on those (James Petras and others) whom he felt had not grasped the significance of 9/11. Certainly, from what is quoted of Petras, he is out of touch in writing that the U.S. "has turned into a network of secret police and informers." We don't need paranoia — things are quite bad enough. The U.S. remains a strange society, given to moods and swings, with a kind of "self-balancing" mechanism. Hysteria on the Left only contributes to our problem.

Certainly American capitalism is not the root of all evil. Just the root of a great deal of it. If the U.S. vanished from the globe tomorrow there would still be terrible, terrible violence and repression in many parts of the world. A point Jacobson makes very well in regard to the reactionary forces within Islam in much of the Muslim world.

I think Cockburn is right in recognizing the courage of those who aimed the aircraft into oblivion. If we can't recognize that our "worst enemies" may be as courageous as any of us, we are going to fail to understand what we are up against. I haven't read Edward Herman's work, but again, I think Jacobson is either settling old scores or trying to keep a kind of balance before proceeding to his main thrust.

Let me say, I appreciated his understanding of the role of the wave of flags that appeared so spontaneously in the immediate aftermath, and his genuine sense of the horror of "disappearing" nearly three thousand human beings, leaving us with the photocopies of faces of people gone forever, posted all over the city, like tears spread on paper, a thousand private griefs made public, haunting all of us who live here.

On the major part of the article, which focused largely on Christopher Hitchens and Michael Walzer, I have a small disagreement to note. For all of our mutual opposition to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the alleged improvements brought by the U.S. invasion were present under the Communists: land reform, literacy, education for women. The tragedy (which gets back to the fact that the U.S. is not the only source of evil in the world) is that the opposition to Soviet forces was mainly based on extremely reactionary forces.

Another minor point: I do not believe that Jacobson's distaste for Paul Robeson's Ballad for Americans is a fair judgment. When I was in Jr. High School, far, far from my radical future, I loved that music (and still do, though my musical taste has, I hope, advanced). The Communist Party was, for whatever reasons, making a real effort to build a radicalism based on American experience, rooted in our history, not in events in Petrograd circa 1917. That effort should not be totally dismissed.

For all this, I rejoiced at Jacobson's systematic rebuttal to Michael Walzer. It is deeply distressing that Walzer has a following of any kind in the left, let alone as the co-editor of *Dissent,* a magazine that began with a truly radical vision. In mild defense of Walzer, his observations on the need for security measures to deal with terrorism would face us in the unlikely event we were

suddenly in power. There is always a balance between freedom and fear, between civil rights and the right of a society to safety. I'm on the side of freedom and civil rights (as Jacobson is) but I confess to believing that there is a balance which shifts under certain conditions (such as war or, in this case, terrorism).

One doesn't have to agree with all of Jacobson's points to appreciate the clarity of his approach and the need for a solid response to Walzer. Many thanks for an article that made a genuine and important contribution to our understanding of 9/11. *New Politics* is one of the publications that deserves a wide audience among younger members of the left.

DAVID MCREYNOLDS

A Wonderful Critique

To the Editor:

I WANT TO COMMEND YOU for Julius Jacobson's article in issue 33. It is terrific. It makes a wonderful critique of lots of folks who need to be critiqued. I would never have been able to do such a good job. But I want to add a personal perspective (as he did) on these issues, and make a few minor suggestions that might add to his argument.

On September 11, 2001, I sat in a train in New Jersey heading to New York City on my daily commute. I watched my workplace in World Trade Center 2 belching smoke and flames. I had no idea which of my friends might be burning, suffocated, or crushed. As I tried to come to grips with this horror, I asked myself, "Is there any way this could be justified by anyone?" My first thoughts turned, mistakenly, to the Iraqi state. I thought about the Iraqi parents of starvation-killed kids. Surely they had the right to retaliate? But . . . no! It was justifiable only within the logic of state systems, within the logic of an eye-for-an-eye that is one strand of Judaic-based religions, or within the amoral calculations of an alienated capitalism. Making war in return, spreading the horror, was also justifiable in the logic of capitalism, the religions of the Book, or the logic of the state, but was clearly rejected by my visceral reaction. The horror that my friends were facing was not just, and spreading it to others in retaliation was not just. My later socialist analysis agrees with this visceral reaction. Julius Jacobson has phrased this more clearly than I can, but the following lines which I have written may capture it in yet another and useful way:

In the Train Watching the Two Towers Burn on 9/11

In the train, I saw the logic,
within the thinking
of the State,
that Iraq would have the option
of enacting this doom-filled sight,
in revenge for dead starved babies,
for the germs of blockaded bomb-filled years.

In the train, I saw the horror,
of that thinking
of the State,
felt the terror, felt the evil,
of a system living
by such Right,
saw the horrors
that the terror
would deliberately provoke.

In the train, I thought of workmates,
dying gasping,
dying burned,
fleeing sightless down the stairways
a hundred feet above the ground.

In the train, half numb with terror,
train-mates' eyes reflecting fear,
not then knowing that my workmates
had all fled safely,
were alive,
in the train, I feared the fire
that raged inside my sight,
in the train, I feared the fires
that America would ignite,
a horrid conflagration
spread by America's armed might.

In the train, I thought and trembled,
thought shaking about States,
saw that States and profit systems
spawn such fires and such hate,
felt the need
for revolution
to tear up the roots
of spreading terror,
to build a world that doesn't
thrive on hate.

OF COURSE, AS A MEMBER OF OUR TENDENCY, I would be truly odd if I did not make a few suggestions about ways I would approach the issue that build upon what you have written.

1. I often contextualize the September 11 events by remembering what was happening in the days immediately before them — the World Conference on Racism and the disgraceful behavior of the world's governments around that event. This Conference had set the stage for a useful debate in the form of crescendoing and savage criticism of these governments. But this debate, and this criticism, were erased from the world's attention by September 11.

2. I would have mentioned another kind of (very healthy) reaction by a small number of us on the left. Some of us who were directly involved in the September 11 events reacted publicly that "Human beings just should not do this kind of thing" — and then applied this perspective to the need not to react in equal barbarity by the U.S. government. The most salient example of this, of course, was Orlando and Phyllis Rodriguez's poignant and wonderful "Not in our son's name" statement.

3. I think Jacobson takes an intellectual shortcut that does not work well at one point. This is where he discusses imperialism in terms of specifically American imperialism where the real point requires addressing the role of European/U.S. imperialism. This is needed especially in those instances where the U.S. took over the imperial role and power from European predecessors, as was the case in much of the Arab world.

But these minor points aside, I think the article is great. To me, it builds upon a general perspective. It has always been the brilliance of our broad tendency (and sometimes it has felt like a curse) to understand, and to *feel,* the error of the equation that "The enemy of my enemy is my friend." This understanding has helped us steer clear of justifying Stalin, Lyndon Johnson, Mao, bin Laden, Clinton, Bush, and other mass murderers. This understanding, which underpins Jacobson's article, has clear class roots. Our tendency strives to represent the positive in a world of negation — that it, the decent and pleasant world that workers can begin to build once we get outside the trap of backing one evil force against another and turn to taking power and building the world anew.

SAM FRIEDMAN

A Needed Article

To the Editor,

BRAVO TO JULIUS JACOBSON'S LEAD PIECE in the new *NP*. Precisely the sort of article I've wanted to see for a while, one that takes on the latter-day warriors of the left (or ex-left, in Hitchens' case) without the "yankophobia" (good phrase) that characterized too much anti-war commentary.

A question, though — which I'm also directing to Steve Shalom. Let's say the Bush administration had responded to the 9/11 massacre in the way Steve suggests — by "taking the Taliban up on their offer to turn bin Laden over to a third party for trial." What if that had been done and then it turned out that the Taliban was not serious? What if the Afghan government simply refused to hand over culprits no matter what?

I suspect that is what in fact would've happened. It was right to oppose the war, as diplomacy was ended prematurely (if we want to call Bush's ultimatums "diplomacy"). But I suspect war in this case was inevitable. I can't find any satisfactory answer to my own question. I'm left with "Well, then we go to war and hope very few civilians die."

What's your answer? [*]

JASON SCHULMAN

[*] See Stephen R. Shalom's response to Justin Schulman's letter in the Correspondence Section, p. 193.

The Roots of bin Laden

To the Editor:

THAT THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT which gave rise to the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center as well as other, less consequential attacks, should be thoroughly analyzed cannot be questioned. Far less attention, I believe, has been paid to the ideas which are part of this context, and which in their own way articulate it. They seek to justify those actions, and at some psychological level inspire the personal sacrifice

necessary to carry them out. We cannot simply denounce them as atrocities committed by criminal gangs. While I see no alternative to supporting the measures of defense required to forestall them, I also believe that ordinary criminals do not commit suicide in the course of their actions. Men and women willing to do so are driven by an idea, a cause. That's what we must examine.

I am unable to do this in any depth; I lack the necessary knowledge of language and literature. So what I will do here is to probe the meanings of some of the remarks attributed to Osama bin Laden over the past few years. Sparse as these remarks have been, they imply a historical vision of sorts. And little as we know about his personal background, some inferences about his religious motivations that have inspired him and his followers are possible.

Sometime in early 2002 or late 2001, bin Laden alluded to (or was reported to have alluded to) "80 years" of Western domination of the Islamic Middle East. Now, the Ottoman Empire was by and large dissolved under the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920, signed by the much weakened sultan. The Empire had embraced Syria, which now fell under French mandate; and Mesopotamia and Palestine, now under the British. Islands in the Aegean were assigned to Greece, others elsewhere in the Mediterranean to the Italians. True, Western domination of the Middle East in modern times had begun with the entry of Napoleon into Egypt in 1798. But Sèvres spelled the end of Ottoman rule, with the exception of Turkey. Whey was this of significance to bin Laden?

Bernard Lewis in his *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (1961, 1968) (upon which I have drawn heavily here) wrote an (unintended) answer to that question, better in its conciseness than I can venture:

> From its foundation until its fall the Ottoman Empire was a state dedicated to the advancement or defense of the power and faith of Islam. For six centuries the Ottomans were almost constantly at war with the Christian West, first in the attempt — mainly successful — to impose Islamic rule on a large part of Europe, then in the long-drawn-out rearguard action to halt or delay the relentless counter-attack of the West . . . For the Ottoman Turk, his Empire, containing all the heartlands of early Islam, was Islam itself." (p. 13, pb edition)

The Empire had been weakened progressively for centuries prior to the Treaty, but Sèvres sealed its demise and, what is more, legalized the presence of the mandatory powers in its formal realm.

In 1923, the Treaty was replaced by a new treaty in which certain concessions were made to Kemal Atatuerk after he had deposed the sultan; but no part of the Empire was restored. The deposition had occurred in 1921; the Turkish republic was proclaimed. Osama bin Laden undoubtedly includes the emergence of secular Turkish nationalism in what he has viewed as "80 years" of Western dominance. How so?

According to the U.S. State Department publication, *Patterns of Global Terrorism,* 2000 (April 2001), the "current goal [of Osama bin Laden] is to establish a pan-Islamic caliphate throughout the world . . . " I assume that this statement is an accurate paraphrase of what bin Laden said (or was reported to have said). It is certainly in character with what I believe to be his historical vision.

Now, the Caliph was historically "the sovereign of Islam" (B. Lewis), and was identified (or identical) with the Ottoman sultan. Kemal Atatuerk recognized that the Caliph "belonged to the Ottoman house," hence Turkey had the right to appoint him after the deposition of the sultan. And so it did, only to abolish the Caliphate altogether in 1924. Furthermore, Turkey disestablished Islam, and in 1928 removed all mention of it from the constitution. Osama bin Laden's notion of restoring the Caliphate has to be viewed as being hostile to the modernism and secularism of Turkey. (Whether any of that country's representatives or writers so view it, I do not know.)

The notion of a restored Caliphate implies pan-Islamism. Pan movements (pan-Germanism, pan-Slavism) have been invariably reactionary, a product of reactionary nationalism in the second half of the 19th century. They led to the severe repression of minorities in the countries to whose national or religious majorities their sponsors appealed. Bin Laden's pan-Islamism is similarly profoundly repressive and reactionary,

considering in particular his background and origins.

Bin Laden, who stems from Yemen, has been associated with the movement of Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia. Wahhabism, to be sure, has come to be a generic term for the advocacy of the "purification" of Islam from degrading accretions, and has been considered to be "ultra-conservative" and insisting upon the "almost absolute literalism" in interpreting the Koran. The Wahhabi challenged the Ottomans, but were suppressed. They survived the repression, and revived in areas of what is today Saudi Arabia, and came evidently to be protected by one of the Saudi chieftains, an ancestor of today's royalty. The Wahhabi are similar to earlier Islamic movements which sought to "impose reform under the compulsion of an idealism through intolerant and fanatical methods." (Fazlur Rahman, *Islam,* 1979, p. 200) I cannot pursue further details here. Wahhabism appears to be the tradition that stamps bin Laden's pan-Islamism.

The "Western domination" whose reach into the realms of Islam bin Laden intends to end has nothing to do, of course, with colonial rule. All Muslim countries are free of such rule. It has to do with secularism, the autonomy of the human spirit, the message associated with the West. Fazlur Rahman writes, "The real problem of [Muslim] countries . . . lies in the actual, positive formulation of Islam, of exactly spelling out what Islam has to say to the modern individual and society. The problem is fatefully crucial . . . for should these societies fail of an adequate answer, the only alternative left to them will be some form of secularism, and there is little doubt that this solution is tantamount to changing the very nature of Islam." (*Islam,* p. 249) But the failure of dealing with this "fateful problem" is not least due, Rahman writes, to the "ubiquitous emergence of fundamentalist attitudes and movements" throughout much of the Islamic world — of which Wahhabism is perhaps the most uncompromising one.

The anti-colonial struggles in the 20th century succeeded in part at least because it became too costly for the colonial powers to maintain their rule. Osama bin Laden may well calculate that this will likewise hold in the longer term for the United States as well. (The withdrawal of American marines from Lebanon in 1982 may be viewed in that perspective.) He seems to have adopted terrorism as a form of guerilla warfare, and will disregard the loss of lives of innocent people. In fact, he has been quoted as having juxtaposed the nuclear attack on Hiroshima in 1945 with the attack on the World Trade Center. Both, so he seems to imply, share in the attackers' disregard of human lives.

Osama bin Laden's is not a movement. His group is comparable perhaps to a determined, small minority of "professional revolutionaries." It is difficult to say what its prospects are. That requires another analysis.

H. BRAND

The Only Moral Intellectual: A Reply to Jacobson

To the Editor:

JACOBSON HAS THE VIRTUE of combining the methods of the Stalinist school of falsification, the vituperative style of Andre Vishinsky during the blood purges of the 1930s, with the crude chauvinism of Rumsfeld (social critics as Americanophobic). Jacobson accuses me of "justifying the hijackings and their al Qaeda trainees" because I describe the political significance of the targets chosen by the terrorists — their military and economic importance. I refer to the event as a human tragedy. Jacobson, in his unique irrational and histrionic polemical zeal cannot understand the difference between an objective analysis and discussion of the targets, (their occupants and characteristics) and the political goals of the terrorists, and advocacy or defense or "apology" for the terrorists or their action. According to Jacobson, anyone who describes the nature and goals of U.S. imperialism, or Israeli state terrorism or the unconditional support of the major Jewish organizations for Sharon are apologists for imperialism or terrorists. When Trotsky described and analyzed the degeneration of the Soviet workers state, Stalin accused him of being an apologist for capitalist restoration and Hitlerite plots. Vishinsky used the same vicious labeling techniques as Jacobson "reckless," "ranting" to avoid substantive arguments and deni-

grate honest revolutionaries.

Jacobson is oblivious to the profound and extensive deterioration of democratic rights after 9/11: the Patriot Act which sets up military tribunals, suspends *habeas corpus*, allows for large scale, long term raids on houses, offices, stores etc.; the TIPS legislation organizes millions of workers and neighbors to spy and report to the police any "suspicious" behavior of anyone. The ACLU, the American Bar Association and civil libertarians of all stripes and colors call this a major step toward an authoritarian regime. Jacobson however in line with Bush, Rumsfeld, the ADL and Trent Lott insists the contrary, the U.S. is and always has been a "bourgeois democracy."

This is a case of political senility. Jacobson cannot take account of vital changes in the nature of the political system but repeats out of date mantras.

Jacobson's ethnocentrism is reminiscent of George Bush's geographic befuddlement. He constantly refers to "American" capitalism when Julius is really talking about the United States. America includes the entire Western Hemisphere. For your information, Julius/George, Latin Americans are also Americans.

I borrowed Bertram Gross' phrase "friendly fascism" to describe a regime (the U.S.) which combined the façade of a democracy (politicians kissing babies in election campaigns, down-home pork barrel politics) with murderous bloody wars killing millions, and substantive legislation which repressed the democratic freedoms of citizens. Jacobson does not address the facts — he answers with his usual nasty snarl, substituting rhetorical questions with his usual — knowing — "Does Petras truly believe all this?" Any civil libertarian would reply, "Don't you read our reports about the widespread fears and intimidation by the state police or are you so buried in your little sect circle, that you ignore the real world?"

Jacobson's ignorance of the repressive-police state ambience is such that he cites the figure of 1,500 arrested. In reality no one except the police officials know the real numbers of arrestees, because the Government under the new police-state legislation can hold detainees incommunicado, and does not have to report how many are held, where they are held and under what conditions.

Jacobson in his delirium accuses me of being the "exponent of the notion that American (sic) capitalism is the root of all evil." If he had read my web site, as 70,000 readers do every month, he would notice that I also criticize the ruling classes of Latin America, the Israeli state, the Israeli lobby in the U.S., intellectuals, and even for a diversion — the loony left. The fact is that U.S. imperialism has been deeply involved in promoting, funding and arming the terror regimes in Asia, Latin America and elsewhere. It is the major source of violent reaction and exploitation in the world — but not the exclusive. A position shared by almost all the left writers and journalists in the U.S. and elsewhere including some of those Jacobson favors. For those readers who are skeptical of Jacobson's fabrications and want to read my critical essays I suggest they look up my web site HTTP://www.rebellion.org/petrasenglish.html. A more complete collection in Spanish can be found at the same site.

As is well know from all my writings, I have opposed religious fundamentalism, terrorist or not, Jewish, Muslim or Christian all of political life — over 45 years. I was on the editorial board of *New Politics* during the 1960s and 1970s. Neither then nor now do I support terrorism or its apologists whether they are Arab unemployed or affluent Jewish businessmen or Basque separatists. Jacobson has provided absolutely no *evidence* demonstrating the contrary. What was in the past an intelligent if acerbic critic has degenerated into a dishonest polemicist, who has borrowed all the rhetorical techniques of his Stalinist adversaries.

There was a positive item, one that preceded Jacobson's article. It read: " The views expressed do not reflect the opinions of the entire editorial board." It is a shame that those contrary opinions did not appear in the journal, to perhaps provide some intellectual and moral balance to Jacobson's one-sided screed. After all, if we are all wrong and Jacobson is the One True and Moral Intellectual who never admits to being wrong on anything at any time (even after 5 million Russians have died prematurely because of the overthrow of the Soviet state) it would be good to see *New Politics* with a

different ideological guru, but I am afraid that will have to wait till nature takes its course.

JAMES PETRAS

Letter to the Editor of *New Politics*

To the Editor:

IN HIS DIATRIBE "On Liberal and Left Responses," Jacobson misrepresents my views in regard to the September 11 attacks. He notes that I say "very little has changed" and that it "feels very much like September 10 to me." But he fails to inform his readers that I was not talking about the state of mind of the U.S. public but about the rightwing agenda of the U.S. ruling class. I note that this agenda remains as relentlessly vicious and unchanged as ever. I point to the huge tax cuts to the very rich, the additional billions to corporate America, the still greater increases in an already bloated military budget, and the continual war against weak defenseless nations and against our civil liberties, our human services, and our environment. Jacobson cites none of the specifics I discussed, and thereby manages to leave the false impression that I am "indeed making light of 9/11."

Jacobson also quotes me as saying that opinion makers used the terrorist attacks as an issue "that rallies everyone around the flag and points a finger at a fanatical Islamic sect rather than at corporate America or the U.S. national security state." Correct. But then Jacobson adds his own comment: "It is as if Parenti does not realize or cannot admit that people have 10 fingers, including a second index finger with which to point at the responsibility of Islamic fundamentalism as an autonomous and retrograde force without for a moment relaxing the other finger that points at the criminal policies of U.S. imperialism."

This is Julie's little shell game. He tells us that "people" can point to more than one retrograde force involved in September 11, as if we didn't know that. But I was not talking about people in general, I was talking about policymakers and pundits who faithfully serve the ruling class by fingering Islam as the cause of it all. Sure, *people* can see otherwise. In fact, one of those people is myself. In my book *The Terrorism Trap: September 11 and Beyond*, which Jacobson obviously has not read, I state: "One can abhor the terrorist attacks while also fixing the blame on a wide array of factors that go beyond — but include — the terrorists themselves." And I discuss the terrible longstanding linkage between religion and violence, concluding: "[W]e cannot divorce religion from the things that are done in its name. Just as we credit religion for its acts of mercy and charity, so might we credit it for the acts of terror and bloody murder it has inspired throughout the ages."

In his eagerness to score polemical points, Jacobson misrepresents what I say, then triumphantly attacks his own misrepresentations.

MICHAEL PARENTI

Jacobson's Lesson In Chauvinism and Intolerance

To the Editor:

JULIUS JACOBSON FOUND my *Z Magazine* article on "The Threat of Global State Terrorism," co-authored with David Peterson, to be "disgraceful," the "tone and timing" inexcusable, failing to "repudiate Islamic fundamentalism and to respond compassionately and sensitively to that horrific day," among other defects. Jacobson is not a very tolerant man. Every article touching on that "horrific day" and its consequences must include, with proper stress, everything that Jacobson would put in; not a thousand flowers, but only one flower, with the balance approved by Jacobson, can bloom without disgracing the author.

Jacobson's own chauvinism is dramatically illustrated in this requirement that we all genuflect to the "horrific day." The whole world has paid homage to the 9/11 victims and the media can't push its horrors enough, but in each and every article we on the left must display suitable sensitivity, until enough time has elapsed in Jacobson's opinion to permit us to broach the subject without obeisance. After all, this was 3,000 U.S. citizens killed, ultra-worthy victims, not gooks. In their article on "Sanctions of Mass Destruction," in *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 1999), John and Karl Mueller claim that the U.S.-organized sanctions on Iraq may have killed over a million civilians, more civilians,

they allege, than were killed by all the weapons of mass destruction in human history. Jacobson, do you speak of the "horrific decade" of such sanctions, and require any mention of 9/11 to refer to this really large-scale killing? You sneer at my "obvious" references to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but the Iraqi children have been killed steadily, almost entirely by U.S. insistence and initiatives, during your editorship — have you given steady and massive attention to this process of mass murder? And doesn't the fact that the 9/11 deaths have been endlessly discussed and grieved over globally make this also by now "obvious"?

Jacobson objects to my failure to give adequate stress to the "depraved" and "genocidal" fundamentalist fanatics who "indiscriminately" kill. Interestingly, in discussing my failings he never uses such invidious language for his leaders. He speaks of "reactionary imperialism," a bland cliché, but he never uses words like "depraved" and "genocidal" to describe the managers of reactionary imperialism. They also apparently don't kill indiscriminately. Jacobson, when Albright told Leslie Stahl in 1996 that killing 500,000 Iraqi children via sanctions was "worth it," wasn't that an illustration of "depravity" and a "genocidal impulse" that can match anything from bin Laden and al-Qaeda? Have you ever described it in such terms or have you just normalized the antics of reactionary imperialism and found them not all that horrific — not worth dwelling on like the 9/11 tragedy?

Jacobson's account of the 9/11 terrorists and the al-Qaeda threat is hysterical, and of course he doesn't mention that they are creatures of the U.S. war against the Soviet Union, now blown back. Peterson and I argued in our article on "The Threat of Global State Terrorism" that the al-Qaeda are "retail" terrorists, who can kill and are dangerous, but are not in a class with "wholesale" terrorists like the United States and Britain. Jacobson argues that we "conveniently" overlook the shrinking gap between the scale of violence that non-state and state terrorists can generate. Jacobson overlooks the facts that 9/11 was a unique event, and that al Qaeda hasn't carried out a single further major act of terror against the United States since then despite the world-wide U.S. assault on its forces. He uses the word "genocidal" in relation to these relatively powerless killers, but refuses to apply it to the killers who are not only capable of committing genocide but who in Iraq have carried out a policy that can truly be described as genocidal.

Jacobson also overlooks the fact that the United States, which is rapidly enlarging its military forces, has an immense nuclear, chemical, missile, airforce, and naval capability whereas al-Qaeda has none of these. And in this new post-9/11 surge the U.S. leaders now threaten to use their enlarging and more "practical" nuclear arsenal. Perhaps the fact that after 9/11 the navy was patrolling the seas off New York and with 24-hour air surveillance over major cities convinced Jacobson that al-Qaeda poses an imminent naval and air attack threat.

In response to my statement that the Bush wholesale terrorist response posed the real danger to world peace and security, Jacobson asks: "where is this response"? For Jacobson, the huge bombing assault on Afghanistan was not wholesale terrorism or aggression, presumably it was just measured retaliation — and if more than 3,000 civilians were killed in the process (as was the case), well, admittedly that is small potatoes for the U.S. military machine, but Jacobson clearly doesn't view their deaths as "horrific" and deserving 9/11 attention. Jacobson also seems unaware of the fact that Bush has given carte blanche to Sharon's wholesale terrorism, that Putin has a freer hand to kill in Chechnya, and that in many other countries from Colombia to the Philippines the new "war on terror" has given state terrorists a go ahead and positive aid to forcibly repress any dissent and rebellion. He doesn't see the intensified bombing of Iraq and plan for an armed attack, which has much of the world terrified, as wholesale terrorism.

Jacobson fails to understand that a real left sticks by fundamentals even in times of stress, when joining the mainstream mob is easy. He pretends, like the "cruise missile left" that appropriate "sensitivity" and adequate denunciations of the enemy will make us more effective with the mainstream (see my article under the title "The

Cruise Missile Left" in *Z Magazine,* November 2002). This is baloney, and is a cover for abandoning the left ship. Our article that he criticizes was an attempt to keep attention focused on where the main threat comes from: an aggressive imperialism, now posing a greater menace than ever, as even many liberals and common sense conservatives now acknowledge.

Jacobson has other ploys in his arsenal: he harks back to other terrorisms like Stalinist Russia and even the Khmer Rouge, both completely irrelevant to the issue of global threats today, but which I supposedly neglected unwarrantedly. On the Khmer Rouge he not only distorts the facts on numbers killed and history, he says that the "purpose" of my work on that subject was "to downsize the extent of the terror." This ugly ad hominem smear of both me and my coauthor on this subject, Noam Chomsky, shows once again that Jacobson has no conception of the proper role of the left. Our purpose in writing on the Khmer Rouge was to contest the bandwagon lying of the U.S. media, at that time trying to mobilize the U.S. public to overcome the Vietnam syndrome and doing and proposing nothing to help the suffering Cambodian population (the subtitle of the book "After the Cataclysm" was "Postwar Indochina and the Reconstruction of Imperial Ideology"). That is illegitimate for Jacobson, although after reading his diatribe in this journal I wonder whether he is even able to comprehend such an effort.

Given this inability or unwillingness to recognize or accept our clearly stated purpose, Jacobson imputes a hidden motive, that we must be aiming to apologize for Pol Pot, just as the standard formula had those opposing U.S. aggression in Vietnam "apologists for communism," and so on up to the opponents of the imminent attack on Iraq being "apologists for Saddam Hussein." Jacobson is working in a great tradition.

EDWARD S. HERMAN

Response to Critics

Julius Jacobson

I WAS SURPRISED AND DELIGHTED, of course — none of us is free of the sin of vanity — by the number of positive, even enthusiastic, responses to my article. Several are printed above, and I received a larger number of plaudits not intended for publication. Not all responses were congratulatory. James Petras, Michael Parenti and Edward Herman, each singled out for criticism in my article, also responded; Petras and Herman most heatedly. The bulk of my response will concentrate on refuting them.

First, however, a few comments about several points in David McReynolds' generally supportive letter and on Horst Brand's observations.

I'm afraid that David missed the point of my criticism of Cockburn's calloused (non)reaction to the horrors of 9/11. Only a few days separated the cataclysm from Cockburn's immediate written response, coauthored by Jeffrey St. Clair in *Counterpunch*, the publication they jointly edit. (A few weeks later, essentially the same article appeared in Cockburn's bi-weekly column in *The Nation*.) While the city and the nation were terrified and traumatized, Cockburn and his co-editor did not lose their cool, clearly lacking the political incentive and sense of moral outrage to even mildly scold those who wrought such mayhem. And there was literally not a sentence of compassion for the victims and the bereaved; not a note of rebuke for the hijackers or their manipulators. This is not to say that they were passive; indeed they were indignant, but their only political target was President Bush, who is ridiculed for calling the hijackers "faceless cowards." In Cockburn's opinion, this was an intolerable characterization,

---

JULIUS JACOBSON *is Co-Editor of* New Politics.

more important to challenge than to condemn those who slaughtered thousands of innocents. Consider that only a day or two before their commentary appeared, there were thousands of body parts covered by or jutting out of the 16 acres of rubble that had been the World Trade Center. Given this horrific background, I was taken aback that David was not as offended as I was by this cold-blooded indifference to a human disaster of such scope; and no less taken aback by his opinion that, "Cockburn is right in recognizing the courage of those who aimed the aircraft into oblivion," as if the question of "courage" was the issue of the day and not the horror inflicted by "courageous" assassins.

David worries that I may be simply "settling old scores" with Edward Herman, as if I had some personal feud with someone I never met. What troubles me is the likelihood that "settling old scores" is really a shorthand for saying something much worse: that when raising political differences, reviewing and evaluating the past is an exercise in futility. This formula was frequently used to discredit the historical concerns of the anti-Stalinist left, yet they remain theoretically important and of contemporary political relevance. For example, there is the question of the decline almost to the vanishing point, in this country and internationally, of the political culture of socialism. This can be largely traced to the intellectually and morally devastating consequences of the defeat of the world revolution post-WWI, the betrayals of social democracy, and to the corrosive effect of Stalinism on basic socialist values. Evidence of this was to be found in the rise of the distinctive phenomenon of Third Worldism in much of the left wing world where democracy has been virtually eliminated as a basic criteria for support of nationalist movements.

This was the point I made in passing in my article as an historical explanation for those in a broadly defined left who fail to expose and condemn without equivocation Islamic fundamentalists for whom democracy is the ideology of a corrupt West.

Why should these concerns be shrugged off as a sectarian pastime of "settling old scores" when they involve issues and debates about fundamental values central to the modern world? No one, after all dismisses the historical debate and analysis of the Holocaust with Holocaust deniers as "settling old scores" of 60 years ago. No one dismisses the moral and political relevance of debating the Enlightenment as a matter of settling old scores with the ghosts of the First and Second estates or the living descendants of the House of Bourbon.*

For all this, I am most gratified by David's praise of my article as a whole and his recommending *New Politics* as " . . . one of the publications that deserves a wide audience among younger members of the left."

Though Horst Brand's letter on the roots of bin Laden made for some interesting background, I was disappointed that his observations were not placed in a contemporary political context. Even more disheartening was the sense, even if vague, that he was suggesting some level of support for the War on Terror. I certainly take issue with his judgment that that there is "no alternative to supporting the measures of defense required to forestall" terrorist attacks such as 9/11. The only "measures of defense" I know of have been taken by the Bush administration most of which I find indefensible for reasons detailed in my article.

In his warm letter, Jason Schulman poses a question to Stephen R. Shalom and myself that certainly merits a response. Actually, the question is directed more to-

* I also take issue with David on what he believes to be another minor point, which it perhaps is in a discussion of Bush's War on Terror, but in a more general historical and theoretical sense is significant. According to David, "The Communist Party [USA] was, for whatever reasons, making a real effort to build a radicalism based on American experience, rooted in our history not in events in Petrograd circa 1917. That effort should not be totally dismissed." In my opinion, that effort should be totally dismissed because it never existed. The Popular Front "Americanization" of the American Communist Party had nothing to do with building radicalism, was not based on American experience, and certainly not rooted in our history. The roots of Americanization, with its maudlin Ballad for Americans — later a Reaganite anthem — can be traced directly to events in Moscow (not Petrograd) circa 1936-37 (not 1917). The only "real effort" made by the American Communist Party was to prove to the Kremlin that it was totally subservient to Moscow.

ward Steve and he does respond to it on our Correspondence section.

NOW TO THE HOSTILE CRITICISMS that I will discuss in the order received.

My critics have me at a certain disadvantage. My article was written a number of months ago. Some of those who read it might not remember it that well and assumed there must be some merit to their attacks since each of them is well known and respected in much of the left wing world. Others might have skipped my article and therefore have less reason to doubt that their allegations and charges had at least some minimal justification. Still others, introduced to *New Politics* for the first time with this issue, will have even less reason to question the veracity of my detractors. Therefore, to expose their abuse and falsifications, I will rely heavily on contrasting their fabrications with quoted excerpts from my article.

Response to James Petras

THE FIRST FOUL PUNCHES were delivered by James Petras; a barrage that evoked a memory of decades past when my family enjoyed the comforts of living in a spacious five-room cooperative with a bowling-length terrace on the Lower East Side. Adjacent to our building was a scruffy mini-park with creaky, slotted wood benches that was the open-air residence, weather permitting, of a singular, homeless woman who achieved a degree of notoriety in our neighborhood and beyond. Every morning she could be seen emerging from the park with her worldly belongings on her back, beginning her trek through narrow streets, crossing wider avenues and frequently making her way toward the elegant Upper East Side, then heading back with the vigorous stride to her park bench, a homeless person's four-poster. What I haven't mentioned, and adding immeasurably to the pathos of her existence, was that her steady gait was accompanied by a ceaseless stream of vocal obscenities. Our distressed neighbor was afflicted by the mysterious and rare ailment, Tourette's Syndrome.

After moving to distant shores in Brooklyn, I never crossed paths with this poor soul again, or any other person so terribly stricken; that is, not until a few months ago when I received the above letter from James Petras with symptoms suggesting that he is a victim of a political variant of Tourette's Syndrome, given his uncontrollable, compulsive recitation of political and personal obscenities.

I am cursed by Petras for using "the methods of Stalinist falsification," damned for mimicking the vituperative style of Andre Vishinsky during the Communist blood purges of the 1930s, and I share "the crude chauvinism of Rumsfeld." My polemical zeal is "unique[ly] irrational and histrionic." Like Vishinsky, Jacobson "denigrate[s] honest revolutionaries" (e.g. James Petras, presumably). I show signs of "political senility." Then there is my "usual nasty snarl," not to mention my "delirium" and "fabrications." I have "degenerated into a dishonest polemicist" who has plagiarized "all" the rhetorical techniques of Stalinism, etc., etc.

He is enraged that I employ the term "Americans" to describe people who live in the United States. This reminds him of the "ethnocentrism" of George Bush, so much so that Jacobson and Bush are coupled as "Julius/George." What is amusing is that Petras also conflates the "United States" with "America." As when he discussed "law-abiding progressive American citizens" when, to be politically correct, he should have said "U.S. citizens."

Now, fair is fair, and if my using the terms interchangeably turns me into an ethnocentric then, to be consistent, Petras's amalgam would have to give way to an ethnocentric triumvirate of James/Julius/George.

Resorting to pure slander and bald-faced lies, the likes of which I have not seen for decades, he paints me as a promoter of "Bush's war on terrorism" and my response to the attack on civil liberties as being "in line" with the thinking of the most reactionary elements in American (if I may be permitted that term) society.

Some examples are in order to illustrate the contradiction between Jacobson's views according to Petras (his letter) and Jacobson's views according to Jacobson (his article).

According to Petras:

> Jacobson is oblivious to the profound and extensive deterioration of democratic rights after 9/11: the Patriot Act which sets up military tribunals, suspends habeas corpus, allows for large scale, long term raids on houses, offices, stores etc.; the TIPS legislation organizes millions of workers and neighbors to spy and report to the police any "suspicious" behavior of anyone.

But in Jacobson according to Jacobson:

> Clearly, Bush, Ashcroft, Cheney, et al, want to keep the nation on edge in order to create a siege mentality where love thy neighbor gives way to watch thy neighbor and an atmosphere is created conducive to winning popular support for an unrelenting assault on basic democratic liberties and to neutralizing opposition to their rightwing agenda on all social questions. (p.6)

> The unrelenting assault on social programs, social movements and democratic liberties is intrinsic to what is called the War on Terror. The war is used as a pretext to justify the war against the poor, the environment, etc., but the point I am most anxious to underscore here is the war against democracy at home is an integral part and function of the "War on Terrorism." And since this is a war in permanence, the ever-intensifying war against democracy becomes a permanent feature of American life. The War on Terrorism — fraudulent to begin with — is transformed into a genuine war against democracy; therefore, a struggle to defend democracy demands unqualified opposition to the war. (p.29)

Jacobson according to Petras is "oblivious" to the assault on civil liberties:

> The ACLU, the American Bar Association and civil libertarians of all stripes and colors call this [the attack on democratic rights] a major step toward an authoritarian regime. Jacobson however in line with Bush, Rumsfeld, the ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) and Trent Lott *insists the contrary*, the U.S. is and always has been a 'bourgeois democracy.' (Emphasis added.)

Jacobson according to Jacobson: far from "insist[ing] the contrary" about the threat of authoritarianism, my forecast was even more dire than that of most civil libertarians when I wrote that

> . . . this unremitting drive to undermine democracy pollutes the social atmosphere with the pungent and odious whiff of fascism. (p.30)

The accusation that Jacobson is "in line with Bush, Rumsfeld, the ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) and Trent Lott" is rank, but there is unintended comic relief in the suggestion that "Bush, Rumsfeld, the ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) and Trent Lott [presumably "in line" with Jacobson] insists" that "the U.S. is and always has been a 'bourgeois democracy'." The image of a semi-educated President who needs to be tutored in American history by his ultra right wing advisor, Karl Rove, or our heel-clicking Defense Secretary, or the racist ex-leader of the Senate majority as proselytizers and promoters of the United States as a "bourgeois democracy," much less debate it, is pure Theater of the Absurd. (And why omit the fascistic knucklehead, Attorney General John Ashcroft, as an apostle of "bourgeois democracy"?) While Petras has me, in effect, complimenting these rogues for their fidelity to bourgeois democracy, a concept which they have never heard of, I in fact damned the administration because, "[T]here is not even a faint voice to be heard from within the Bush camp in defense of civil liberties and democratic rights." (p. 29)

I have always argued, as I do in my article, that bourgeois democratic rights were not a gift from above, but more often than not extracted from the ruling class after years and decades of bitter, often violent, struggles from below. To accuse me of being "in line" with their "thinking" on any question, above all the steady erosion of the most basic and hard-fought for democratic rights, is vilification so extreme as to suggest that my critic suffers more from a clinical problem than a political one.

Also, in a special section of my article, I make what I believe, perhaps immodestly, is the important point that the post-9/11 attack on civil liberties and political rights is even more ominous than the atmosphere created during the McCarthy years because, "unlike the 1950s witch-hunt, the War on Democracy is recognizably *a war by the ruling class and its State*." (Emphasis in original.)

More muck is thrown by Petras:

> According to Jacobson, anyone who describes the nature and goals of U.S. imperialism, or Israeli state terrorism or the unconditional support of the major Jewish organizations for Sharon are apologists for imperialism or terrorists.

This, of course, is not a view according to Jacobson, but just another slander about Jacobson according to Petras. My article frequently and at length denounces the nature and goals of U.S. imperialism and Israeli terrorism. As on page 7 where I condemn " . . . Israel's brutal and unrestrained war against the Palestinian people . . ." and later attribute " . . . the fury of the Islamic masses toward the U.S. [to] its vital support of Israel's brutal repression of Palestinians . . ." and again, " . . . [Israel] is engaged in a savage terrorist use of force against the Palestinian people, with no end in sight."

My article took issue with Petras' estimate that "tens of thousands" had been arrested, making the obvious point that such wild exaggerations can only weaken the civil libertarian cause. Yet, Petras persists that, "Jacobson's ignorance of the repressive-police state ambience is such that he cites the figure of 1,500 arrested. In reality no one except the police officials know the real numbers of arrestees. . . ."

My estimate of 1,500 arrests was taken from the high end of approximations made by civil rights and anti-war organizations and activists. (In January, a two-page anti-war ad placed by Not in Our Name estimated that there had been 1,000 illegally held detainees.) In the last few months, between 250 and 500 arrests were made in a wide sweep in California. In any case, if "no one except the police officials know the real numbers," then how can Petras know that the real number reached "tens of thousands"? Are the police telling Petras?

Consider another of Petras' excesses: his labeling the arrests of mainly young men and women of Middle Eastern origin or descent a "pogrom." The detentions are a gross violation of civil liberties to be condemned and resisted without reservation, but they are not "pogroms." Pogroms are identified historically and in our consciousness as the uniquely savage assaults in Tsarist Russia and much of Eastern Europe at the time on Jews, their religious and cultural institutions; their homes were torched, ghettoes and villages in which they lived sacked. Pogroms were marked by rape, torture, murder, mutilation, looting and pillaging. They were vigilante actions of peasants and Cossacks, incited but not organized by the official organs of state repression. The equivalency Petras makes between gross violations of civil liberties by the Department of Justice and the barbarism of pogromists is the kind of hysterical excess that, if adopted by the anti-war movement, would only bring it discredit.

Then there is the absurd excess of characterizing the media as having been reduced to "state propaganda machines" in this current period of "friendly fascism." I am no champion of the U.S. media, but I have come across dozens and dozens of powerful accounts of the war in Afghanistan that could never have appeared in a press tightly controlled by a fascist-type state.

In the same article from which the above excerpts are quoted, Petras resorts to an argument that is at best truly ethnocentric and vulnerable to the charge of racism. He writes that of the victims, "almost forty percent are foreign nationals working in the U.S. In other words, the total number of victims may not have exceeded 1,500 U.S. citizens . . . The question that arises is whether the deaths of 1,500 U.S. citizens warrants a war which has already displaced 3 million Afghans and killed several thousand civilians from the bombing, malnutrition and disease."

If one bears in mind that these shocking sentences were written only about five weeks after the American bombing of Afghanistan began, some of his figures about the number of civilians displaced and killed in that brief period are open to question. But far more serious than his dubious statistics is when he asks the rhetorical question of "whether the deaths of 1,500 U.S. citizens warrants a war" can only mean that he, James Petras, is dismissing the moral and political relevance of an almost equal number of victims solely because they were foreigners; *Petras* is advancing the argument that a stronger case for military retaliation would have made had all the victims been citizens and therefore it is *Petras* who is arguing that the life of a citizen has greater

value than the life of a foreigner.

Petras is most petulant that, "Jacobson accuses me of 'justifying the hijackings and their al Qaeda trainees' . . ." Actually, I wrote that his article in *Rebelión,* from which I quoted extensively, "is *the closest I have seen* to not merely rationalizing, but justifying, the hijackers and their al Qaeda trainers." (Italics added.) I can only refer the reader back to my article which places my estimate of Petras' position on a solid foundation. It is too long to repeat here; a few choice excerpts should suffice.

According to Petras, by taking up space in a "nominally civilian building (WTC)," the CIA and the Secret Service irresponsibly "placed the WTC occupants directly in a line of fire of the numerous adversaries of the CIA." Thus, the almost 3,000 killed at the WTC were not intended victims, but only the collateral casualties in a politically motivated attack against the CIA and the Secret Service, thereby assigning much of the blame for the disaster on irresponsible covert agencies. The CIA and Secret Service have enough crimes to answer for without holding them responsible for the horror of 9/11.

Moreover, "[S]ome of the victims of the WTC are known swindlers." Obviously they got their just desserts, courtesy of the hijackers.

Petras assures us that,

> [C]learly the terrorists' decision was not an act of vengeance based on religious criteria, but based on strategic economic understanding of the spatial and economic location of their target and the timing of the economic cycle. Both timing and location were selected to maximize the strategic effects on the U.S. economy and not to inflict the greatest amount of human casualties.

This is not close to a justification?

And, finally, although the collateral damage to civilians was excruciating, the terrorists "acted with rational forethought," and, "if the intention was to challenge the empire, they chose a significant target."

This is not close to an apologia?

Petras ends his shriek on a particularly mordant note. It seems that *New Politics* had once been a fairly decent journal, but with an aging Jacobson as its "ideological guru" (how little Petras knows about this publication) he is "afraid" that the possibility for resuscitating *New Politics* "will have to wait till nature takes its course." Translation: he looks forward to Jacobson's demise. All of which is an incentive to hang in there as long as possible, if just to spite Mr. Petras.

Response to Michael Parenti

AFTER PETRAS' UNCONTROLLABLE HOWL, it was somewhat of a relief to receive the much more moderate letter of protest from Michael Parenti. Even though he dismisses my article as a "diatribe" and calls the readers' attention to "Julie's little shell game," it is relatively placid. It is also surprisingly thin, even in its own terms, and what he does have to say only confirms the criticisms I had to make of his response to 9/11. Consider his introductory sentence: "In his diatribe 'On Liberal and Left Responses,' Jacobson misrepresents my views in regard to the September 11 attacks." First of all, take note that Parenti truncates my article's title, deleting "Bush's War on Democracy" the key phrase that reflects the political thrust of my uncompromisingly anti-war article.

Consciously or not, misquoting the title of my article serves his purpose of rather contemptuously dismissing my discussion as a "diatribe," one that gives aid and comfort to enemies of peace. But the only reason he offers to justify this sweeping condemnation is that "Jacobson misrepresents my position in regard to the September 11th attacks." Now, let us suppose that I was not fair to Parenti. Is that sufficient reason to damn my article as a diatribe? Bear in mind that I wrote 18,373 words of which 244 were devoted to Parenti, of which 64 is a quote from one of his articles. That leaves 18,129 words in my review of various responses to "Bush's War on Democracy." So it must be that more than 98.5 percent of my article, which I presume Parenti read, exasperated him and earned me such a failing grade.

But why? A good portion of my article was a denunciation of the Bush administration, of the war in Afghanistan, of American imperialism in general, of the attack on democracy at home, of Bush's raising the prospect of a preemptive nuclear strike, of the plans for war against Iraq, etc., etc. I

attack Sharon and the Israeli regime for their brutality against the Palestinian people. Did Parenti find that I was too harsh in my criticisms, that I was penning a diatribe?

The largest section of my article is devoted to a vigorous critical examination of such liberal and left wing apologists for the Afghan war as Todd Gitlin, Christopher Hitchens, and Michael Walzer. Did Parenti find that I was mean and nasty to them, reducing my criticism to the level of a diatribe?

But then I also devoted a section of my article to an analysis of the threat to global peace and democracy by an ultra-reactionary but increasingly popular fundamentalist movement intent on turning the Islamic world into primitive and merciless states of theocratic barbarism. Is it possible — *given Parenti's political orientation* — that it is the force of my denunciation of Islamic fundamentalism that reduces everything else I have to say against the war and American imperialism to the level of a diatribe?

Parenti fails to inform his readers that when he wrote that "very little has changed" with 9/11 and that "it feels very much like September 10th to me" that he "was not talking about the state of mind of the U.S. public but about the rightwing agenda of the U.S. ruling class." I don't know what Parenti is talking about since I was not faulting him for what he did or did not say about the effect 9/11 had on consciousness, but precisely about his failure to understand the depth and breadth of changes, political and social, international and domestic, including the rightwing agenda of the U.S. ruling class, all facilitated by 9/11. Parenti merely repeats his untenable position, one that denies obvious realities that the rightwing agenda of the U.S. ruling class after 9/11 "remains as relentlessly vicious and *unchanged as ever.*" (My emphasis added.) You see, the day before and the day after 9/11 the working class was exploited to the benefit of the rich, the military appetite for national resources remained unsated, etc., etc. So what is all the fuss about? So very little that is fundamental has changed.

By the same token, it could be argued that little has changed in political, social and class relations in the United States in the last 125 years. We had exploitation of labor then, we have it today. There were the rapacious Robber Barons of the late 19th century, then there is the quintessential greed of Robber Barons today (we call them Fortune 500 CEOs). There was the widespread corruption of the Gilded Age; the imperialism of the Spanish-American War; and a continual assault against weak, defenseless nations south of the border. Politicians dragged the nation into the slaughter of the First World War; there were the vicious Palmer raids; there was gunboat diplomacy, etc., etc. So how different is American society in 2003 and America *circa* 1875 or 1919?

9/11 has facilitated the shredding of what there is of the social safety net and has created an atmosphere that has strengthened the enemies of women's right to choose.

Were it not for 9/11, the U.S. would not have made war on Afghanistan.

Parenti notwithstanding, were it not for 9/11, the Patriot Act, the military tribunals, illegal detentions, and dozens of other violations of basic civil liberties could never have been so quickly imposed on the American people raising as never before in U.S. history the spector of authoritarianism.

There is a cause and effect relationship between 9/11 and North Korea restarting its nuclear arms program, raising the terrifying possibility of a nuclear holocaust.

THESE BONE-CHILLING CONSEQUENCES OF 9/11 should be obvious to all; but not to Parenti, anxious to show that our lives are pretty much the same the day after as the day before September 11. He is in effect asking, "What is all the fuss about?" thereby diminishing the degree of responsibility of Islamic fundamentalism for the incalculable threat to peace and freedom.

In Parenti's considered view, the U.S. ruling class is simply using the attacks as an issue "that rallies everyone around the flag and points a finger at a fanatical Islamic sect rather than at corporate America or the U.S. national security state." And he correctly quotes me as commenting, "it is as if Parenti does not realize, or cannot admit, that people have ten fingers, including a second index finger with which to point at the responsibility of Islamic fundamen-

talism as an autonomous and retrograde force, without for a moment relaxing the other finger that points at the criminal policies of U.S. imperialism."

He indignantly denies this in his response, referring to my anatomical observation as "Julie's little shell game." Parenti insists that he is aware that blame can also be placed on the Islamic fundamentalists. This is a self-serving afterthought. Note that his criticism is of those who point an indicting finger at a fanatical sect "*rather than*" (my emphasis) at the American ruling class and its security state. But "rather than" is an "either/or" proposition and *excludes* the possibility of holding more than one party accountable; it is *either* corporate America *or* Islamic fundamentalism that is responsible for the mounting global crisis. This is not a matter of "Julie's shell game," but of taking Parenti at his written word.

Parenti correctly assumes that I had not as yet read his book *The Terrorism Trap: September 11th and Beyond* in which he states that the blame for the terrorist attacks involves "a wide array of factors that go beyond, but include, the terrorists themselves." And he acknowledges "the terrible, longstanding linkage between religion and violence." Somehow or other, Parenti has managed to convince himself that this proves that he understands and gives proper weight to the portion of blame borne by Islamic fundamentalists. He does no such thing. What he has quoted from his book is not even the equivalent of raising an arthritic pinky in symbolic protest against the horror perpetrated by fundamentalists on September 11th or of exposing the monstrous social objectives of al Qaeda and parallel fundamentalist movements.

Nevertheless, taking Parenti's recommendation to heart, I did read his book. I learned once again that "on the larger scene, very little has changed" after 9/11, domestically or globally. But there are also other revealing and relevant things about Parenti's book, just one example being his chapter entitled "Afghanistan, the Untold Story," which reads like a primer for kindergarteners justifying the Russian attack on Afghanistan in December 1979.

Parenti's treatment of the totalitarian character of the Afghanistan Communist-controlled state is farcical. He would have us believe that the fractious Stalinist Peoples' Democratic Party — where internal disputes were often resolved by shootouts — that despotically ruled Afghanistan was an authentic Marxist movement "advocating an equitable distribution of social resources that encouraged the hatred and fear of the U.S. ruling class and privileged classes everywhere." In his short course on Afghanistan's untold story we learn that the PDP, besieged by opposition forces in late 1979, "asked Moscow to send a contingent [!] of troops to help ward off Mujahadeen (Islamic guerrilla fighters) and foreign mercenaries" and that only after repeated requests from Kabul, did Moscow agree to military intervention. A "*contingent*" it was not, but a huge mechanized army equipped with all the paraphernalia of mass slaughter along with an armada of military aircraft. It goes without saying that Parenti totally ignores the well-documented savagery of Russian aggression that leveled hundreds of villages and made war not only against the Mujahadeen but against children and unarmed civilians specifically targeted and slaughtered by the thousands.

Of course Parenti is embittered that the Kremlin ordered a battered Russian army to evacuate a country it left in ruins. "It was a betrayal." (A sentiment shared a dozen years ago by Alexander Cockburn who also denounced the Kremlin's order to pull out as a betrayal of proletarian internationalism.) Still embittered over the Kremlin's humiliating defeat, in his book Parenti berates Noam Chomsky for having said that "opposing the Russian invasion was 'a good thing'."

It is hardly surprising that our apologist for the decade-long Communist butchery in Afghanistan has received congratulations from Slobodan Milosevic, a Stalinist butcher, who wrote a euphoric preface to a Serbian edition of Parenti's recent book, *To Kill A Nation: The Attack on Yugoslavia*. Milosevic pays tribute to "Michael Parenti, an American to whom every true veracious [sic.!] inhabitant of the Planet ought to be grateful for the great courage and ability to see and understand the events that marked the last decade of the twentieth century."

PERHAPS SADDAM HUSSEIN will contribute an equally enthusiastic introduction to Parenti's next book, should the butcher of Baghdad be made familiar with an article by Parenti, sharing his impressions of the Saddam regime and the quality of life in Iraq when he was part of a foreign delegation on a whirlwind three day visit to Baghdad.

Parenti reports that: "The Iraqi officials who greet us do not try to hide how pleased they are with our arrival." Why should they not be pleased?

Parenti's does note in passing that Saddam Hussein was placed into power in 1968 by a CIA-engineered coup and that he proceeded to massacre Communists and dissidents in his Ba'ath Party. But this is in the past, forgotten or forgiven, at least by Michael Parenti. What follows is a long report on his impressions in which there is not a critical word about Saddam Hussein and his regime. Instead, there is nothing but praise for its social policies and personnel, above all of Iraq's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tariq Aziz, "a calm, congenial man who speaks in clear and precise English."

Parenti is captivated by Aziz's linguistic skills and mild demeanor and impressed by the Minister's assertion that, "when a nation [Iraq] succeeds in refusing the dictate of imperialists, and succeeds in preserving its sovereignty and its independence and its dignity, that is an achievement."

And he is deeply touched by the gentle Minister's humaneness and assurances that:

> One of the basic human rights is that *you have the right to make your own judgment*, not to buy judgments made by others that might not be honest and true so I hope that you will use this short visit to know what is going on in this country and what the realities are.

Shades of the 1930s, when such Stalinist front organizations as the "Friends of the Soviet Union" sent well-rehearsed delegations to Ukraine and on their return, reported to rapt audiences of being witness to sturdy peasants, voices raised in a chorus of song, marching off to plow the fields or reap the harvest and an urban proletariat achieving the miracles of socialist construction. Meanwhile, back in Ukraine, GPU personnel were laboring overtime stacking the skeletal corpses of peasants and workers onto ox-driven carts, the grisly toll of Stalin's state-engineered famine supplemented by mass executions; 5 million lives were obliterated.

And now we have Parenti — and he is far from alone, keeping company as he does with Workers' World Party useful idiot, Ramsey Clark — heaping praise on Tariq Aziz, the foreign minister of a bloody despot, for being a gentle and humane individual; a veritable member of the Ethical Cultural Society rather than the cynical sycophant depicted in the yellow press. Behold how, with such touching devotion, the generals and top advisors of the bloody despot line up to bow, scrape, and curtsy before planting a gentle kiss on each of the beloved murderer's shoulders. How fitting that the blood of the Prophet courses through the veins of this peace-loving nationalist, this admirer of Stalin. How do we know? Why we have it on the authority of the great leader himself, to which no Iraqi would gainsay. So adored is Saddam that while Stalin could only claim a modest 99 percent backing from his countryfolk, the descendent of Mohammed receives a ringing 100 percent endorsement.

Response to Ed Herman

EDWARD HERMAN HAD INDICATED, shortly after my article appeared, that he would respond to it. After having received James Petras' rant, and Michael Parenti's slight rejoinder, I was looking forward to Edward Herman's reply, which I assumed would offer a certain level of sophistication as well as combativeness; something that would keep me on my toes. That was not to be.

Sadly, when his letter arrived, and I read the head he gave it, "Jacobson's Lesson in Chauvinism and Intolerance," I knew that I was in for more of the same, much more.

His distortions of my position are too numerous to cover completely; not only distortions, but outright fabrications and sly innuendoes. He writes, for example, that "Every article touching on that 'horrific day' [why the quotation marks?] and its consequences must include, with proper stress,

everything that Jacobson would put in." Of course, this is absurd, but presumably reveals my "intolerance."

More seriously, following this, "Jacobson's own chauvinism is dramatically illustrated in this requirement that we all genuflect to the 'horrific day'. The whole world has paid homage to the 9/11 victims and the media can't push its horrors enough, but in each and every article we on the left must display suitable sensitivity until enough time has elapsed in Jacobson's opinion, to permit us to broach the subject without obeisance."

But if mourning for the victims and the bereaved barely a year "dramatically" reveals my "chauvinism" can Herman give an approximate month after 9/11 when mourning and genuflecting was no longer acceptable? Three months? Six months? Ed, how long did you mourn?

I know that what you did do was to rush into print with a long article to set the record straight: 9/11 was a minor felony compared to the number of world-wide victims of American imperialism. I would hardly call that mourning.

In any case, if mourning a year after that horrific day (quotation marks not required) is proof of my chauvinism, and "dramatically" so, I am in the good company of such fellow chauvinists as Edward Said, Noam Chomsky, Steven Shalom, Michael Albert and many others on the Left with impeccable anti-war credentials.

ASSUMING THAT HERMAN ACTUALLY READ the article, and not merely the brief page or so devoted to him, how is it possible for him to accuse me of "chauvinism"? I not only ridicule at length those liberals who want the Left to wrap itself in the American flag, but I also denounce imperialism, flag-waving, and chauvinism against Arabs, and Arab-Americans, throughout my article. In the first page of my article I take strong exception with "[T]oday's flag waving [. . .] saturated with jingoism and révanchism." And if Herman had read my article he might have noticed that in my discussion of Todd Gitlin I ridicule the manner in which he has

> wrapped himself in the American flag, finding it an emblem of so much that is positive and beautiful in American life, transforming a symbol of class domination and imperialism into that of freedom and true patriotism. (p. 17)

Chauvinism?

Furthermore, the article repeatedly makes clear my unqualified opposition to the war in Afghanistan, to the so-called "war on terror," and to the imminent war against Iraq.

Then, with biting sarcasm: "after all, this was 3,000 U.S. citizens killed, ultra-worthy victims, not gooks." Against whom is this sarcasm directed? Since I am the target of his rebuttal and "dramatically" guilty of "chauvinism," this taunt carries with it the utterly loathsome innuendo that I am in the category of those racist reactionaries who contemptuously refer to all non-Caucasians as "gooks."

Where sanctions on Iraq are concerned, Herman makes the following rhetorical challenge, really an insulting accusation:

> Jacobson, do you speak of the 'horrific decade' of such sanctions, and require any mention of 9/11 to refer to this really large-scale [as apparently against the small-scale number of 9/11 victims] killing?

Of course I do. If he read my article attentively, he will find that I do so emphatically, as when my article condemns the U.S. for " . . . its pitiless sanctions on Iraq and its support of Israel's bloody war against the Palestinian people which so enrages the vast majority of the world's 1.2 billion Muslims" and I focus on Arab "outrage over sanctions against Iraq that have taken the lives of hundreds of thousands of innocent people, mainly children."

Herman's anger reaches fever pitch.

> . . . the Iraqi children have been killed steadily, almost entirely by U.S. insistence and initiatives, during your editorship — have you given steady and massive attention to this process of mass murder?

I am afraid I must plead guilty with mitigating circumstances to the implied charge. You see, *New Politics,* averaging more than 200 pages an issue, comes out just twice a year, and I am afraid we are not in the position, no matter who the editor, to give steady and massive attention to any subject. But we do the best we can. For example, a long article dealing with the

unconscionable sanctions appears in the issue previous to my article that Herman must have somehow overlooked and in the same issue is a section on "Myth & Reality; 'The War on Terrorism.'" Several articles make appropriate references to the sanctions. Perhaps not steady and massive enough coverage to satisfy Herman for which I duly apologize.

Herman complains that "Jacobson objects to my failure to give adequate stress to the 'depraved' and 'genocidal' fundamentalist fanatics who 'indiscriminately kill'." True enough, and there is little in his rebuttal that leads me to revise my initial impression. He continues, somewhat incoherently: "interestingly, in discussing my failings he never uses such invidious language for his leaders."

This makes no sense. It is straight out of the curious world created by Lewis Carroll. Why would I use invidious language against my anonymous leaders? If they are my leaders, at least in my political relationships with them, they are undeserving of invidious epitaphs. More interesting than the Alice in Wonderland quality of his rebuke is the question of whom he presumes to be my presumed "leaders." I could give a long list of my peers, I must confess that no contemporary name comes to mind of someone *I* consider *my* leader. But in the context of Herman's discussion and his exposing me as dramatically chauvinist, there is the malign innuendo that George Bush and company are my "leaders." Who else could he have in mind?

There is more:

> [Jacobson] speaks of 'reactionary imperialism', a bland cliché, but he never uses words like 'depraved' and 'genocidal' to describe the managers of 'reactionary imperialism'."

The best news I have had in a long time is that in American society, to speak of "reactionary imperialism" is so widely accepted that it is no more than a "bland cliché." And while I might not have used the words "depraved" or "genocidal" to describe the managers of "reactionary imperialism," I do refer to President Bush as a "megalomaniac" and a "neolithic," Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld as reminiscent of an SS officer, Vice President Cheney as corrupt, Attorney General John Ashcroft as a fascistic racist bigot and Superhawks Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and Advisor Richard Perle as "flame-throwers." These epithets, reserved for my hinted-at-"leaders," should be invidious enough for Herman.

Then, Herman's challenge escalates: "Jacobson, when Albright told Leslie Stahl, in 1996, that killing 500,000 Iraqi children via sanctions was 'worth it', wasn't that an illustration of depravity and 'genocidal impulse' . . . ?" Let me set Herman at ease. My answer is "Yes, it was." Now that we have gotten this out of the way, would Herman let me know whether he considers 9/11 to have been a "depraved" act, whether he agrees that fundamentalist fanatics have "genocidal impulses," and "indiscriminately kill"?

This is followed by more slanderous blather: " . . . have you just normalized the antics of reactionary imperialism and found them not all that horrific, not worth dwelling on like the 9/11 tragedy?" Here is what I say about the antics of reactionary imperialism (a "bland cliché"):

> . . . the American role in foreign affairs in the past 50 years has been a pattern of systematic imperialism, support to dictators, terrorists, corrupt, cynical and sinister movements and personalities . . .

In the same vein:

> To call the United States a "global bully" is all too mild; anyone with the faintest familiarity of U.S. foreign policy since the time of the Spanish American War, and the crude manner in which it continues to threaten, penalize and sometimes undermine sovereign nations to achieve a foreign policy goal knows that we are not only confronted by a bully, but an imperialist and dangerous bully.

So much for my normalizing the antics of reactionary imperialism.

Herman dismisses my discussion of the 9/11 terrorists and the al Qaeda threat as "hysterical," but never says why. He also takes me to task for not mentioning "that they are creatures of the U.S. war against the Soviet Union, now blown back."

I don't mention it because it is not true, or at best it is only half-true. That histori-

cally American imperialism has provided essential fuel powering the growth of Islamic fundamentalism, and propping up corrupt and brutal regimes throughout the Middle East, is clear enough and I discuss this at appropriate length in my article. However, terrorism and corruption is not solely a byproduct of American imperialism, but is also generated by secular and religious struggles within the Islamic world, and this too I emphasize in my discussion.

Herman reassures us that al Qaeda is really not that much of a terrorist threat, that its members are "relatively powerless killers." Anyone who believes that al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden and similar fundamentalist forces who are revered by tens, perhaps hundreds, of millions of the world's 1.25 billion Muslims is "relatively powerless" is AWOL from Planet Earth. And while 9/11 has had no sequel, as yet, in the United States, the terrorist forces have struck repeatedly and lethally since then, from Tunisia to Pakistan, Bali to the Philippines, Kenya to Kashmir, and elsewhere.

Herman continues to falsify when he writes that:

> Jacobson also seems unaware of the fact that Bush has given carte blanche to Sharon's wholesale terrorism, that Putin has a freer hand to kill in Chechnya, and that in many other countries from Colombia to the Philippines the new "war on terror" has given state terrorists a go ahead and positive aid to forcibly repress any dissent and rebellion. He doesn't see the intensified bombing of Iraq and plan for an armed attack, which has much of the world terrified, as wholesale terrorism.

Poor Edward! Missed it again! In my article I take note of the " . . . ongoing saga of imperialist interventionism as in Colombia, Venezuela and elsewhere . . ." As for Putin having a free hand to kill in Chechnya, I do make that point, but it is more inclusive:

> The very act of welcoming the dictatorships and societies relying on terror into the coalition of civilized nations means that the Bush administration is abetting terrorism in Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, Chechnya, Palestine, Indonesia, Malaysia, China and in other countries of this grand Coalition.

THEN THERE IS THE QUESTION of the distinction between "wholesale terrorism" and "retail terrorism" that is Herman's specialty. In my criticism of Herman, I did not take issue with the differences between the generally lower level of violence perpetrated by terrorist organizations as compared to the much large-scale terrorism that can be inflicted by a violent government with all the instruments of mass killing available; a fanatical group without state power is hardly in a position to carry out the incineration of Dresden and tens of thousands of its civilian population, the vaporization of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the violence of Germany under Hitler, the Soviet Union under Stalin, Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, the massacres in Indonesia under Suharto (with U.S. support) that took the lives of tens of millions. What I did take issue with, and was so offended by, was the immediacy with which Herman rushed in to print to make this obvious distinction between what he calls "retail terror" and the more massive "wholesale terror" of terrorist states. It was much more than a matter of revealing bad taste, which it of course was, but has political connotations, a minimizing the tragic dimensions of 9/11, and a telling to all who would listen that while 9/11 was bad; that it paled by comparison to wholesale terrorism and that the "real" threat to world peace is not to be located in the world of Islamic fundamentalism but overwhelmingly in the global aspirations of American imperialism.

Herman was so anxious to prove the almost exclusive culpability of U.S. imperialism as the real danger to global peace and security that he claimed that the Bush administration had already made "a wholesale terrorist response." Since I had not come across any evidence since 9/11 that the Bush administration has engaged in wholesale terrorism *as defined by Herman,* I remind the reader that even though Herman accepted the figure of 6,000 victims it still did not go beyond "retail terrorism." Thus, when Herman wrote that the United States had already made a wholesale terrorist response, I asked Herman a reasonable question: "Where is this response?" He comes up with an answer in his letter:

> For Jacobson, the huge bombing assault on

> Afghanistan was not wholesale terrorism or aggression, presumably it was just measured retaliation — and if more than 3,000 civilians were killed in the process (as was the case), well, admittedly that is small potatoes for the U.S. military machine, but Jacobson clearly doesn't view their deaths as "horrific" and deserving 9/11 attention.

This is both irrational and personally disgusting. Irrational because he gives the estimate of 3,000 Afghani civilians killed in the bombings as evidence of "wholesale terrorism," while the death toll that he initially accepted for September 11th of 6,000 is ballyhooed as an example of a lesser "retail terrorism." What is disgusting is the accusation that I "clearly" don't view the Afghani civilian toll as horrific, whereas anyone who has read my article, or understands anything about the human sentiments of democratic and revolutionary socialists, could not help but note with what revulsion I characterize the U.S. military's (and government's) appalling and criminal indifference to civilian casualties in, what I believe, was a demolition of Michael Walzer's mistreatment of this issue.

On this question of 9/11 and "retail terrorism," I would recommend Herman read, if he has not already done so, an article by a most prominent leftist whom we both respect. In this article,

> . . . on September 11, for the first time, a western country was subjected on home soil to a horrendous terrorist attack of a kind all too familiar to victims of western power. The attack goes far and beyond what's sometimes called the "retail terror" of the IRA, FLN or Red Brigades. . . .

This was written by Noam Chomsky on the eve of the anniversary of 9/11. Obviously, Chomsky needs to be straightened out, and who better to do the job than Edward Herman?

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT IN building its powerful case against the bloody machinations of American imperialism with its current promise of an endless war on terrorism (which, of course, it is not) in a possibly imminent assault on Iraq and the frightful possibility of this being extended to the Korean peninsula and beyond, the U.S. and international left cannot afford to accept the excesses of Edward Herman which can only leave the anti-war movement vulnerable. For instance, where the American government and military must be most vigorously condemned is in its criminal indifference to the toll inevitably taken on the civilian population from its massive aerial bombardment on Afghanistan. This was horrible enough without trying to prove that bombs were intentionally dropped for the intended purpose of killing civilians, as Edward Herman claims. He has no evidence that the Afghani party-goers killed and wounded in the hundreds were slain by design, rather than by criminal indifference. This was bad enough; a case of massive manslaughter by an air force prepared to devastate an entire area, populace and all, on the mere suspicion that it might be an enemy redoubt.

I am convinced that Herman has an ulterior motive in claiming that killing civilians was in itself a prime U.S. military objective. Since the number of civilians killed by the Americans does not qualify as being "wholesale" by his statistical criteria. He might fit it into that category if he can establish that the killings were actually mass, premeditated murder compared to the retail nature of the 9/11 assaults. But even here Edward Herman is in trouble since the slaughter of thousands was in no way of an accidental or collateral nature, but clearly done by design, premeditated. One of the hijackers' main objectives was to kill as many innocent civilians, all infidels; an objective that was hardly less hideous and no less of a wholesale nature than the civilian toll taken in Afghanistan. It was clearly a case of premeditated murder, certainly no less grave a crime than criminal manslaughter. That the intent was to kill as many as possible, it is clear from everything we know about the methods and objectives of al Qaeda and similar terrorism movements. It was made explicit by Osama bin Laden that the intent is to kill as many Americans as possible and without making distinctions or exceptions.

READING THE THREE LETTERS, above all those of Petras and Herman, was like biting into a tainted madeleine. Not the elegiac remembrance of things past stimulated by the taste of Proust's sweet and buttery confection. In-

stead, it brought back memories of a moral and political disorder that afflicted a broadly defined left in the 1930s and 40s, a period when the anti-Stalinist left, above all its revolutionary socialist wing, was subjected to a level of abuse, that I assumed could never be matched. As a few of us know from personal experience, and more have learned in political histories, anti-Stalinists were condemned by the Communist Party as fascists, agents of the bosses, scabs and reserved for the women, "prostitutes." When Trotskyists initiated a protest around a German-American Bund, that drew several hundred thousand, they were denounced by the Stalinists who insisted that the Trotskyists were only trying to give publicity to the Nazi rally. If I were a more tolerant person, I might describe their letters as lacking verisimilitude. But Herman is at least partially accurate in saying that Jacobson is intolerant, that is, I admittedly cannot tolerate anything even remotely smacking of the notorious Stalinist school of falsification, that I mistakenly believed lost fashion after Stalin's death and became extinct in subsequent decades.

My article makes it clear that I am writing from the perspective of a revolutionary socialist who has never wavered in his opposition to American capitalism and imperialism.

Yet, for both Petras and Herman, I am a chauvinist (and dramatically so) in the Bush camp.

I denounce Sharon, but am accused of, at best, being indifferent to Israeli crimes against the Palestinian people.

I call the War on Terror a war on democracy and give heavy emphasis to the attack on basic democratic rights as an integral part in the expanded imperial aspirations of the American ruling class, yet, to Petras I am, at best, indifferent to the accelerating attack on civil liberties and am, in fact, an ideological member of the Bush team.

And so it goes on at least a dozen other positions I take about which they simply lie, since in my article there is no room for error or misinterpretation about my democratic and socialist positions.

Yet James Petras, who claims 70,000 online readers, Edward Herman, widely published and read in the left wing press and ubiquitous Michael Parenti are all reasonably respected and authoritative figures on the left.

Herman's critique, above all, begins in a note of slander and ends in a point of calumny. He turns Bush's political sophistry — "either you are with us or you are with the terrorists" — inside out, suggesting that opposition to Herman is tantamount to working in the "great tradition" of State Department socialism. All this without a single quotation, even one torn out of context, from my article; a case resting indefensibly and dishonestly on snippets garnered from brief sections dealing with him and his cothinkers individually. Such clamorous egotism as evidenced here is blinded to the contempt for humanity that radiates from its political center. Any socialism worthy of its name is rooted in solidarity with the oppressed and exploited, measured against the yardstick of consistent democracy and animated by the quest for human dignity and happiness.

At one time socialism in any of its varieties was automatically associated with this whole heritage of humanitarian impulses. And it was on this basis that the economic relations of capitalism — including the entire structure of its imperialism — and of class oppression and social privilege, in general and under the most variegated of circumstances, was indicted. This entire heritage is dissolved by my critics into a soupy reduction they call "anti-imperialism." It is predicated on a transparent indifference to suffering and a callous disrespect for the stuff of life *except* when such crimes flow from or are associated with the projection of American economic and military might. How else can one interpret Herman's self-defined mission, which he pompously identifies as the "'proper'[!] role of the left" "to keep attention focused on where the main threat comes from: aggressive imperialism."

David McReynolds scolds me for seeking to settle old accounts. He is grievously mistaken in the concrete. But there is a larger point in which the reflexive mental habits born in an age of Stalinism seek an extended afterlife in the post-Communist world. And that is in the practice of manipulating language to devise a political and

moral calculus through which fundamental political discrepancies, asymmetries and inequalities can be worked up for the express purpose of taking sides within the status quo. This political double-bookkeeping is the essence of "lesser evilism." Pulsating through the criticisms of my detractors is the historical echo of those who, such as the French writer Romain Rolland, justified their soft-peddling of the horrors of Stalinism (respectively, the Khmer Rouge, the Islamists, the Ba'athists, etc.) by the need to "fight the (Hitlerian, or American) evil that is nearer and greater." This is an exercise in apologetics no less so now than then. How empty is a socialism that struggles against the impending carnage of American imperialist onslaught solely to deliver the Arab world back to the tender mercies of Islamic reaction or Ba'athist fascism.

We can do better. We can oppose the entire machinery of death and oppression that these three powerful pistons of reaction together propel. We can resist the blandishments of Herman and company and refuse to enter a compact of indifference with any of these specific evils.

For there is a greater imperative at stake here. The heated atmosphere of war has spontaneously borne aloft a mighty movement of moral dissent and resistance that is as welcome as it is unexpected. This remarkable movement of ordinary citizens feels itself at present above the political fray motivated largely by its loathing for a war so manifestly unprovoked and so immanently avoidable. But sections, and, we can hope large sections of it will invariably seek to ground its ethical yearnings and moral fervor in social action consistent with a larger political program for change. The animating-power for all radical movements consists, in the first instance, in its moral revulsion for the existing order. As it feels its way, the movement will invariably be peppered with influences from without, attempting to ease its journey to the left. What, one might ask, can the movement learn from my critics? To cut and trim its morality in the service of "anti-imperialism"? To be wary of criticizing from the left those forces that the American establishment also and for its own separate reasons opposes, lest such criticisms add grist to the war machine? Would they similarly lecture Arab dissidents, feminists and trade unionists to downplay their democratic, anti-fascist opposition, for fear that they too might inadvertently buttress the pro-war propaganda of the American ruling class? No, I'm afraid this is a recipe for cynicism and disillusionment. Their assertion that militant opposition to all forms of reaction, wherever they may be found and however they relate to American power, is a distraction from anti-imperialism is simply an inverted chauvinist conceit of the Herman, Petras and Parenti and their Center for Falsification Studies.

Painted into a Corner: Liberals Amid The Wreckage Of the 2002 Elections

Michael Hirsch

EXPLAINING THE MARGINALITY of the left is hard enough. How do we explain the Democratic Party's election collapse, too? Some people have no problem.

From *The New York Times* editorialists to writers for *The Nation* and *The American Prospect*, the answer is clear and the verdict is in: guilty by reason of identity theft. The Democrats lost Congress because they would not — or could not — campaign on their own core progressive values. Democrats were clueless about the economy and gutless on peace and war, a party lacking fiber, or certainly roughage. The public — in the context of terror attacks and war threats — saw no reason to embrace them.

Lack of vision in the face of warrior Bush, the tailing after Republican nostrums and the inability to stand up to the center-right Democratic Leadership Conference that's what done 'em in, the best of the liberals writers say. Worse, the party's failure to stitch together even one electable Democratic idea will doom progressive Democrats to pariah status unless they can get the party to rally its base and fight back.

The explanation is tempting, and true as far as it goes. But it's not that simple.

Robert L. Borosage, writing in *The Nation Online*, is one of those who thinks the party can do better.

> Contrary to the DLC, the Democratic Party is not a dirigible that can be repositioned to fit the passing winds. It is a party of working people against the Republican Party of corporations and wealth. It is a party of diversity against the whites-only Republican Party. It is a party of pro-choice women against the party of the radical right. It is a party of unions and of environmentalists against the party of Ken Lay and Dick Cheney. It won't ever be more muscular than Republicans on war abroad or guns at home. It will win elections by fighting for the causes of its base, while putting forth a bold, full-employment economic program and a real security agenda that challenges Bush for defining threats solely in military terms. The DLC may call that 'too liberal.' For Democrats, it's just common sense.

Hold back for a moment about whether his take on the Democrats is descriptive or prescriptive, a fact or a wish. He calls the DLC, the organization of Al Gore, Bill Clinton, and Joe Lieberman, "the corporate wing of the Democratic Party," a true enough statement, and wants the party to stand for something progressive. It doesn't now, he says. So it loses.

And when it runs left, his calculus holds, it wins.

John Nichols agrees. Writing in *The Nation Online* (12/9/02), he says that a shift back to traditional liberal principles was key to Louisiana Sen. Mary Landrieu's successful re-election bid by winning black voters and urban white working-class households.

"Landrieu was no progressive before December 5, and she is no progressive now. But by putting some distance between herself and Bush, by reaching out to core Democratic constituencies, and by focusing in on local economic issues, she offered an alternative not just to [her opponent] but to the Bush administration and Republican policies."

He adds that her chameleon-like efforts to identify with Bush in the state primary — a strategy she dropped along with her feckless out-of-state advisors — explains why she had to face a runoff at all.

Michael Tomasky, writing in *New York* magazine, argues that Republican master mage and Bush operative Karl Rove hit upon a formula to put any Democratic genie back in the bottle by combining

---

MICHAEL HIRSCH *is a member of the editorial board of* New Politics. *The opinions expressed here are his own.*

"Reagan's uncomplicated, cheery nature" with "Gingrich's ideological tenacity. Contemplate that for a minute: Gingrich's agenda and Reagan's disposition. And that's the formula."

Adds Tomasky: Now, "the Republicans are in complete control of the emotional terrain of politics (as well as, of course, having more money, stronger supporting institutions, and their own "news" network for message dissemination). The Democrats chase them around like a bunch of bumbling Clouseaus."

Democrats "need to *make* something happen," Tomasky concludes. "If not, they might be watching from the wings for a long time to come."

These writers are on to something. Running scared doesn't work. This was no election tsunami, no public shift toward reactionary policies, no mandate to rule from the right. A 51-49 deficit in the Senate and a handful of votes shy of a majority in the House is a good perch from which to launch an opposition, not run for cover. This election didn't cause the kind of fundamental realignment Walter Dean Burnham talked about in his classic study of critical elections, which he described minimally as intense, polarizing, and definitive high-turnout affairs. Except possibly in Georgia, where multiple amputee and war veteran Sen. Max Cleland lost his re-election bid because he wasn't seen as sufficiently bloody-minded, the state-by-state contests were uninspired.

CERTAINLY AS A SKETCH of what happened, all three writers are right. There was no fight. No policies aimed at addressing worsening economic and social indicators — the low-hanging fruit of politics — were introduced into the election. What wasn't raised in this campaign is a litany of what working families need and what the Democrats avoided.

What wasn't on the election radar? Here's a sampler.

- *Unemployment*. Nationally the private sector lost 2 million jobs under Bush. Of 39 cities with labor forces of 200,000 or more in September, the Bureau of Labor Statistics found 25 topping the national unemployment rate of 6 percent. Hardest hit were not just the industrial towns Cleveland, Detroit and Oakland, but also the most populous cities, New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Houston. Almost every big city with the exception of Boston and Minneapolis showed high rates of unemployment. Even once-booming Las Vegas was within one tenth of a percentage point of the national unemployment average.
- *Budget cuts.* California's state budget gap stands at $21 billion. In New York State, faced with a likely multi-billion budget deficit, gubernatorial hopeful Carl McCall ran a thin, issue-less campaign.
- *Global markets and job exports*. Nobel economist Joseph Stiglitz's *Globalization and Its Discontents* (2002), a plain-language look on the world economy, made the case for a repudiation of actually-existing globalism. It's a connect-the-dots textbook ready to be translated into election discourse. There were no takers
- *Prescription drugs*. Polls show widespread support for inexpensive prescription medication for seniors. Not only were the Democrats outmaneuvered on this issue legislatively, there was little effort to blame the Republican's for the congressional failure.

Not an echo of these was in any campaign. In the absence of a real challenge, Republicans embraced war and security, their natural issues. The wonder is the Democrats fared as well as they did.

The party's friendly critics are good, principled writers. They are not moving inexorably right, making peace with a corrupted system or relishing a Middle East war. Hunger, want, despair and vast inequalities still outrage them, and they see politics and an activist, interventionist state — the trappings of classic social democratic theory — as a means to change things.

Borosage in particular is no political slouch. He has become a one-man band sounding the dangers of centrism — only in part because he's working the same side of the street as are the DLC suits — as co-director of the Campaign for America's Future, an advocacy group contending to the left of the DLC.

He will be an important asset in efforts to counteract those like John Catsimatidis,

chairman of Red Apple Companies and a deep-pockets New York Democratic contributor, who is already talking about moving the party to the political center.

"We have to decide whether the Democratic Party is putting out the right message people want to hear," Mr. Catsimatidis says. "If that's not the right message, what is?" (*Crain's NY Business*, 11/26/02).

They also don't paint Republican Karl Rove as the Svengali who makes all bad things happen, as Jack Beatty does in *The Atlantic* (August 2000). Beatty, like many others, demonizes the presidential *consiglieri* for "ma(king) U.S. economic policy hostage to politics," as though Bush were the first chief executive to have a political advisor dominate policy: James Farley, Sherman Adams, Kevin O'Donnell, and George Stephanopoulos also come to mind. Rove is just better at it, the Democrats are worse, or at least people have forgotten just how pivotal Farley was to FDR's agenda.

They are certainly preferable to those loitering waiting for sun-up and the Republican vampires to be re-interred. John Judis and Ruy Teixeira, in their *The Emerging Democratic Majority*, end an otherwise descriptively important book on a quietistic, non-political, even non-sensual note, endorsing what can be called "the inevitability of progressive centrism." For them, in the wake of demographic and cultural changes favoring liberal policies and Republican implosion through over-reaching, its *nach Bush uns*. Even their argument for an organically developing and more liberal electorate is no gimme. Pre-election polling in October by the *National Journal's* Charles Cook showed black support for Bush hovering around 27 percent, too high to boost Democrats over the top in close races.

Socialists can quibble about liberal programs. Too accommodating in abandoning affirmative action and rejecting any race-based remedies; not insistent on a thoroughgoing democratic foreign policy; ready to concede that welfare reform may have been a good idea after all. But those are not the problems.

On issues from health and housing policy to union democracy and income distribution, liberals and traditional leftists agree. Unless you look for narcissistic differences á la the French style of political engagement, those like Borosage, Tomasky and Nichols stand on much the same ground as do the Democratic Party's radical critics. They may even agree on the need for a non-corporate party, not just on building a section of one that won't give business a free ride. They also know better than most the right answer to Wobbly Ralph Chaplin's pertinent question: "Is there aught we hold in common with the greedy parasite?"

The problem is that even the best of the liberals paint themselves into a corner. Like early Christian dissenters, they fear salvation outside of Holy Mother Church is impossible.

What is more problematic is their assumption that the Democratic Party can change, not just by adopting a marketing strategy of running to the left, but at becoming itself an instrumentality for social change.

So when Stanley Aronowitz, as the 2002 New York State Green Party gubernatorial candidate, went hat in hand for backing to union friends he had known and worked with for some four decades as a strategist, organizer, publicist, educator and stump speaker — often at a moment's notice — the response was "Stanley who?"

The late Jim Chapin was irritatingly typical. A Democratic Socialists of America founder and leader, a longtime advisor to New York's Mark Green, he was until his untimely death this year a risible, pungent and always informed political correspondent for United Press International. Chapin could deconstruct the corporate connects of a thousand politicians and link them back to their business-patron roots. But he always ended by reflexively arguing that the peculiarities of America's two-party hegemony — specifically its first-past-the-post, winner-take-all election process — guaranteed that the existing two mass parties could be the only locus of possible reform politics. Any exit strategy was utopian.

Or Dennis Rivera, leader of the giant 1199-Service Employees International Union in New York. Tired of waiting for lefty, likely irritated that his long stewardship as state vice chair of New York's Democratic Party organization resulted in so little, and

having won something tangible from the Republican governor in the form of more than $1 billion in state dollars originally targeted to healthcare for the uninsured but rerouted to wages for his members, he walked. His swan song featured not only a full-throttle endorsement for incumbent Republican George Pataki, but statewide stumping for him by his politically savvy union. He repeatedly explained this odd-couple tango by saying unions "have no permanent alliances, only permanent interests."

BUT THE REAL QUESTION IS: Can the Democratic Party ever be anything more? * Strategically the question has to be asked: can this party do what its liberal supporters say it can. Can it mobilize? Can it take on the corporations? Can it oppose and stop fast track trade legislation? Can it carry any larger ideas and a deeper sensibility than the baseline "abortion-rights-good, guns-bad, don't mention social class and we'll get back to you on replacement workers, death penalty and prison reform?"

Can anyone reasonably expect those young people now marching in anti-globalization and anti-war protests, and who have no electoral face or strategy, to be won to such a party as activists? Can the Democrats not so much market themselves by running to the left — a possibility — as govern from the left?

Will the monied classes, or those among them who underwrite the Democrats, contribute to a party that doesn't hug the center? Would even the AFL-CIO do so? If not, who would fund such a rejiggered organization? Clearly, even just to survive institutionally, a left-of-center party would have to be mass-based, and one that looks and acts nothing like the present, inertial coalition of county organizations, hired operatives and electeds.

Can this melange ever really go beyond Republican lite, when, the late Paul Wellstone to the contrary, there is no Democrat heavy; only variations on thin lager and near beers. It's the same sad song in France and the UK, where "third force" professional politicians war on unions, and where Tony Blair has become Rudy Giuliani with a human face.

For years, the radical left painted the two parties as Tweedledee and Tweedledum caricatures. A better cultural simile would be Sidney Falco and J.J. Hunsecker, the symbiotic protagonists in the 1957 noir classic "Sweet Smell of Success." Here, the grasping, unctuous publicity agent Falco (Tony Curtis) is too declassed and broke ever to leave a gratuity at a nightclub, while the viperous gossip columnist Hunsecker (Burt Lancaster) is too powerful and loathsome to stoop to gratify anyone.

With these sad choices, no wonder some institutional leaders found themselves trying to make their support for Pataki seem like independent political action.

*Posing it this way does not contradict working in mainstream efforts and calling in the chips later, the thin meat of politicking. Speaking *ex cathedra*, I believe that working for some major party candidates in discrete electoral campaigns is a tactical question, no more and no less. I even have my favorite pols, and I tell my children that so long as Democratic state Sen. Liz Krueger represents the East Side of Manhattan, they can sleep safely in their beds. These are notions shamans of independent politics war against. But I also know that, strategically, working to elect even the best liberals is a holding action, if even that. Institutions such as public sector unions and community-based housing groups, heavily and inevitably reliant on public dollars, may be compelled to endorse and stump for major-party candidates, but other activists are not. As the cuckolded husband in the vaudeville joke says to his wife's lover, "I may have to, but you?" Strong opinions on individuals taking part in mainstream election campaigns, pro or con, run along the same lines as opinions on gum chewing, a harmless pastime Trotsky disliked, but about which deeply held feelings are pointless. The tough questions: what kind of electoral politics; when, how, and if ever, to back Democrats strategically; how to build an alternative, anti-corporate political center; and what role electoral politics plays in building that alternative — the real questions of moment — aren't answered by pointing out either the merits of Democratic Party electoral abstinence or criticizing Pavlovian get-out-the-vote efforts.

Reflections on a Run for Governor of New York State

Stanley Aronowitz

Stanley Aronowitz, a long time activist in radical and labor movements, was the 2002 Green Party candidate for governor of New York State. His campaign was a model for leftists running for public office: radical, honest, grounded in the issues, and accessible. Aronowitz's reflections on the campaign, written just weeks after the polls closed, give New Politics *readers a sense of the opportunities and challenges of independent political campaigns in a time when most progressives still cling to the Democratic Party, but when the total inability of the Democrats to offer a real alternative to the Republicans becomes clearer with every passing day.*

Joanne Landy, member of the New Politics *editorial board*

RADICALS, GENERALLY SPEAKING, don't like electoral politics. The left mantra is that elections are all but fixed by big money; low turnouts are attributable not to apathy alone but to widespread skepticism that the outcomes can make a real difference in the lives of working people; and, insofar as the Democrats constitute no real opposition but only marginal difference, the two-party system is a swindle. So — and I think correctly — most radicals expend most of their energies building social movements on the premise that if they have enough effect some elected officials will be compelled to follow their lead. In any case whether progressive laws are passed and bad laws, especially those restricting civil liberties, are thwarted depends mainly on pressure from below rather than legislative maneuver. Despairing their ability to play a significant electoral role most left activists hope for a Democratic Party victory, at least in Congress, because in this era of Republican-controlled national government our best bet is gridlock. If the evils of conservatism can be contained, activists are usually relatively free to attend to building militant trade unions, peace movements, anti-corporate globalization protests, and, at the local level, housing organizations, health and education organizations, energy coalitions, anti-real estate development groups and the like.

There is another, perhaps more compelling, reason for left indifference to electoral politics: it has been a long time since radical ideas and programs have enjoyed a popular constituency. Proposals for radical reforms such as shorter hours, national health insurance and alternatives to non-renewable energy sources such as coal and oil, have been driven off the American political map, although they are quite alive in Western Europe. And, of course, the left is divided between those who hold out forlorn hope for a labor party or a mass socialist party, and those who are doomed to reproduce the failed past by putting their energies into building the ephemeral left-wing of the Democrats. Like the AFL-CIO for which no insult is a cause for reevaluation of labor's affiliation to the Democrats, the overwhelming evidence that the Democrats are firmly planted on the Center-Right can deter some leftists from repeating the long history of failure of the political realignment strategy.

Initiated by the Communists and a fraction of breakaway trade union Socialists in 1936, the American Labor Party (ALP) — one of the major initiatives of the American popular front — was formed to provide a way for socialist workers who had been reared in implacable opposition to the two

---

STANLEY ARONOWITZ *teaches social and cultural theory at the City University of New york Graduate Center. He is a member of the executive council fo the Professional Staff Congress, the CUNY faculty and staff union. His book* How Class Works *will be published by Yale University PRess in Spring 2003.*

bourgeois parties, and scorned the machine-ridden corrupt Democrats, to vote for Roosevelt. By the 1970s it was no longer feasible, or necessary, to form ostensible "third" parties to cross-endorse liberal Democrats, because the old corrupt urban machines had been broken by a combination of demographic shifts of their core ethnic constituents, the demise of the socialist movement among workers, and the success of middle class movements for electoral reform. With the exception of the Peace and Freedom formations that arose out of the radical wing of the civil rights and peace movements, "left" Democrats joined the party's reform movements. In their various guises these factions were the basis, together with electoral fractions of the student, feminist, antiwar and civil rights movements, for the McCarthy and Kennedy challenges to the Johnson administration.

The last hurrah of the left Democrats was McGovern's capture of the party's presidential nomination in 1972.

The last hurrah of the left Democrats was McGovern's capture of the party's presidential nomination in 1972. Having been swamped by Nixon, by the 1980s the Democratic left was a vestige. The Democratic Party heavyweights, including the top leaders of the major unions, repossessed the apparatuses and drove most of the left-liberals out of the party leadership. With the drift of the Democrats to the center/right, which followed the Reagan administration's near burial of the New Deal, an achievement cemented by the Clinton presidency, we are now witnessing a revival of the strategy in states like New York, Vermont and Minnesota where some unions and grass roots organizations, notably of the poor, have decided to try to push the Democrats to the left through forming parties that cross endorse Democrats — whether they are progressive or not — like New York's Working Families Party, a self-conscious redux of the ALP. The only problem is that Gore, Bradley and their local progeny are now the equivalent of Rockefeller Republicans: corporate, socially moderate and fiscally conservative.

I suppose I could be counted among those who held out for independent politics. I was a charter member of the Labor Party but saw that it would probably go nowhere because it had effectively put its fate in the hands of a handful of "progressive" international unions, most of which were affiliated with the AFL-CIO. Since the federation was firmly committed to the Democrats, the Labor Party rejected the idea of running its own candidates and confined itself to advocating some reforms like single-payer health care and free college tuition.

Then along came Nader. While his 1996 half-hearted presidential bid under the banner of the Green Party produced barely a ripple, the 2000 elections witnessed the emergence of the Greens as a genuine national party and electoral force. Nader's 3.7 million votes were evidence that third party politics had arrived, although it was seriously underweight. That it did not reach the threshold of 5 percent of the total was discouraging because the Greens were unable to qualify for federal funds. Still, unless one is in the camp that blames Nader and the Greens for the election of George W., rather than Gore's dullness and relentless centrism, the election demonstrated that there is, indeed, a constituency for a consistent progressive, if not radical program.

When, in 1998 the actor, Al Lewis, who had been a regular on a popular TV show, *The Munsters*, and, as a result, was something of a celebrity in New York State, won more than 50,000 votes on the Green line for governor, the party qualified under state law as a ballot party. This meant that it would not have to seek petitions for its designees for statewide office and, at the local level, its candidates would be required to procure only 5 percent of the registered voters in the district. So ballot status was very valuable for a small party with limited resources. As a result, the magic of 50,000 votes became something of an obsession for many Greens.

The problem of who should run to keep

the party's ballot status in 2002 really heated up after the 2001 local elections. I was approached by some party activists to run but did not decide to seek the party's designation until late January 2002, when the inability of the party leadership to recruit a celebrity became clear. They tried Tim Robbins, Susan Sarandon and Michael Moore, to no avail. My long-time refusal to run for public office was punctured when I was invited to appear with Andrew Cuomo and Carl McCall at NOW's legislative conference on January 9, 2002. Based on their generally weak presentations and the positive reception to mine by the delegates I concluded that unless the Republican Governor, George Pataki, made incredible gaffes, the Democrats were dead in the water. Neither Coumo nor McCall had a thing to say that inspired the 300 women in attendance. Then, as now, they had forgotten — if they ever knew — what a political opposition was all about. I kept remembering Labor Party founder, Tony Mazzocchi's answer to the question, "Why a labor party?" — "The bosses have two political parties, we need one of our own." Of course, I had no illusions that the Greens were a labor party but there is enough in their philosophy and program to justify the conclusion they were no longer a single-issue party, but were a genuine alternative party.

Far from remaining an exclusively ecological party, since the late 1980s the Greens had evolved by enunciating three additional principles: social justice, peace and, notably, a fierce dedication to radical democracy, most important of all, its commitment to seek European-style electoral reforms such as proportional representation (PR). While like all American electoral vehicles the Green Party is a tent rather than an ideologically coherent movement, about which more below, the broad areas of agreement that unite its active members embrace the politics of the four great social movements of the last four decades: environmentalism, black freedom, second wave feminism, and the disability movement, in addition to which the party is a reliable force against militarism and for labor's rights. (Compare the Greens in Germany, who are by no means reliably pro-labor, e.g., their position on pension "reform" — a cautionary example.) It was enough to build a platform and a campaign.

The first hurdle I had to overcome was to win the party's designation. I spent the spring traveling around to as many of the 60 locals in the state as my time and money permitted. I was, after all, an outsider, not a celebrity, and generally unknown to the party activists. Add to these grounds for suspicion the premise that, as an academic lacking the common touch, I would inevitably make a poor campaigner. Whether or not their assumptions about my campaigning ability were right I did seem to have enough to persuade more than 74 percent of the delegates to the Greens' Ithaca convention to designate me their candidate. To most I seemed honest and straightforward: where I disagreed with the prevailing party culture — e.g., vegetarianism, but also pacifism — I laid out my positions. I suspect that most of my appeal was attributable to having observed the abiding rule of all kinds of politics: first, show up. When I appeared by car on a cold snowy Buffalo evening in February and continued to tour other cities in the northwest and central sections of the state — Rochester, Ithaca, Binghamton — I got good marks for persistence. If energy was a criterion, I passed the test.

By the party's May convention, I had visited enough locals to amass pledges of support from a comfortable majority of the delegates. The trips, conducted mostly by car, proved to be an eye-opener. I discovered the best and the not so best of the Green organization. While the party had grown since the 2000 elections, in most places it consisted of small groups with little or no political experience, the exceptions being some locals in the largest cities. But with few exceptions the party was weak in the suburbs in a state where rural and urban districts were in decline. At the end of the designation process, I realized that the campaign to win at least 50,000 votes and to get out a different message was destined to be uphill; if the measure of success was holding on to the ballot line, we were in trouble.

The problems were complicated by the fact that the state leadership remained opposed to my nomination throughout the designation process. Shortly before the convention the party's vice-chair and some locals

put forward the 1998 Green candidate for Lieutenant Governor — a black woman community leader, Alice Green, from the Albany area whose candidacy had helped Lewis obtain the necessary vote to qualify for ballot status. There was another candidate, Don Hassig, a rural Green who made cancer prevention his major issue. While he appeared before many local meetings during the designation process, he never accumulated significant support. In the end neither received the requisite 25 percent of the delegates' votes to qualify for the ballot, so I became the candidate. And we nominated a black woman physician, Jennifer Daniels, for Lieutenant Governor who had run as a Green in Syracuse in 2001 and received almost 8 percent of the vote.

From the outset we faced two nearly insurmountable problems: the social base of the New York Green Party is composed of a sizeable group of the unwaged — students, casual workers, part-time editors and writers, computer technology "consultants," a euphemism for the sometimes employed, and the unemployed. There are a few self-employed small business people, including farmers, lawyers and physicians. Many who are full-time wage workers are in the lower end of the occupational structure. Thus, with few exceptions, its relations with the unions are tenuous or non-existent, and relatively few have well-paying jobs or occupations. There is a small but growing membership among blacks, Asians and Latinos, and the party has made some progress in recruiting and building ties at the leadership level in the larger cities and metropolitan areas. The scant presence of people of color has prompted much scorn from among the left Democrats, especially the leadership of the Working Families Party, which is always looking over its shoulder to see if anyone is encroaching on their hallowed ground. Such baiting from progressive Democrats of third party movements, when not a case of bad faith — most of them know the Democrats are corrupt and hopeless but lack the courage to make the break because they are tied into political networks and to actual benefits controlled by the party — is surely an instance of crass demagogy.

Having unwaged people in its ranks is a major advantage: it means that a party can mount an impressive volunteer effort for campaigns, picket lines, organizing press conferences and public meetings. Everywhere I went there were people to accompany me to meet the press, to address community groups, to attend campus press and public events. But its economic marginality combined with its relatively small size made the party structurally incapable of raising substantial funds to run electoral campaigns. With almost no large donors it was mainly a nickel and dime operation, with no full-time apparatus, state office or organizers in the field. These meager resources contrasted with its huge aspiration to become a legitimate electoral force. The national Greens were not particularly interested in New York, having better prospects elsewhere, so there were no resources there, except Nader himself. And even though the vice chair sent out a fundraising mailing to various Nader lists just before the convention, it was clear that, as far as money was concerned, my campaign was on its own. We actually contributed some money to the party's own campaign operation. As a result we had to conduct our own direct mail to lists gathered from various sources, hold house parties with Green party members and non-Green sympathizers which raised between $200-$2000 each, sponsor events such as a well-attended fundraiser on October 4 with Nader, Cynthia McKinney, the recently defeated five term black congresswoman from Georgia, and anti-globalization activist Medea Benjamin, which raised a decent amount, including most of the $1000 contributions we received. And Ellen Willis and I were obliged to underwrite perhaps a third of the $100,000 campaign budget, using loans and personal funds for which we

Gore, Bradley and their local progeny are now the equivalent of Rockefeller Republicans: corporate, socially moderate and fiscally conservative.

can expect no repayment.

From the beginning we determined that to raise the level of the debate the Greens would have to advance a startling proposal that could attract media attention as well. By proposing the slogan "tax and spend," which seized for our own purposes the old right-wing attack against the left, we signaled a brutal honesty that was notably absent in the campaign. The state treasury was in dire straits and, we said, if new sources of revenue were not found, after the election there would be layoffs in state and local governments, libraries would be cut back and some closed and even police and fire departments, held sacred since September 11 by many, would suffer budget cuts. I was the only candidate who opposed the Bush-sponsored resolution to sanction war against Iraq and made an issue of the war. We focused on the war not only because it is wrong, but also because it has become an excuse for rampant militarism and civil liberties abrogation and is already starving long-deferred federal social programs.

We signaled our embrace of social radicalism by proposing legislation to require insurance companies to fund abortions, genuine sex education in high schools, and free tuition for CUNY and SUNY. And, of course, as a player in energy coalitions around the state, notably the movement to close Indian Point nuclear plant, the Greens challenged the other candidates to state their positions. Eventually McCall came out for closing the plant and Pataki issued a weak statement that indicated support for eventual closure. And the self-financed Rochester businessman Tom Golisano, who was widely expected to ravage Pataki from the right, instead ran a largely populist campaign. We used to joke that he looked at my website every morning and by the afternoon had issued a statement adopting, albeit in twisted form, one of my platform planks. Mixed in with his ritual fiscal conservatism, he called for tuition scholarships for students with a B average or better and favored repeal of the Rockefeller Drug Laws. In the end, these unexpected departures hurt us, especially in northwest cities such as Rochester and Buffalo, because he put millions of dollars into TV ads trumpeting his positions and, for some, was a viable candidate.

We had just enough money to pay for literature, posters, a few mailings, lawn signs. Our inability to run ads on TV and major radio stations prompted the hiring of a public relations firm whose efforts yielded mixed results. The firm handled press requests for interviews and for materials, issued press releases — mostly unpublished — and tried, unsuccessfully, to help us raise funds. Still we received more than a little public notice. I was profiled in the *New York Times's* Public Lives column, and my personal contacts proved useful in getting profiled in the *New York Press*, and CUNY student newspapers. Some papers such as the *Chief*, the civil service paper, contacted me directly and ran a big story which was at once skeptical of my chances of making an impact and sympathetic with my stand on the issues. As did many upstate and New York City radio stations where, by telephone and through studio appearances, I got a fair amount of coverage until the last two weeks of the campaign, when we were shut out by the major media. We fought back by placing a limited number of 30-second spots on cable TV which, apart from the New York Metro market, were fairly inexpensive. I also made several appearances on the local listener-supported radio station WBAI, was interviewed three times by the largest upstate NPR station, WAMC, and by cable TV on Staten Island, Long Island and Westchester and, with the party's assistance held three Albany press conferences which were covered by major upstate media, especially AP and the Gannett papers which together cover the state. And in the course of making speeches, attending rallies and holding local press conferences upstate I was frequently covered by the local dailies, mainstream television and the weeklies. In fact two of them, Rochester and Albany endorsed me. That said it remained true that the four major Metro New York dailies the *Times*, *News*, *Post* and *Newsday* firmly refused to cover our campaign; two of them admitted it was a matter of policy that they did not cover "minor" parties. The *Times*, which admits nothing, only ran a profile and a picture of me during the TV debates.

Our biggest break came when, in order to avoid a one-on-one TV debate with McCall, Pataki agreed to debate on condi-

tion that all of the seven gubernatorial candidates were included. We engaged in two debates sponsored respectively by Channel 7, the metro New York ABC affiliate, and the Syracuse local CBS affiliate. Maybe seven or eight hundred thousand viewers tuned in. The format was fairly typical of contemporary media treatment of news and

Are electoral politics worth the time, money and emotional energy for a left whose resources are chronically stressed?

politics. We were given a minute to answer each of about seven or eight questions and had no opportunity to comment on each other's answers. So it wasn't a "debate" but instead a series of sound bites. Aside from Tom Leighton, the ex-Green who was running on the Marijuana Reform line and I, who insisted that the state was in a condition of fiscal crisis and required a new program of progressive taxation to finance health, education and environmental needs, the major party candidates and Tom Golisano, the self-financed candidate of the Independence Party, insisted that they were for tax reductions or no increases and were entirely mute on the crisis. Of course *after* the campaign the budget boom was lowered on state and local social programs and public employees.

We attracted hundreds of volunteers in New York City, opened an office with a full-time manager and managed to get our message out in some key neighborhoods, particularly Park Slope, North Brooklyn, the Lower East Side and Flushing, Queens. Where there were strong local organizations such as Ithaca and Rochester and hard campus work in the City as well as the mid-Atlantic region, the results were notably better than elsewhere. I got close to 10 percent of the vote in Park Slope, raised our vote in Brooklyn by one-third and Manhattan by a similar number; we increased Green totals in New York compared to the 1998 election. I got 42,000 votes, short of the 50,000 standard to retain ballot status.

But money, organization, and the perception that we were a lost cause, at least in electoral terms, did not account for the 8000-vote deficit, one that our Attorney General candidate did reach. The major ideological obstacle was the "McCall factor." Never mind that his campaign was dead in the water almost from the beginning, certainly following Cuomo's exit from the campaign shortly before the primary. His main qualification for the job was that he was in line for it and Democrats were loyal to that edict. Not that he had anything to say: he was perceived, correctly, as a centrist and a corporate guy who had spent his eight years as State Comptroller keeping a low profile in the wake of Pataki's policies of corporate welfare, tax cuts for the wealthy and obdurate refusal to equalize the grossly inequitable state education aid formula. Nobody except Wayne Barrett of the *Village Voice* remembered that he had rewarded his contributors with contracts, just like any other officeholder, or that he had stubbornly refused to invest state workers' pension funds in social projects, even while as sole trustee of the Fund he squandered a half billion of their dollars on companies such as Enron and WorldCom.

McCall had one card, and it played well in some circles, including the left-libs: he was the first black major party candidate for governor. Even though by October it was crystal clear that his chances of winning were nil and he refused to depart from his carefully honed script of saying nothing that might ruffle any feathers, many white leftists and liberals supported him on the grounds of pure identity politics. Even leaders of the Working Families Party which, during the last weeks were his only field operation in the City, admitted that my positions were closer to their own than McCall's, especially on taxes. But neither they nor, indeed, the so-called "democratic left" intellectuals and activists close to the Committees of Correspondence and Democratic Socialists, were prepared to support an independent candidacy against the duopoly that controls the electoral process and the state's political and legislative agenda. In fact many were hostile to my candidacy and, in bad faith, never tired of

bringing up the Nader issue in the 2000 presidential race even though Pataki was no Bush and McCall was a political corpse.

But I did not come away from the months of campaigning with a sense of defeat. Hundreds volunteered to perform the mundane tasks of postering, phone banking and poll duty. And hundreds more have contacted me to express their gratitude for waging the campaign, saying it was a pleasure to finally get a chance to vote for someone they believed in. We did manage to get our program aired in many venues and, especially in New York City, the party has a higher profile. Yet the questions remain: are electoral politics worth the time, money and emotional energy for a left whose resources are chronically stressed? Should we continue to build a national third party movement in the face of the most concerted attack in recent memory by the Right on even the feeble existing democratic and economic rights of labor and the social movements? And, most importantly, does a genuine base exist for such an effort?

The answer to the first question is the easiest: the left makes a serious error by refusing to offer an electoral alternative. In many ways we have succumbed to the winner-take-all logic inherent in our political system: if you can't win, don't run. Which leaves the field to the two major parties and their left and right flanks such as New York's Conservative Party and the Working Families Party. Left parties should run on their own program for at least three reasons: an electoral presence often places their politics in the public eye in ways that even mass demonstrations, especially these days, have difficulty achieving. The election season is the one time when, with an adroit strategy, the media is listening even slightly to our arguments and proposals and we have a chance, occasionally, to enter the debates with the major party candidates. Americans may respond, in the short term, to an anti-war perspective, but unless the war is linked to issues of democracy and social justice, single-issue movements are unable to build a political base capable of challenging the structure of political power, rather than only its symptoms. Even then, as in the Vietnam War era, the strategy of simple resistance eventually reaches its limits. In this connection one of the tragic aspects of that era is that the movement did not morph into an articulate political opposition but, due largely to its limited program of "End the War" was weakened after Nixon abolished the draft, and disintegrated after the armed conflict ended.

Unlike the traditional approach of some left sects which sometimes run candidates who conduct "educational" campaigns and hope to recruit some to their ranks thereby, strategically placed local campaigns can establish a public presence in many cities, towns and villages if they have something to say about the burning local issues such as the Indian Point nuclear power plant just outside New York City, labor struggles (not only strikes but housing and education issues), a plan to build a new shopping mall that will cause congestion, pollution and eat up valuable land that could be used for public purposes, as well as national and international issues. The election campaign is a way to attract new activists and reinspire some old ones, especially if we offer an educational and organizational context to continue activity after the election. If the campaign is sufficiently attractive it can recruit many new people to political activism, providing there is a place for them to go after the campaign. Despite its occasional looniness and, in some places a distinctly inhospitable organizational environment, the Greens do have some organizational structure to absorb activist energies, and most locals are composed of friendly, even warm, people. In short the left will never overcome its ideological and political isolation, apart from its undeniable organizing capacity, unless it tests its politics in the

The left makes a serious error by refusing to offer an electoral alternative. In many ways we have succumbed to the winner-take-all logic inherent in our political system: if you can't win, don't run.

commonweal. Elections are one way to engage in this test.

The Nader campaign indicated that a base does exist for a third progressive party in America. It is arguable that if the candidate himself had embraced issues of racial equality and feminism the Greens might have gained the 5 percent to qualify for federal funds, for it is fairly plain that not only women, but also blacks and Latinos share the disillusionment of other voters with the two party system. Note well that, despite his stubborn refusal to depart substantially from his narrowly focused anti-corporate message Nader's vote among blacks, 4.5 percent, exceeded his overall performance of about 3.5 percent. Nationally, despite relentless attacks from the Democrats and their social-liberal allies the Greens grew by some 30 percent since 2000 to around a quarter million members. That many of them are politically inexperienced cannot erase the deep-seated discontent with the centrism of the Democratic Party among a broad range of constituencies.

It is arguable that if Nader had embraced issues of racial equality and feminism the Greens might have gained the 5 percent to qualify for federal funds.

Having said that, the Green Party, by itself, is not likely to become a mass electoral party in the United States. The main reason is that its social base is too narrow. Its ability to attract working class and black/Latino support will be limited as long as the trade unions remain tied to the prevailing political system and there is no breakaway among what Phil Randolph used to call the "black masses." While in a trickle individuals from these formations have joined the Greens this is not the same as constituting a popular base. While it is unlikely that even if a split in the labor movement and in the black political leadership occurs the Greens would benefit directly, such developments would make an alliance feasible. For in places like California, where the Green gubernatorial candidate received 5 percent of the vote, New Mexico, the Northwest and New England the Green Party has sunk some roots and, in New York State, this is also true of some upstate counties. A labor-black-Latino-Green alliance is a more likely scenario than a single party. And despite its lack of traditional working class support the Greens bring to the table a significant base of what might be described as "new class" voters — professional and technical people, the self-employed and, at least in New York a solid constituency of artists and writers, groups that are generally not be available to other parties.

Moreover the Greens are likely remain an electoral force of some substance precisely because the party is identified as a player on one of the central world-historical dramas of our time, the ecological crisis, to which much of the left has paid scant attention. The bulk of the others who grant the value of electoral activity are still mired in their increasingly futile attempts to influence the Democratic Party from within. And some of them, like the coterie of erstwhile New Left intellectuals such as Todd Gitlin, Paul Berman, and Fred Siegel, have complained that the left is preoccupied with cultural politics at the expense of struggles for economic justice. In my view posing these as binaries is as futile as it is seriously mistaken. Feminist and ecological struggles are also economic struggles. If Congress and state legislatures are asked to appropriate funds to enable poor women to have abortions, is this an economic or a cultural issue? And what are most local "development" issues other than a program of capital accumulation and commodification at the expense of clean air, clean water and the necessary open space? When the left and the labor movement recognize that the serious health hazards faced by residents of black neighborhoods are, simultaneously race, ecological and class issues the chance of building a broad base for left politics will vastly improve.

Can the left mount effective electoral campaigns, effective by the criteria that they can win elective office, especially at the local level, and even where it cannot elect of-

ficials change the conversation about key public issues? With scant resources the Greens have elected more than 150 officials at the local level and every election brings more small victories. At the same time it must be admitted that of the more than 2000 trade unionists in public office almost all of them are in the Democratic Party. But labor's influence on the Democrats is waning and it is unlikely, in my opinion, until unions adopt an oppositionist position in the political landscape that its influence will grow. For the present, third party politics, most prominently the Greens, will continue to grow incrementally, especially among the young, because as the one national party integral to the anti-war movement it has achieved considerable prestige, especially among activists.

As we approach the 2004 elections the most pressing issue will undoubtedly revolve around the urgency of defeating Bush. Should Nader or some other third party candidate of the left run? The best reasons for answering in the affirmative is that the Democrats are increasingly incapable of mounting opposition to the war and austerity policies that have prevailed since the Reagan presidency, whether Democrats or Republicans occupy the White House. In view of this historical judgment I would argue that only a vigorous campaign from an independent progressive will galvanize portions of the electorate to show up. If the Democrats are intelligent enough to allow themselves to be pulled to the left in response to an insurgent campaign, they might mobilize their historic base; if not they will lose again, but the left will have expanded its clout.

California Greenin': A Report from the Electoral Front

Eric V. Kirk

A SPECTER HAUNTED CALIFORNIA DEMOCRATS this fall, and it wasn't Bush, the post-9/11 swing to the right, or politicized funerals in Minnesota. It certainly wasn't Republican hopeful Bill Simon, who did everything he could to lose his bid for governor short of endorsing Democrat Gray Davis. The specter was Green, embodied in a socialist stockbroker named Peter Miguel Camejo and a handful of effective Green Party organizers who may have altered California's political landscape for some time to come.

In the short run, the election-night gods smiled on California's Democrats. For the first time in recent memory a party won a clean sweep of all seven of the statewide positions, and the Democrats now rule two branches of government in California, reversing the trend toward Republican wins of the 1980s in the face of a growing Hispanic electorate, the decline of certain military industries, and the ascent of the arguably more cosmopolitan high-tech sector.

While Hispanics make up about one third of the population and added some 1 million to the voting lists during the 1990s they currently constitute just 18 percent of registered voters. But their numbers as residents and voters are growing. In addition to these difficulties, the state GOP faces one other peculiar problem, namely that the majority of primary voters in the party are too right wing to elect a social moderate like former Los Angeles mayor Richard Riordan (who lost the primary election to Bill Simon thanks in large part to the calculated pre-primary pounding on the more moderate of the two Republican by the Davis camp). It appears likely that Bill Jones, the incumbent Secretary of State, will be the last Republican to have been elected to a statewide position until there is another significant demographic shift, or unless movie star and putative candidate Arnold Schwartzenegger runs for governor and can draw out support normally absent from the polls. We'll see if the hard-liners are as unforgiving with the socially moderate Schwartzenegger in any gubernatorial run in 2006.

But it was an especially good night for the Greens, where Venezuelan born Camejo collected just over 380,000 votes, or about 5.3 percent of the votes cast on November 4 — more than tripling the votes for Dan Hamburg's Green Party gubernatorial run in 1998. Others on the ballot did even better, with controller candidate Laura Wells collecting more than 400,000 votes for a total of about 5.8 percent, and treasurer candidate Jeanne Marie Rosenmeir edging over 5 percent, too.

Camejo also took 7 percent of the Hispanic vote, higher than his support among whites. That was also a 1000 percent increase for the Greens among Hispanics and the party's first serious inroad into a non-white community. He garnered 16 percent of the vote in San Francisco, beating out the Republican for second place. In Mendocino County, Camejo did even better, finding favor with 16.38 percent of those who voted. Camejo did very well in several other north coast counties where the aging veterans of the "back-to-the-land" movement and their Reggae loving coming-of-age children have been flexing considerable political muscle for the past decade.

Witness the successes the party has seen in local races, where 26 more Greens (out of 67 hopefuls fielded) join party incumbents on city councils, school boards, hospital districts and other administrative bodies around the state to bring its total of

---

ERIC V. KIRK *is an attorney practicing in the "tye-dye belt" of northern California. He is active with the Civil Liberties Monitoring Project and with KMUD radio, a Pacifica-affiliated listener-sponsored station, which airs his talk show "All Things Reconsidered."*

elected officials to 62. Prominent among its officeholders are San Francisco Board Supervisor Matt Gonzales, Board of Education member Sarah Lipson, (who ran citywide) and members of numerous city councils including those in Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, Alameda, Santa Monica, Nevada City, San Bernadino, Point Arena, Sonoma, Arcata and Santa Barbara. Greens even hold a majority on the Nevada County school board.

"It's pretty much established that the Green Party has become the third party in California," Camejo told the *Sacramento Bee* following the election. "It's not that there aren't other parties, but the Green Party by far is the largest. You just don't see any other party getting 16 percent of a county."

Some of the Greens' statewide success was peculiar to this one election, with Camejo taking advantage of two weak "major" party candidates. Camejo acknowledges this, telling the *Oakland Tribune* following the election that "There's no question we have made some important headway here . . . but we also had the wind at our back because of the unpopularity of both major-party candidates. There were one-time advantages we had this time that won't be there the next time around."

And unpopular both Davis and Simon were. Davis's "third way" approach has not resonated well with progressives who see no reason to compromise with the right in what is widely viewed as the "new" California. He has repeatedly vetoed bills meant to address the environment, civil liberties (including measures designed to end racial profiling by the state's Highway Patrol), and open government; and has been implicated in a number of allegations of unethical fundraising. Although the deregulation that caused the energy crisis of 2000 predated his initial election, he presided over the crisis and addressed it by pouring even more state money to those in the power industry who caused the problem. Consequently, the budget is deep in the red for the first time in a decade and the state's short-term economic outlook is bleak.

Weak Candidacies

CERTAINLY MANY OF DAVIS'S PROBLEMS were of his own making. He alienated Latino voters, most recently by vetoing legislation allowing undocumented workers to obtain driver's licenses. He originally pledged to sign the bill, then reneged, and has since renewed his promise, claiming that he only rejected it because he didn't want "murderers and terrorists" to get driver's licenses.

This was the last straw in what Camejo called "a series of betrayals" for many Hispanics. In an interview I did of him on KMUD, a north coast community radio station, Camejo described what he saw as an enormous dissatisfaction with Davis in the Hispanic communities. Following the veto on October 5, Radio Unica, a Spanish language radio station based in Los Angeles with a wide base of listeners, held an eight-hour marathon on the question of "why we aren't voting for Davis." Many telephoned in to voice support for Camejo. Some twelve thousand listeners went to the station to sign an anti-Davis petition. Although it was not scientific by any means, Los Angeles-based Spanish talk radio KWKW polled its listeners in October and 70 percent of the callers supported Camejo — suggesting that the politically active portions of the Spanish speaking community were moving away from Davis.

On November 5, the Velasquez Institute, a Southwest-based voter education effort, and the *Los Angeles Times* conducted exit polls that showed Davis receiving 65 to 71 percent of the Hispanic vote, down from the 78 to 85 percent he collected in 1998.

Simon, too, ran a ragged campaign, benefiting at the last minute from the surge in Republican enthusiasm nationally. He lost all hope of actually winning the race when he repeated misinformation fed him by COPS (a police organization that supported Simon) that accused Davis of illegal fundraising. The group supplied a photograph of Davis allegedly receiving a check from a donor in the lieutenant governor's office, a violation of law. However, the wall depicted in the photograph was almost instantly recognized as something other than the office wall in Sacramento. The shot was actually taken at a Santa Monica Hills private residence, whose owner has since sued Simon for slander.

This stunt alone would have probably destroyed his re-election chances, but

stacked upon it were: his mismanagement of campaign funds necessitating lay-offs of more than half his staff in August; his earlier refusal to disclose his tax records; a unanimous civil jury verdict for fraud against a family business; indictment of his investment firm for falsifying records; and the fact that he went through four campaign managers before settling on the one responsible for the COPS stunt. His social views were far to the right of many Republicans. And even his debate performance was uninspired. His most fortuitous campaign move was to have the Democrats help him win the Republican primary over two opponents.

These weak major party candidacies left fertile ground for Camejo, an artful campaigner and arguably the most effective one the Greens fielded nationwide. He kept himself in the media spotlight and used his meager $90,000 war chest to visit every corner of the state. His fluency in Spanish helped him take advantage of Davis's loss of support from Hispanic voters.

He even benefited from a few outspoken Republicans, dissatisfied with their party's nominee. At Baron's Books in Anaheim, employee Myra Vevenecia, a 39-year-old Orange County Republican, told an *Associated Press* reporter in a widely publicized story, "I haven't made up my mind on which one, only because they both seem pretty rotten. It's not going to be Simon or Davis. I'm thinking, actually, the Green Party guy, I don't know his name. That will be a first."

Camejo and the entire Green slate also ran a well-coordinated statewide campaign, one that might have resulted in many more votes had Davis agreed to debate Camejo. Instead of appearing with Camejo and Simon at a scheduled September 17 encounter, Davis held a press conference 10 minutes away, ensuring that there would be no significant television coverage of the Simon-Camejo dust-up. Simon was of course more than happy to oblige Camejo and the debate went ahead as planned, with little media coverage. In a radio interview, Camejo attributed Davis' actions to an "arrogance of power."

On October 7, the *L.A. Times* sponsored a debate to which Camejo was not invited. Bill Simon invited Camejo as his personal guest to observe, at which point Davis threw a tantrum and threatened to walk out of the debate if Camejo was even allowed in the building. In a replay of the Nader incident two years ago, Camejo was barred, with Camejo claiming that the refusal to admit him violated California's Jesse Unruh Civil Rights Act, which, with some exceptions, prevents a spectator from being excluded from public meetings on the basis of political opinion. The barring was front-page news, and angry editorials blasted Davis and the *Times*. Davis's treatment of Camejo was one factor in his poor election-day showing.

Davis' s negative coattails compromised the entire Democratic slate. Now, despite winning a clean sweep, statewide Democrats are looking over their left shoulder, and Democrats have no excuses to unduly compromise with Republicans. For the Republicans, the election is probably as bad as it can get. If a Democratic sweep with record performances from the Greens isn't a mandate, what is?

Although they aren't likely to see it this way, the Democrats owe Camejo and company a debt for shifting the continuum of debate leftward. More likely, they are relieved that Camejo, being foreign born, cannot replace Ralph Nader as the Green's presidential candidate in 2004.

Can the California Greens repeat if not surpass their statewide performance in four years, and under changed circumstances? Not if 2006 boasts a Schwartzenegger race against popular Attorney General Bill Lockyer. Not only is Lockyer a much better candidate than Davis — alone of all the candidates he scored a majority of votes for office, but there will be a great progressive drive to nip any emerging Schwartzenegger political career in the bud.

Socialists in the Phone Book

So who is Peter Camejo? I first heard of him way back in high school, when I joined the Socialist Workers Party (they came up under "socialist" in the phone book) and he is likely no stranger to *New Politics* readers. After his being drummed out for some heresy I don't remember, he went largely unheard in left activist circles until he sur-

faced a few years later as a successful stockbroker, apparently subscribing to Jerry Rubin's nostrum that "power is in money, not people."

He reappeared again in the early 1990s when he and other left refugees coalesced into the "Committees of Correspondence," now expressing its politics within the Green Party.

Camejo possesses a gravitas all too absent in progressive electoral politics, not to mention in California gubernatorial candidates of any party since Upton Sinclair's run in 1932. Unlike most left candidates, he has been a success in private business, starting Progressive Assets Management, the nation's first viable, socially conscious investment firm. This led to the creation of businesses such as Working Assets and one of the strongest pension funds in California. As brilliant as Ralph Nader, Camejo makes a better leader, thanks to a sharp wit and a visible sense of irony. He also milks the "socialist stock broker" shtick for all it's worth. Every once in a while he relapses into rhetoric that makes recovering Marxists wince (too-quick references to "smashing the two-party duopoly" are typical), but mostly he presents his perspectives with a level of intelligence, depth, and marketability unknown to the left in recent years.

Though he doesn't talk much about his Trotskyist past, claiming as justification a fiduciary responsibility to the Green Party, which is not socialist per se, his status as a Green is still tentative. In a KMUD interview on my radio show, his knowledge of north coast environmental issues seemed token at best, and one could detect in his statements about European Green Parties a relapse to the old left bugbear that ecology is a bourgeois science. Camejo even interjected a curious metaphor, likening the Party to a watermelon: "green on the outside and red on the inside."

On the other hand, when sitting in a circle of activists in rural Garberville (in Humboldt County, the north end of California's "tye-dye belt"), he was less reflexive. He cautioned one supporter not to fixate on the theories of economic calamity, using his expertise as a professional investor to argue that the economy was more uncertain than in distress. He further encouraged the young man to exercise care and avoid arguments he could not back up because "leftists on the outside of power can lose credibility easily."

Camejo introduced color, literally and figuratively, to Green politics. Davis was right in a sense to fear him, and pulled out the stops calling in favors from Hispanic supporters to campaign on his behalf, including Dolores Huerta, heir to Caesar Chavez as spiritual leader of the farm worker movement.

So what explains Camejo's ballot success? In essence, he lobbied hard over Spanish speaking radio so that he was the only candidate who could directly address some of the Hispanic voters. He combined sophistication with wit on the stump, as when he replied to tremulous liberal supporters worried about a surging Camejo possibly throwing the election to the Republican: "He (Davis) spent 10 million to get Simon nominated, and if Simon wins he'll blame it on me."

He also emphasized the right issues to energize the old hippie and bohemian vote, a solid bloc in California, and he managed to link them with broader social issues and comprehensive policy. Take the Greens' balanced budget proposal, offered in response to a projected $21 billion state deficit. It includes policies that could draw revenue while reducing implementation costs. A key example is savings from the legalization of marijuana, including lower prison costs, fewer enforcement and court costs, and increases in revenue due to the taxing one of the largest cash crops in the state. Of course, one should also consider the drops in price if the substance is legalized, and the loss of federal block grants currently available for ganja eradication. But the point is Camejo and the other candidates were effective in presenting a thoughtful platform that was more than a typical laundry list of issues playing to the usual suspects.

Essentially, Camejo, using his standing as a businessperson to good effect, also added some pragmatism to the idealism of the Greens. He never believed he could score in the election without several key reforms that he believes should be the major focus of ongoing Green activism in the next few years. He encouraged his supporters to push

for instant run-off elections (now in effect in San Francisco), one cut away from proportional representation. And he urged that his supporters push for liberalization and clarification of qualifications for participation in televised debates. Moreover, he urged people to remember that under the original charters, broadcasters were stewards of broadcast signals, not their owners — so that the public has the right to demand that they provide coverage of all of the candidates who qualify for ballot status. Lastly, he urged support for public financing of qualifying campaigns for office. Had even a few of these reforms been in place, Camejo believes he could have been the "Jesse Ventura of California."

On proportional representation, he was emphatic: "You know, nation after nation has considered it (our electoral-college system), and rejected it because it's so old. It was fine when towns were two hundred people — three hundred people — to have winner-take-all. We have 35 million people in California. You have to have a more advanced election system . . . Every single Eastern European nation rejected our system when they considered having democratic elections — as undemocratic."

A revised electoral system, he argued, would also bring non-voters back to the polls. Camejo re-emphasized the point after the election, telling the *Ukiah Daily Journal,* "(Davis) was elected by 14.63 percent of all eligible voters in California. That is who voted for him. Eighty-five percent of all eligible voters did not vote for Davis. If you consider the fact that the overwhelming majority of people in California did not vote for the person who is now governor, you have to say there is something wrong with our system."

In the election's aftermath, the Greens were probably the most enthusiastic losers in election history. They collected their 5 percent. They made the Democrats sweat. They finally got some decent media coverage. They even scored victories in local elections, running 67 candidates around the state and electing 26 to office, bring the total of Green officeholders to 62.

The question is the future. With so many Greens now holding elected positions around the state, should the party's focus be on local efforts? Should they run a high profile campaign for statewide positions other than governor in 2006? Should they run candidates against liberal Democrats?

Camejo is again pragmatic. "The Green Party has to overcome structural difficulties," he told the *Oakland Tribune*. "We've got to get a statewide office open with full-time staff, and we've got to increase funding. Those are issues I'm going to be working on during the next few years."

Now, in California at least, Democrats must earn the progressive vote.

The Future of Caretaking

Betty Reid Mandell

ONE OF THE CASUALTIES OF UNFETTERED capitalism is caretaking. The needs of capital take precedence over the needs of children, the aged, and the disabled for sensitive and reliable care.

Conservatives say the family is crumbling and in crisis; feminists say the crisis is in the lack of caretaking provisions for working parents and lack of cash support for unemployed parents. Conservatives want a return to the male breadwinner type of family where men make the living and women stay home to care for their children. Irving Kristol believes that this would solve problems such as illegitimacy and male irresponsibility. Francis Fukayama hopes that women will rediscover their biologically imprinted nurturing capacities and realize that taking a few years off work to stay with young children is best for their families. When this happens, he says, "day care will become the lot of the children of 'working class or welfare mothers' only."

Conservatives call for a moral regeneration to restore the nuclear family and the breadwinner father who earns the "family wage," yet they favor economic policies such as deregulation, weakened unions, and lowered wages which, along with rising expectations, create the need for both parents to work. Feminists, on the other hand, call for "family-friendly" state and employment policies that will make it possible for parents to combine work and child care without sacrificing their careers or neglecting their children, their aged parents, or disabled family members, and without requiring that the caregivers be female.

BETTY REID MANDELL *is a retired professor of social work from Bridgewater State College. She is co-author of* Introduction to Human Services: Policy and Practice. *She has been a welfare rights activist since the 1960s and helped found Survivors, Inc., publishers of* Survival News.

Gender and Caretaking

THE ONLY TIME IN THE HISTORY of the United States when men were expected to do caretaking was during colonial times when children were considered to be the property of their fathers, who had final say in what happened to children. The family, not the individual, was the building block of society and all family members worked to maintain the family as a self-sufficient economic unit. Fathers were in contact with even very young children all day and routinely performed domestic tasks. Mothers had exclusive care of infants because of the requirements of breast-feeding, but after that, power passed to the men. Male children were indentured to tradesmen for apprenticeships, and those children lived with the men who supervised their work.

With industrialization, there was less need for children to earn their keep. The family became less the center of the economic world and, at least for the middle and upper classes, women became more dependent on husbands' ability to earn cash. Mothers rather than fathers were entrusted with the moral lives of children, and were expected to devote themselves to their children.

Since colonial times, women have done most of the caregiving, both paid and unpaid. They care for their own children and they care for other people's children. They are the primary caretakers of aged and disabled relatives, both their own and their husband's. And they are the primary caretakers of other people's aged and disabled relatives. Ninety-three percent of caregivers in long-term care facilities for the aged are women.

Almost one-quarter of American households provide home-based care to friends or relatives age 50 or older. Nearly three-quarters of these caretakers are women. They provide an average of 50 percent more hours per week of informal care than men.

The belief that women should be the

primary caregivers is deeply imbedded in custom and in people's psyches. The main thrust of the women's movement was to achieve equality in the work place, as well as to exercise choice in whether to have children. There was less success in achieving equality in caretaking and homemaking.

One of the reasons that mothers stay home to care for the children while fathers work outside the home is that men generally make more money than women, so it often makes economic sense for the woman to stay home. But has equal pay led to equal caretaking? Do highly paid dual-career couples share the caretaking and housework equally? The answer is "no," but a look at studies from the 1970s to the present shows gradual but slow progress in that direction. Rosanna Hertz compared her 1981 study of twenty-one dual career couples with one done over a decade before hers, which showed markedly less equality in terms of household chores, marital decision making, and career evaluation. Julia Wrigley's 1994 study of child care practices of 79 dual-career couples found more husbands were sharing in caretaking and housework, and a few were even taking the primary caretaking responsibility for children.

In her study of twelve dual-career couples between 1980 and 1988, Arlie Hochschild described women's caretaking work as "the second shift." She concluded that women worked roughly fifteen hours longer each week than men. "Over a year, they worked an extra month of twenty-four-hour days."

Most of the women in Hochschild's study wanted more equality between men and women in housework and child care. Most of the men resisted this. This created tension in many of the marriages. (Hochschild points out that the rise in women's employment paralleled the rise in the divorce rate.) The second shift was not just women's problem. Women felt resentment when their husbands did not share in the work and sometimes expressed their frustration and rage by losing interest in sex and becoming overly absorbed with the children. The men had to steel themselves against their wives' resentment.

The women in this study talked more than the men did about being overtired, sick, and "emotionally drained." They talked about how much sleep they could "get by on." There was a speed-up in both work and family life. Children complained, "Mother is always rushing us." Hochschild's review of the research led her to conclude that working mothers have higher self-esteem and get less depressed than housewives, but compared to their husbands, they are more tired and get sick more often. More women than men questioned how good they were as parents. Two 1985 surveys, each of about a thousand women and men, found working mothers were more likely than any other group to be anxious.

Do highly paid dual-career couples share the caretaking and housework equally? The answer is "no."

A recent University of Maryland study found that among dual-career couples, the women did about 6 more hours of chores than men. In cohabiting couples, there was a more equal sharing, even though women still did quite a bit more. In fact, cohabiting couples were at greater risk of breaking up if they fell into traditional patterns and deviated from egalitarianism.

Couples who cohabit rather than marry are slightly more egalitarian in their domestic arrangements than are married couples. Cohabitation doesn't involve the "good wife" image, so women aren't expected to carry most of the housework load. "Marriage still has a very powerful effect on people, even if they don't realize it," said Melissa Milkie, a University of Maryland sociologist. "When you marry, you get a list of expectations about the good wife and the good husband. When you cohabit, you're just sharing a household."

One study of more than 7,000 married and cohabiting people found that women in dual-income married households had more strife in their relationship than cohabiting working couples. Married women took on roughly 71 percent of the total housework burden and generally had to effectively

"buy" their way out of housework by earning more. Unmarried women who lived with men, however, took on slightly less housework — 67 percent of the burden — and did not have to earn more to shed chores. Couples who married after living together divided chores somewhat more equally than married couples who never lived together.

In her classic feminist book *The Mermaid and the Minotaur*, Dorothy Dinnerstein argues that the arrangement of giving the mother primary responsibility for child care has led to what she describes as our "human malaise." She stated that people's greed and rapacity toward each other and toward nature can be traced to "the early mother's apparent omnipotence . . . her ambivalent role as ultimate source of good and evil." The exploitation of women, which is linked to the acceptability of exploitation in general,

> is rooted in our attitudes toward very early parental figures, and will go on until these figures are male as well as female. Only when this happens will society be forced to find ways to help its members handle the impulses of greed and rapacity that now make man "wolf to the man." *It is at this point that the human projects of brotherhood, of peace with nature, and of sexual liberty interpenetrate*. (Italics in the original.)

Dinnerstein argues that our ambivalent attitudes toward the body and pleasures of the flesh are caused by this early ambivalence toward the mother. We debase the flesh "because woman is available for the dirty-goddess role, and man can thus be relatively exempt . . . from the baseness that she carries." Women rein in their sexual nature because of this ambivalence, and men cannot express healthy sexuality because they split off lust from tenderness. When men are as directly involved as females "in the intensely carnal lives of infants and small children, the reality of the male body as a source of new creatures is bound to become substantial for us at an earlier age than it does now, and to remain emotionally more salient forever after." Men and women must join as equal collaborators in order to overcome the split between male and female sensibility. "This is a necessity that mother-raised men find it painfully hard to accept, and that mother-raised women find it intolerably bruising to urge upon them."

The economist Marilyn Waring argues that we need to rethink basic economic concepts such as gross domestic product in ways that take community well-being into account. The current practice of considering activities valuable only if they are a market commodity or a market service devalues the unpaid work of women. Waring says that when governments shed their responsibility for services, it is women who have to take over those services, without pay.

When she was a member of the New Zealand Parliament, Waring became a proponent for determining economic policy based on time and use rather than on money. Economists consider women to be unemployed as unpaid workers. However, if the boundaries of what is considered production were extended to include unpaid household work, all people engaged in those activities would be considered self-employed. She said:

> If unpaid labor were considered based on the equivalent pay scale of people who do that work for pay, unpaid household work would constitute the single largest service and production sector. . . This work includes child-care and senior care. Expenses for these services are paid out of the workers' own pockets with no tax deductions and no incentives.

Waring helped to pressure the government of New Zealand to implement a national Time Use Survey in 1998. The survey was designed to "Show up which sex gets the menial, boring, low status and unpaid invisible work which in turn highlights oppression and subordination."

Class and Race in Caretaking

RICH PEOPLE OFTEN HIRE NANNIES to look after their children.* Some of these nannies are from a similar social class and race as the employer, but most of them are not. Nannies who come from middle class homes can make a good salary. A UMass student tells me that she earned over $40,000 a year, plus benefits, as a nanny for a rich couple.

* A 1991 survey found that over 40 percent of parents with family incomes over $75,000 hired caregivers to look after their children. (Julia Wrigley, *Other People's Children*, p. ix)

Most nannies, however, are not so lucky. Many are poor women with children of their own. Many are of a different ethnicity than their employers. Many are immigrants, some of them undocumented.

Some high-level political figures have made the news because they hired undocumented immigrants. Perhaps the most publicized case occurred in January 1993 when incoming President Bill Clinton nominated Zoë Baird for attorney general. Baird, a highly successful corporate lawyer, and her husband, a Yale law professor, had hired an undocumented Peruvian couple to look after their three-year-old son. When they hired them they were aware that the couple were in the country illegally and they did not pay required taxes on them. After being grilled for days by senators, Baird became the first Cabinet nominee to withdraw in 120 years.

After the Baird incident, the public became interested in the women who cared for the children of rich dual-career couples, and the media began to cover the story. The dominant theme of the story was exploitation. A *Wall Street Journal* reporter wrote, "There is a dirty little secret in middle- and upper-middle-class America: Nannies are among the most exploited workers in the country." Two young women recently published a fictionalized account of their experiences as nannies to rich New York City couples, which featured narcissistic, materialistic parents who thoughtlessly, and sometimes cruelly, exploited their nannies and ignored their children.

Some employers rely on external pressures, such as labor market competition or worker vulnerability, to exert control over a worker's performance. The most egregious form of this is to use an undocumented worker's illegal immigrant status to control her, which happens fairly often. One example of this is a woman from Uganda who had been imprisoned and beaten by military police in Uganda and who escaped by coming to the U.S. She ended up as a virtual slave in the home of a woman who lived in a Boston suburb, caring for the woman, her three children and four boarders, and constantly being yelled at by her employer. She never received any money for her work. She never left the house and one day, after living there for three months, she discovered her passport was missing. After five months, she left with the four boarders and is now being helped by a church to apply for asylum. She said, "I felt trapped, but I had to take it because I had no place to go."

The vast majority of working women cannot afford to pay for a nanny.

The rich people whom Hertz studied did not want to place their children in franchise day care centers because they understood business practices and knew that the day care center would probably make a profit at the expense of their children. They would not consider public day care because they associated that with the stigma of poverty and welfare. Some would not put their children in day care because of worries inspired by highly publicized and controversial cases of alleged sexual abuse by day care workers. If their children went to a day care center at all, it was to a high status one where their children would get a "leg up" on admission to high status elementary and high schools and an Ivy League college.

And now, as Robert Kuttner puts it, "the Wall Street scandals have reached all the way into the nursery schools." A stock analyst at Citicorp, Jack Grubman, apparently upgraded his rating of sagging AT&T stock to do his boss a favor, so that the boss, Citicorp chairman Sandy Weill, would use his influence to help Grubman get his twins into a prestigious nursery school. (AT&T's chairman served on Citicorp's board, and was a Citicorp client.) The nursery school, the 92nd street Y in Manhattan, "has a terrific record at graduating its tots into elite private grammar schools, which in turn feed prestigious prep schools and then, of course, the Ivy League. But what about the rest of America?"

The larger story, Kuttner says, "is the absence of any decent pre-school or after-school places for millions of working Americans who aren't buddies of the chairman of Citicorp." The large scale influx of working women into paid labor has not been accom-

panied by a corresponding increase in day care facilities or help with paying for day care. Welfare reform has pushed millions of low-income women out of the home into waged jobs, but neither the federal government nor the states have provided enough day care for these women. Massachusetts, one of the better states in providing day care, has 18,000 children on a waiting list for day care subsidies. The shortage of day care is so severe that four child-care providers in Boston were exempted from the city's 1998 living-wage ordinance, the first such exemption ever. Even the low $10.54 an hour mandated by the law is far more than day care teachers typically make. Child care workers frequently earn wages only slightly above minimum wage. The child care providers said that they would have to cut spaces in programs for children of low-income families if they were not granted an exemption from the law.

The lack of access to day care and after-school care has led to neglect of many children while mothers work, and sometimes to horror stories. A woman in Atlanta, Nakia Burgess, appeared in an Atlanta court on October 3, 2002, charged with murder. Her 3-year-old daughter, Ashante, died after being left in Burgess's sweltering car. Her attorney said Burgess left Ashante in the car because she couldn't find affordable day care. In his movie *Bowling for Columbine*, Michael Moore tells the story of a six year old child who shot and killed another six year old child at school. The child's mother, a welfare recipient, had been forced into a workfare program. She got up at 6:00 a.m. to take the workfare bus, which drove her 40 miles to her work. She left her son in the care of her brother, at whose home the child discovered a gun and took it to school. Moore interviewed several officials in the area who are indignant at the policy which forces a mother to be in a workfare program instead of caring for her son.

There is a global movement of caregivers from poor countries to industrialized countries. Large numbers of women from Ecuador go to Spain to care for children. In Italy, there is a large influx of women carers (called "badanti") from Eastern European countries such as Moldavia, Rumania, and the Ukraine. They are middle aged and leave their families behind. A priest is often the broker for them. They, along with couples living in as domestic servants from the Philippines, Sri Lanka, etc., got special treatment in recent immigration legislation, compared with other workers such as factory and building workers. However, as usual, this legislation purported to legalize their position with the employers paying the taxes, while in fact the employers often took it out of the immigrants' pay packet.

Historically, large numbers of women of color have gone into domestic work, including African-Americans in the North or South, Mexican-Americans in the South-

The cost to "intense" caregivers over the course of their work lives was nearly $600,000 in lost pensions, wages, and Social Security.

west, or Japanese- and Chinese-Americans on the Pacific coast. Very few African-American women now enter domestic work; most of those who do it are older women. One agency director who hires workers said, "I once asked a friend of mine who's black and she said that her mother did that already. American black people have been slaves and domestics for years. And after they scrub somebody's floor, they get up saying 'My child will never do this.'"

Parents who employ caregivers seldom admit to racial prejudice, but owners of domestic employment agencies say that many parents refuse to accept black workers. If they do accept them, they expect to pay them less than white workers. Since few African-Americans apply for domestic work, this prejudice mainly affects Caribbean women. Different parents have different prejudices. One mother said she would accept Salvadoran women, but not Guatemalans.

These prejudices about class and race create tensions in the relationships between employer and employee, and instill elitist attitudes in the children who are cared for. Even employers with egalitarian ideologies

worry that their own status as personal "dictators" cannot help influencing their children. Even an employer's egalitarian attitude cannot keep the children from growing more distant from the caregiver as they grow older. One Mexican caregiver said that the boy she looked after included her in the pictures of his family that he drew in kindergarten, but he stopped doing this when he went to first grade. She said, "The closeness he felt for me has grown cold. He sees me as an employee." The child's distance led the caretaker to withdraw in turn, and to regard him as just another employer. Children whose parents do not enforce respect toward the caregiver develop even more callous attitudes. As children get older, they come to see caregivers as their personal servants and can become quite tyrannical toward them.

Caregivers work in conditions where they have no peer companionship. They are often given little or no autonomy by their employers, and work in "aching isolation and boredom." These harsh working conditions can lead to depression. A substantial minority of the caregivers whom Julia Wrigley interviewed seemed sad.

Media discussions about the "supermom" who has it all — a highly paid and satisfying career and well cared for children — are almost always talking about white and at least middle class women. In reality, that supermom is having trouble juggling career and children. But the vast majority of working women cannot afford to pay for a nanny. Most of the maids and baby-sitters for the supermoms never advance to a well paid job. Forty-six percent of all working women earn less than $10,000 a year.

The Costs of Caretaking

MOST CORPORATIONS HAVE NOT CHANGED their expectations or structures to accommodate employees' caretaking responsibilities. "Thus, career women postpone childbearing until they have been promoted to higher ranks in their firms." Furthermore, the corporations prevent women from taking collective action against policies that impede their progress "by making individual deals and special arrangements with the few women who are seen as indispensable to the organization." In order to advance in highly paid careers at large corporations, women often work 60 and 70 hours a week. They frequently complain of ulcers, fatigue, and stress.

It is a class system, with gender expectations, that forces the trade-off of a woman working or hiring another woman. After all, the child care could be done instead by stay-at-home husbands. As the system stands now, however, women in highly paid careers have to hire help in order to be freed to advance in their careers. Thus, progress for some women is bought at the expense of equal progress for other women. "Dual career couples have an indirect but material interest in maintaining an unstable, low-wage pool of labor." There is a small boom in the employment market for unskilled labor due to the increasing numbers of career women.

When most workers take time off from work because of caretaking responsibilities, they feel the pinch. Three-quarters of caregivers for older people work full or part-time, and half of those who work are making some sort of work-related adjustment. The most frequent adjustment is to go to work late, leave early, or take time off from work. Other adjustments include: taking a leave of absence, dropping back to part-time or taking a less demanding job; losing job benefits; turning down a promotion; choosing early retirement; or giving up work entirely.

A substantial number of adults who provide care to a parent, age 65 or older, report symptoms of depression. Two out of three informal caregivers are in ill health. Routine caregiver tasks can cause acute and chronic physical strain, particularly when caregivers lack appropriate training. Although most caregiving is short-term, prolonged responsibilities take a toll on the emotional and physical health of caregivers. Caregivers worry about not having enough time to spend with their spouse, partner, or children, or by themselves.

Caregivers for older people in the United States spend an average of $171 a month on out-of-pocket expenses — or approximately $1.5 billion nation-wide per month — for groceries, medications, home modifications, and the like, for their family member. "This is the equivalent of an IRA

each year for many women who may not have a pension through their workplace." A MetLife study estimated that the cost to "intense" caregivers over the course of their work lives was nearly $600,000 in lost pensions, wages, and Social Security. "As a result of all this, women are more likely than men to face poverty in retirement: 12 percent vs. 7 percent. As the number of women who provide informal caregiving increases, the number of poor older women will inevitably increase."

The U.S. Department of Commerce estimated the value of housework in the U.S. at $1.5 trillion a year. And it is not only caretakers who lose money; corporations lose about $11 billion a year because of absenteeism, turnover, and lost productivity among full time employees who care for elderly people. On an international level, the UN Human Development Report of 1995 estimated the value of women's unwaged work worldwide at U.S. $11 trillion.

Welfare Reform and Caretaking

THE 1996 FEDERAL WELFARE REFORM ACT required most welfare recipients to do waged work or workfare and set a 5 year lifetime limit on receipt of welfare.* Some feminists opposed the law, including the leadership of NOW, but most feminists either did not oppose it or actively supported it. The women's movement was organized mainly by middle class women who were trying to enter the job market on an equal footing with men, and many of them assumed that it was good for welfare mothers to get into the job market. They did not look closely at what this involves for poor single mothers and did not take the trouble to ask welfare recipients what they themselves wanted. Most welfare mothers that I know want the same thing for themselves that middle class women want — a college degree that will lead to a fulfilling career that pays well enough to support a family, and high quality day care for their children. But most welfare mothers can't afford to go to college and don't have careers — they have jobs that don't pay enough to support a family. The TANF program won't allow them to attend more than one year of higher education, and that has to be vocational training.

Conservatives who talk about family values want middle class mothers to stay home and care for their children, but they don't apply those same family values to poor women. They do not view this as a contradiction because affluent women are not supported by the state, and they believe that the state is justified in requiring welfare recipients to do waged work, particularly since so many middle class women have entered the labor market and women now make up about half of the waged labor force. The percentage of mothers working full time rose from 40 percent in the early 1960s to 54 percent in the early 1990s, while the percentage of those who worked part time increased from 5 percent to 12 percent. Those mothers who are working say, "I have to work. Why can't welfare mothers work too?"

Even though a majority of mothers are now in the work force, several polls have found that most Americans believe that women with children — especially young children — should stay home and rear them. But the picture is different when it comes to welfare recipients. Although most Americans believe that welfare recipients should work, they also believe that welfare reform cannot be deemed a success if mothers are still in poverty, and they believe that women should be provided with the supports that enable them to work.

Polls show that the vast majority of Americans support government assistance for the poor and believe that the government has a responsibility to guarantee every citizen food to eat and a place to sleep. A recent poll showed that 92.7 percent of voters considered fighting hunger "an important issue." The answers that pollsters get depend upon the questions they ask. When welfare reform is measured only in terms of making people less "dependent" and more "self-sufficient," then getting large numbers of people off the rolls looks like a success to people, regardless of how or why they left the rolls or what happens to them afterwards. Government officials continue to trumpet this success and newspapers faith-

*The Act was called the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, and the program it created was called Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). It replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and gave states block grants to administer the TANF program.

fully quote them, so most Americans do not know that large numbers of people who have left the rolls do not have food to eat or a place to sleep.

The present TANF law requires 30 hours of work a week from single mothers. President Bush has proposed extending that to 40 hours a week, and requiring a still larger percentage of recipients to work. However, he has not proposed additional funding for day care for the children of those mothers who work. The TANF bill was supposed to be reauthorized by October 1, 2002. However, Congress allowed the present bill to remain in force until March 31, 2003 and will consider reauthorization next year.

Most Americans do not know that large numbers of people who have left the welfare rolls do not have food to eat or a place to sleep.

The House has approved a bill that includes the President's proposal. The proposals of the Senate Finance Committee were only marginally better. There is no reason to hope for a more humane bill from the new Republican-controlled Congress. However, some big city mayors and state governors are concerned about the fact that the people left on the welfare rolls are harder to place in jobs. New York City officials report that more than half of their public assistance cases involve individuals who are capable of only limited work or no work at all because of addiction, depression and other disabilities, domestic violence, and AIDS. They want the Congress and the President to accept rehabilitation as a work activity, but doubt that this will happen. The so-called "compassionate conservatives" are not that compassionate.

The TANF bill allowed states to require work of mothers of infants, and many states did this. Massachusetts got a waiver from federal requirements and does not force mothers to go to work until their children are school age, but both the governor and the legislator are trying to reduce the age.

The current feminist split over work and caretaking in welfare echoes the original feminist split about the nature of the original ADC (Aid to Dependent Children) program in 1935. Dorothy Roberts says that besides its misguided faith in the family wage, the welfare movement, initiated by the Progressive Party, "was flawed by the elitism of the privileged, white activist network that led it. As a result, a defining aspect of its welfare vision was the social control of poor immigrant families and the neglect of Black women." The Progressives mistakenly believed that immigrant women made up a disproportionate share of deserted wives and illegitimate mothers. They used welfare programs to supervise and discipline recipients to conform to "American" family standards. Aid generally was conditioned on compliance with "suitable home" provisions and often administered by juvenile court judges who made punitive judgments. Black single mothers, on the other hand, were simply excluded, in keeping with the Progressives' support of racial segregation.

The virtual exclusion of Black women from welfare in the beginning resulted in the loss of valuable insights from the Black women's movement. Black women activists of the era also relied on motherhood as a political platform, but since they had not been able to rely on the male wage, they "eschewed the viability of the family wage and women's economic dependence on men. Instead, they accepted married women's employment as a necessity, advocating assistance for working mothers." Black women's organizations also stressed the value of mothers' work in the home.

The New Deal excluded Blacks from social insurance by excluding agricultural workers and domestic servants, "in a deliberate effort to maintain a Black menial labor caste in the South. Whites feared that Social Security would make both recipients and those freed from the burden of supporting dependents less willing to accept low wages."

The War on Poverty gave rise to the National Welfare Rights Organization, a grassroots movement composed of welfare mothers and advocates. This movement secured entitlements to benefits, raised ben-

efit levels, and increased accessibility to the program. As a result, by 1967 the welfare caseload that had once been eighty-six percent white had become forty-six percent nonwhite. However, it was a Pyrrhic victory because Blacks got themselves included in a stigmatized, means-tested program rather than the universal, non-stigmatized Social Security. "As AFDC became increasingly associated with Black mothers already stereotyped as lazy, irresponsible, and overly fertile, it became increasingly burdened with behavior modification, work requirements, and reduced effective benefit levels."

Over three million children and their parents receive benefits from Social Security because a working parent has died, retired, or is disabled. A disproportionate number of these are white because the areas that many black people worked in — agriculture and domestic work — were not covered, or they did not have enough quarters of work to qualify them for Social Security. The AFDC program was always vulnerable because it was means tested. Conservatives would like to make Social Security a means tested program, as a way to cut back on the program. We need to be alert for that strategy and fight against it.

Since the welfare reform of 1996, whites have been leaving the rolls at a faster rate than Blacks, partly because Blacks are discriminated against in the job market, and partly because whites have had better educational advantages. Women of color now make up a majority of the welfare caseload, and this has subjected the program to even more racism.

President George W. Bush has proposed spending $300 million a year to encourage TANF recipients to marry, on the assumption that marriage will provide them with enough income to get off the welfare rolls, and will in addition be good for their moral character. His proposal reflects the "male breadwinner" model on which welfare was originally predicated, yet his proposal to require 40 hours a week work from welfare recipients violates that model.

Choosing To Stay Home: Is It False Consciousness?

WELFARE OFFICIALS SOMETIMES TELL recipients that they could get a job taking care of other people's children. Recipients often answer, "Why can't we care for our own children?" When people tell welfare mothers that waged work is good for them because it presumably leads to "self-sufficiency," eliminates "dependence," and provides a good role model for the children, I am reminded of Albert Camus' statement:

> The welfare of the people has always been the alibi of tyrants. It serves the further advantage of giving the servants of tyranny a good conscience. It would be easy, however, to destroy that good conscience by saying to them, "If you want the welfare of the people, ask them what they want and what they don't want.

Waged work is good for mothers only if it is preferable to the alternatives. Many women in Stalinist countries would have preferred to stay home rather than work long hours in factories. Stalinist countries, which wanted women in the work force, glorified women workers while minimizing the importance of their child caring tasks. Hungary, for example, claimed to be liberating women by giving them equal status to men. Yet they not only expected full-time work of women; they also expected women to do all the caretaking work. Women now had the right to engage in productive work, "but they must not make the mistake of losing themselves in the muscular, productionist, heroic (male) proletariat: to be a woman is to nurture children (and do housework)." One of the reasons for the violent rejection of the Hungarian regime in 1956, in addition to material hardship and injustice, was resentment about the treatment of women and the demand to "give the mother back to the family."

Many women working in the sweat shops of Sri Lanka would prefer to have a generous dowry to buy a good marriage. Sri Lanka is one of the many Third World societies that adopted economic liberalization policies in the mid- to late-twentieth century. This has led to the global feminization of labor where factories have employed primarily female work forces. Sri Lanka set up free trade zones and hired mostly unmarried women migrants from villages. The free trade zone got the reputation of being a "city of easy women or easy virtue."

Women, particularly village women, are considered the mothers of the nation and the locus of tradition and culture. Politicians who opposed the policy of establishing two hundred export-oriented factories throughout the country tried to discredit the garment factories by claiming that "our innocent girls are sewing underwear for white women." This claim had potent symbolic significance because most Sri Lankans consider underwear both sexual and dirty. White woman are considered sexually immoral in Sri Lanka.

The work itself is exhausting. Many women suffer physical pain such as weight loss, back pain, headaches and dizziness, respiratory problems from inhaling cotton dust, and other ailments. Factories are often stifling hot, especially during the warmer seasons, and women often complain of feeling faint, and sometimes do faint. Mental pain is caused by the lack of social respect garment workers receive and the crude manner in which some managers treat workers. Many women agree to marriage matches they normally would refuse so they can quit and receive the state benefits women are entitled to if they stop working in order to marry. Some women probably marry men who hit and scold them. (This is an example of how government policy can force women into abusive marriages. The regressive welfare policies of the U.S. government have also forced women who have no other economic alternative into abusive marriages.)

In Sri Lanka, women are expected to bring a dowry to their marriage. A large dowry can lead to a good marriage. Women sometimes choose garment factory jobs over alternatives because they need the money for their dowries. However, the very fact of working in a garment factory may prevent their making a good marriage because of the stigma of factory work. Sri Lanka newspaper marriage proposals sometimes disqualify garment workers with the phrase "no garment girls."

Jane Lewis points out that "even if good-quality, affordable child care were to be provided overnight, it is not clear that all women would want to work full-time." A British Labor Force Survey found that ninety percent of women with children who work part-time do not want full-time work. This choice may of course be influenced by the lack of good child care provision relative to that of most other European countries. The Netherlands' recently-initiated policy of treating single mothers as workers rather than as mothers failed at the local level because "neither social workers charged with its implementation nor the mothers themselves believed that they should be pushed into the labor market."

Waged work is good for mothers only if it is preferable to the alternatives.

Some feminists believe that women who choose to stay home to care for their children rather than to build a career for themselves have not reached an optimal level of feminist consciousness. Ann Orloff, a professor of Sociology at Northwestern University, believes that the ideal goal for a welfare state is to make it possible for women to form autonomous households without having to marry or maintain other family relationships. Yet she believes that it is not a bad thing to require work of welfare recipients. Lucie White, Professor of Law at Harvard University, believes that a work-based safety net is preferable to cash grants to mothers because

> Even low-wage work, has the potential to enhance a single mother's feelings of self-esteem, competency, and social connection. It can give her a bulwark of social and institutional support against the risk of intimate violence. It can provide positive role models for her children.

White does not believe that universal child care should be an entitlement, but should be provided by a mix of community groups and government facilities and subsidies. She does not like the "old, rigidly rights-based notion." White's dislike of entitlements is similar to the conservative efforts to end entitlements and to end people's expectations of entitlements. David Stockman, President Reagan's budget director, said, "There are *no* entitlements, *period!*"

White also advocates a means-tested income support program, as a back-up to a work program.

In defense of her support for forced work for welfare recipients, White calls up the memory of Johnnie Tillmon, an African-American woman who was one of the grassroots leaders of the National Welfare Rights Organization. She had always worked at low wage jobs since she was a child. Tillmon and the other welfare mothers in the NWRO wanted a welfare system that would allow them to be workers and mothers at the same time. "They wanted decent working conditions and decent pay, and they wanted some extra help when they got sick or could not find a good job or needed some time off of work to take care of their children."

White does not mention that in addition to the above demands, Johnnie Tillmon and her colleagues in the NWRO also wanted a Guaranteed Annual Income (GAI). The GAI they want would be universal, not means-tested. Johnnie Tillmon and her NWRO colleagues knew that means-tested programs almost always carry stigma since they do not have the political support of the middle class. Lucie White, on the other hand, calls for an income support program that is means tested.

Mothers should be given opportunities to enter the job market if they so choose, but they should not be forced to do so.

Barbara Bergmann and Heidi Hartmann, co-chairs of the Economists' Policy Group for Women's Issues, advocated a welfare program that encouraged job-holding for mothers who received AFDC. They argued that mothers could support their families, even with a minimum-wage job, if they had health care, child care, Earned Income Tax Credit, food stamps, and housing assistance. For unemployed parents, they proposed a fallback package , consisting mostly of vouchers for necessities. I argued against their proposal, pointing out that the majority of welfare recipients would be consigned to low-wage jobs because of their low level of education and job skills, and the supports that Bergmann and Hartmann called for are not nearly enough to bring their families out of poverty. Child care, housing subsidies, food stamps, and medical care were never adequate to the need and they have been cut back since the 1980s. Further, I argued that their call for vouchers as a fallback program revealed their distrust of the poor. I said,

> Since welfare began, there have always been policy-makers who believed that the poor couldn't be trusted to spend their own money and needed supervision. In fact, the vast majority of the poor are just as capable of spending their money wisely as are the vast majority of the affluent. The poor correctly perceive vouchers as an insult.

Bergmann and Hartmann later retracted their proposal for vouchers, admitting that it was not a good idea. But they still held to their belief that most welfare recipients should be forced to get into the job market. I believe, on the other hand, that mothers should be given opportunities for the education and training that would enable them to get a job that will support their families and they should be helped to enter the job market if they so choose, but they should not be forced to do so. Because employment is unpredictable and caretaking needs are various, a one-size-fits-all work policy should not be imposed.

Even before work became an enforced requirement, welfare recipients always did waged work, entering the labor market when they could find a job and arrange child care and leaving when they lost the job, got sick, or had child care responsibilities. Before the 1996 welfare reform, 56 percent of recipients left the rolls within a year, and only 18 percent stayed on continuously for more than five years. Many welfare recipients cannot work because of disabilities, the need to care for a disabled child, or the need to recover from domestic violence. It is possible that the same proportion of welfare mothers are working since TANF as worked before. Schram and Soss speculate that the decline in welfare rolls since TANF may be due to fewer people entering the rolls be-

cause of stricter eligibility rules, harsher treatment of applicants, and increased stigma against even applying for help. In addition, legal immigrants were removed from the rolls.

Those feminists who support a policy of expanded cash grants to mothers, sufficient to lift them out of poverty, define caregiving as *work* which should be compensated just as all other work is compensated. A group of feminists called the Women's Committee of One Hundred has called for a caregivers' income. Gwendolyn Mink gives the following rationale for this:

> Far from a sign of dependence on government, a caregivers' income would provide mothers with economic means in their own right. This would promote equality in father-mother relations both because it would unmask the economic value of mothers' side of the sexual division of labor and because it would enable mothers to exit unhappy, subordinating, or violent relations with the fathers of their children. It also would nurture equality among citizens by establishing that it is not only market work that should earn a living wage but also the caring work upon which the market depends for workers. In turn, a caregivers' income would promote equality among women — between middle-class married caregivers who enjoy social and political support when they choose to work in the home raising children and poor unmarried caregivers whom welfare policy now compels to choose wages over children.

Mink helped her mother, Rep. Patsy Mink of Hawaii (now deceased), to craft a bill that would improve the TANF program enormously when it was reauthorized. Welfare activists lobbied for the Mink bill in Congress, but it was far too progressive a bill to get majority support in that body.

Juggling Work and Caretaking

NEITHER THE BUSINESS WORLD NOR THE government makes it easy for people to juggle work and caretaking. The federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), enacted in 1993, allows only 12 weeks of *unpaid* leave during any 12-month period for the birth and care of a new child (birth, adoption, or foster care) or for an immediate family member with a serious health condition, or to take medical leave. It applies to public agencies and to private sector employees in firms that employ 50 or more employees. The Bush Administration opposes an amendment to FMLA that would allow parents to attend school conferences or doctor's appointments.

The Bush Administration also wants to repeal a regulation that lets states provide unemployment pay to workers who take unpaid time off to care for a newborn child. Labor Department officials propose to repeal the Birth and Adoption Unemployment Rule in order to protect states' unemployment insurance trust funds for laid-off workers, even though no state has chosen to pay for leave with those funds.

California is the first and so far the only state in the country to pass a Paid Family Leave Act. Beginning July 1, 2004, California workers will receive up to 6 weeks of paid leave per year to care for a new child (birth, adoption, or foster care) or seriously ill family member (parent, child, spouse, or domestic partner). The benefit will replace up to 55 percent of wages, up to a maximum of $728 a week in 2004.

Twenty-six states offer tax credits to corporations to support on-site day care or child-care subsidies, but only a small number of U.S. companies cashed in these credits, largely because they already had so many tax write-offs that they didn't need the perk. The National Women's Law Center in Washington, D.C., says the tax credits should go directly to working parents, not to corporations who don't seem to need them.

Some large corporations have on-site child care centers, but most do not. Some company centers are available to employees only in emergencies as when a child is sick or when schools are closed. This is the policy of day care centers run by Citigroup, the company that pledged a million dollars to the 92nd Street Y in exchange for helping Jack Grubman get his twins into the school. Commenting on the policy of emergency-only day care, Rebecca Mead says:

> Backup child care is a fast-growing segment of the thirty-billion-dollar child care industry, which is no surprise, since it is the kind of parent-friendly policy a company can introduce without having to contemplate anything quite so parent-friendly as full-time child care.

A few large corporations have initiated some benefits for employees who care for aged relatives. About one-fifth of companies in the U.S. provide telephone resources and referral services on care for the elderly, up from 15 percent in 1998. Some companies have gone beyond this to offer full-time geriatric care managers to advise employees, and are providing in-home assessments by geriatric specialists. The United Auto Workers and Ford Motor Company jointly set up an assessment program.

But these programs are only a drop in the bucket of what is needed to solve the problems that workers are having in juggling work and caretaking. Perhaps the heaviest burden falls on those people who are part of what has been dubbed "the sandwich generation" — people who need to care for an elderly relative as well as children. With the combined effects of couples waiting longer to have children and a growing elderly population, "more than half of working Americans will find themselves in this situation in the next 10 years." Perhaps the most severe problem in balancing jobs and caretaking is the lack of time. Juliet Schor talks of the overworked American. Work time has been increasing for twenty years. Nationwide, people report their leisure time has declined by more than one third since the early 1970s. Parents are devoting less attention to their children. Stress is on the rise, as well as work-related illnesses. Increasing numbers of people are sleep-deprived, getting between 60 and 90 minutes a night less than they should for their health. This is particularly affecting women, who are coping with the double load of work and caretaking.

Many people are holding down two, or even three jobs because of low wages. Nearly one-third of all U.S. workers earn wages which, on a full-time schedule, are not enough to lift them out of poverty. An official of the Service Employees Union in New England said that nearly one-third of their nursing home employees now have two full-time jobs. Schor estimates that the average employed person is now on the job an additional 163 hours — or the equivalent of an extra month — a year. Weekly schedules are also getting longer, by about one hour a week. People are working more overtime, partly because employers want to avoid hiring new people and giving them benefits. Companies are pressuring workers to work longer hours. "For the production and nonsupervisory employees who make up 80 percent of the labor force, these demands have been substantial. . . . Just to reach their 1973 standard of living, they must work 245 more hours, or 6-plus extra weeks a year."

The United States stands out among rich countries in its failure to guarantee vacation time for workers. Few people in the U.S. have more than two weeks of vacation, and many workers have less. France, on the other hand, legally requires companies to give workers five weeks of vacation. France also has a legally-mandated 35 hour work week, although employers find ways to subvert it and the conservative Chirac government wants to rescind the law.

Ironically, at the same time that the majority of people are overworked, a substantial minority are working fewer hours than they want to or not working at all. Companies are hiring part-time workers to avoid paying benefits, and are hiring workers on a temporary contingent basis. This affects many welfare recipients who can only find part-time or temporary work and are not able to support their families. Those who have hit the five year time limit (and a shorter limit in some states) are without any job.

Although women have cut back on the time they spend on housework since entering the job market, housework is still far more difficult, labor-intensive, and inefficient than it needs to be. In a society that values individual solutions to problems, people do not devise or expect collective solutions. The government provides some household help to older people such as homemaker service, communal meals, and meals on wheels, but not to parents of young children.

A Comparative View

THE UNITED STATES IS FAR BEHIND most European countries in its provisions for caretaking, and in alleviating poverty. Karen Christopher studied how tax and transfer systems and employment supports in nine Western nations affect the poverty rates of mothers.* In all the countries she studied, mothers are more likely to live in poverty

than fathers, but this is most pronounced in the United States, "where mothers' poverty rate is almost 60 percent higher than that of fathers." The U.S. tax and transfer system is by far the least effective in reducing the poverty of married and single mothers, lowering their poverty rate by only 13 to 14 percent, as compared to Sweden (89 percent), France (86 percent), and the Netherlands (73 percent). Both married and single mothers generally have the lowest poverty rates in Sweden, Finland, and France and those countries have by far the most generous employment supports for mothers.

Many people are holding down two, or even three jobs because of low wages.

Overall, Finland and Sweden are generally the most effective welfare states in reducing mothers' and single mothers' poverty using social transfers, tax credits, and employment supports. Both countries have individualized their tax systems, eliminating tax differences based on family status. Single mothers are often privileged in social programs such as subsidized child care programs, housing allowance, and child support advance payments (in which the state pays child support when the absent parent cannot or does not).

A Gender Analysis of Welfare States

FEMINIST SCHOLARS HAVE CREATED different typologies of welfare states with a focus on gender. The male-breadwinner or "caregiver" model is not considered to be ideal because it leads to women's dependence on men. It includes social policies such as entitlement based on the breadwinner/caretaker family and private, unpaid care labor. The caregiver model does little to facilitate women's employment but grants cash assistance to single mothers without requiring participation in waged work.

The model that fosters women's paid employment is called the "parent/worker" model. The countries which follow the parent/worker model provide generous supports to working parents and also provide single mothers with social assistance programs including cash and subsidized housing. Sweden gives both fathers and mothers parental leave of up to one and a half years from the birth of a child, and gives parents 60 days a year of leave in order to care for a sick child. Finland gives a paid maternity allowance to either the father or mother for 158 work days, and provides leave for parents to care for a sick child.

France provides universal child care. All French 4- and 5-year-olds are enrolled in the Ecole Maternelle system, as are more than 90 percent of 3-year-olds and 30 percent of 2-year-olds. This system is "widely regarded as the jewel of the French educational system." France has attracted international attention for its system of early education.

France provides generous benefits to single mother families until the child is 3, after which it is assumed that the mother will enter employment. It also pays part of the cost for hiring someone to care for young children in the home when the parents are working, and provides a parental child care allowance to a parent to care for a seriously ill or handicapped child.

The caregiver model is followed by the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Germany. The United Kingdom is supportive of mothers' caregiving without labor force participation (as is Australia, but to a lesser extent). In these countries, single mothers can receive state support to engage in caregiving until their children are sixteen. However, this is beginning to change in the United Kingdom. In 1997 the Conservative government introduced an "obligation to work" in the social security system, accompanied by a plan to help mothers with job search and job training. The present Labor government has continued the emphasis on greater labor participation in its "welfare to work" program, modeled to some extent on the U.S. welfare reform.

In Germany, unmarried mothers are not

*Her information is taken from the Luxembourg Income Study. The nations and the dates of the information are: Australia (1994); Canada (1994); Finland (1995); France (1994); Germany (1994); the Netherlands (1994); Sweden (1995); the United Kingdom (1995); and the United States (1994).

expected to work until after their children are twelve, but German social assistance levels are low so some single mothers work for pay. Traditional beliefs about women staying home to care for children are still strong in Germany. The German corporate world is heavily male-dominated, and male bosses routinely ask women whether and when they plan to bear children.

The Netherlands has traditionally believed in the male-breadwinner model and encouraged women to stay home to care for children. However, this has been changing recently and women are now encouraged to get into the paid work force. Sixty-six percent of women work part-time, but only six percent of mothers with children under ten work full-time.

The Netherlands provides a minimum income for everybody who has inadequate financial resources. People receiving National Assistance are obliged to look for work, but those responsible for the care of children aged under five can be exempted from a work requirement. Cash assistance in the Netherlands carries less stigma than in the United Kingdom, Canada, and the U.S. because the entire society is more supportive of caregiving.

Japan has traditionally put all of the burden for caretaking on to women's shoulders, with few government supports. That changed, however, when middle aged working women, severely burdened by the lack of facilities for care of the aged, mobilized and struck for their demands. This forced the ruling Liberal Democratic Party to introduce reforms in the 1990s, including long-term care insurance and support services for care of the aged. Younger women took a different path of resistance — they postponed or avoided marriage and/or childbirth in order to pursue their careers and work. This resulted in a decline in fertility below what the government considers necessary to sustain further economic growth, prompting the government to increase child care facilities and other family support services.

Nancy Fraser has a vision of a more radical model of a welfare system, called the "dual-earner/dual-carer" model. In this system, women and men would share equally in both paid employment and caring labor. She argues that the so-called "mommy track" for women inevitably disadvantages women in building a career. Only when men share equally in caregiving will this disparity be abolished. She says, "the real free riders in the current system are not poor solo mothers . . . (but) men of all classes who shirk care work and domestic labor, and especially corporations who free ride on the labor of working people, both underpaid and unpaid."

Getting Fathers Involved in Caretaking

SOME COUNTRIES HAVE USED parental leave policies to encourage fathers to take a more active role in caretaking, but the fathers' response has not been enthusiastic. Sweden and Norway have paternal leave policies in which couples lose paid leave time when husbands do not take a portion of the leave time. Parental leave has been offered in Finland, France, Germany and Denmark, but few fathers have taken advantage of it.

Welfare reform policies in the U.S. seek to bring fathers back into women's lives by forcing them to pay child-support and punishing them if they do not. TANF requires mothers to identify the fathers of their children and punishes them by reducing the welfare grant if they do not. In general a mother must file a support order against him, whether or not she wants him financially involved in her family's life. TANF law also pressures mothers to grant joint custody or visitation rights to biological fathers, and has encouraged states to set up programs to get fathers involved with the family and to promote marriage of the mothers. Gwendolyn Mink points out that these programs "force poor single mothers to compromise their independence and even to put their rights to their children at risk. . . [and they] invade recipients' sexual privacy."

Part-time Work

MANY DEVELOPED NATIONS have promoted part-time work as a strategy for reconciling mothers' increased labor force participation with their caretaking responsibilities. Almost one out of every three working women in the European Union has a part-time job, compared with only one out of twenty men. The Dutch government has promoted part-time work as the model for

both women and men. According to this model, men as well as women should share paid work as well as unpaid care work. Despite the government's stated goal of equalizing men's and women's work, Kremer comments that "the rates fell far short of the government's utopian vision in which men would do half of the caring." Furthermore, 32 percent of women work less than 20 hours a week and many would like to work more hours and have better jobs with stable contracts.

The Dutch might be on the right track in their utopian vision to have both men and women in part-time work and have them share domestic work equally. If both men and women worked shorter hours and part-time work was comparable to full-time work in pay and benefits, with a stable contract, then women and men could share caretaking equally. Jobs for Justice and the contingent work movement in the U.S. have addressed the issue of securing stability in part-time work, and the 1997 United Parcel Service strike was a significant beginning towards workers achieving this.

Working Out Solutions

GLOBALIZATION HAS LED TO DEREGULATION, an emphasis on market forces, and cutbacks in welfare provisions around the world. European countries often point to the U.S. as the model for accomplishing such cutbacks. Not all countries, however, have fallen in line. Denmark and Sweden have largely resisted pressure to restructure, though coverage is thinner and lower in quality than before. France and Finland have cut back on some child care services, but have partly supplanted them with Home Care Allowances for parents of children under 3. The harshest cutbacks have been in the United States, Canada, and the Netherlands, although workfare and other neoliberal policies have met resistance from both mothers and welfare officials in the Netherlands.

The countries that have had the fewest cutbacks are those with the most highly developed services and income supports. When people have high expectations of services from the government, they continue to demand them and governments cut them back at their peril. Social Security in the United States is an example of this; it is sometimes referred to as "the third rail" of politics — touch it and you die.

Improving support for caretaking needs to proceed on several fronts. We need to: restructure work; have more vacation time; share domestic work equally between mother and father; and have more support services. We need to value caretaking more highly and to reward it, both for parents and for workers in institutions. We need to work for a shorter work week, a shorter work day, and more flexible work arrangements. We need a flexible family leave policy that allows for the exigencies of caretaking, and we need paid family leave because we can't afford to lose wages. We need more respite care so people who care for children, the aged, and disabled relatives can get some relief from the exhausting work. We need a universal guaranteed annual income. We need universal day care similar to the French system. We need single payer health care.

We also need tax and pension systems that do not discriminate against women. Housewives in the U.S. can draw pensions only as dependents of their husbands. Israel included housewives in their own right in its old age insurance program in the 1990s, in response to pressure from women's organizations and female legislators.

The International Wages for Housework Campaign (WFH), a network of women in Third World and industrialized countries, began organizing in the early 1970s. They demand that "the unwaged work that women do be recognized as work in official government statistics, and for this work to be paid." Their International Women Count Network includes more than 2,000 non-governmental organizations from the North and South. In 1995, the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing called on governments to calculate the value of women's unpaid work and include it in conventional measures of national output, such as the Gross Domestic Product. So far, only Trinidad and Tobago and Spain have passed legislation mandating the new accounting, but many other countries have undertaken surveys to determine how much time is spent on unpaid household work.

The countries with strong welfare provisions have strong unions. Improvements in this country's caretaking provisions will

depend partly on union organizing, as well as on feminist organizations and other advocacy organizations such as the Children's Defense Fund, AARP, National Council on Aging, Family Caregiver Alliance, National Alliance for Caregiving, Grey Panthers, Older Women's League, and welfare rights organizations. There have been some promising beginnings. Some of the workers who have been successfully organized by Service Employees International Union (SEIU) recently include:

- Thousands of health care workers at Catholic Healthcare West, the largest hospital chain in California.
- 80,000 home care workers in Southern California.
- 604 people in Milwaukee, Wisconsin who care for their parents, employed by the nonprofit agency New Health Services (NHS). This was the first large-scale organizing in Milwaukee at the low end of the wage scale since the 1997 launch of "W-2," Wisconsin's welfare reform system initiated by then-governor Tommy Thompson (now director of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services). Many former welfare recipients are employed by NHS. These workers were paid at the rate of $7.10 an hour, with no benefits of any kind. After their union was certified, they went on to negotiate a contract for higher wages, improved training, health insurance, and pension benefits.

The Labor Project for Working Families was founded in 1992 by the California Bay Area Labor Councils, AFL-CIO. The Project brings unions and advocacy groups together to promote family-friendly legislation. They put out a newsletter which gives information about organizing projects for family friendly policies all over the nation. They also maintain the nation's only database of information and contract language on labor and such work/family issues as child care, elder care, family leave, alternative work schedules, and other family-friendly policies. They helped to win paid family leave for working Californians.

A review of Labor Project newsletters shows that unions are concerned about caretaking issues and active in negotiating benefits. Both the United Steelworkers of America and the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners passed resolutions on family and work at their national conventions. Teachers' unions in Massachusetts, Wisconsin, Philadelphia, California, and Seattle — among other places — have won family-friendly benefits. The California Council of Machinists won break time for lactation. State employees in California, Washington, and Ohio have won benefits, such as dependent care subsidies, paid parental leave, and including domestic partners in sick leave benefits. The California Nurses Association and the Massachusetts Nurses Association won limits on mandatory overtime. And the Communication Workers of America won similar limits on mandatory overtime from Verizon.

The United States is far behind most European countries in its provisions for caretaking.

We cannot expect much help with family-friendly policies from Congress, or from the Bush Administration. Conservative Republicans and Democrats, along with centrist Democrats, are more preoccupied with making war and squelching civil liberties than with meeting the real needs of families. Addressing these needs involves substantial challenges to the status quo: breaking down the sex roles of caregiving, forcing corporations to shorten work hours and pay living wages, and pressuring government to serve the interests of the vast majority of the population. We will have to continue the struggle for humane caretaking policies through grassroots pressure from below — in our unions, in our cities and towns, and in our states. We must try to get the support of the millions of people who are working too hard and too long and earning too little and who need help with the care of their children and their parents.

Footnotes are available on the *New Politics* Web site, **http://www.wpunj.edu/newpol**.

Transnational Feminism and The Struggle for Global Justice

Johanna Brenner

CAPITALIST GLOBALIZATION HAS HAD a profound yet contradictory impact on women's lives and on the possibilities for contesting male domination in both the core and periphery of the world capitalist system. On the one hand, older forms of male dominance are being undermined; on the other, women's life conditions are in many respects growing worse.

Capitalist penetration deep into the rural periphery has disrupted the settled economies which supported "classic patriarchy" — a system in which men's power rests economically and politically on male property ownership and household headship.[1] In the cities of the periphery, the "fordist gender regime" — the male breadwinner/female housewife household — which had emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, the "golden age" of economic development in some parts of the Third World, is also crumbling as male wage and salary earners no longer earn a family wage. At the same time, based in part on women's incorporation into wage labor and their access to literacy and education, feminism has emerged as an organized political force. Women from the global South are not only mounting challenges in their own countries but are participating in a global feminist movement that is capable of affecting the policies of transnational organizations such as the UN and the European Union.[2]

Counterbalancing these developments, women and children, even more than men, are victimized by global capitalist restructuring. Economic insecurity and impoverishment, exposure to toxics, degradation of water, high infant and maternal mortality rates, forced migration, increased hours spent in paid and unpaid work are only some of the indicators of women's burdens worldwide.[3] Women's organizations that have emerged to defend women of the working class and the rural and urban poor find themselves caught in a contradictory field of power relations defined by three contesting forces: national states, religious fundamentalist movements, and the global centers managing the neo-liberal agenda.

Third World governments are male-dominated, often inefficient, plagued by cronyism, and sometimes corrupt; and the pressures of structural adjustment programs imposed on them by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank have certainly aggravated these tendencies. Their failure to deliver on the promised benefits of "free-market" policies has spurred the growth of religious fundamentalist political movements that target feminism and challenge governmental power. National governments respond to these movements with both political repression and accommodation, primarily at women's expense — for example, ceding local civil authority to religious courts and leaders. Such policies shore up traditional patriarchy in its social control functions while the capitalist transformation of local economies deprives women of whatever protection and security patriarchal systems did provide.[4]

In contrast to the weakened and male-dominated national state and the fundamentalist movements, key institutions of the neo-liberal order, pre-eminently the World Bank but also First World government agencies such as USAID, proclaim their support for modernization and democratization. Offering resources for women's economic development efforts, social services, and health care organizations, the managers of the new world economic order present themselves as allies of liberal feminism. Central feminist aspirations — full

---

JOHANNA BRENNER *is coordinator of women's studies at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon. She is the author of* Women and the Politics of Class *(Monthly Review, 2000).*

political citizenship, equal access to education and occupational opportunity, and an end to the culturally and legally authorized right of men to control women's bodies, sexuality, and reproductive potential — are fully compatible with neo-liberalism. The forces that have the most to lose from the institutionalization of liberal feminism's political goals are not the World Bank, the WTO, or the transnational corporations. The major forces contesting feminism, for example, within development policy circles and the international conferences through which the United Nations attempts to regulate development policy are not those of the new world economic order, but organizations representing groups threatened by the loss of older forms of patriarchal political and economic power: Islamic governments, conservative Muslim non-governmental organizations, the Vatican and Catholic organizations, the Protestant evangelicals, and the International Right to Life Committee.[5]

Of course, a neo-liberal economic order will never usher in gender equality. But, just as capitalism offers more room for self-determination and self-organization for people than does feudalism, so too does the neo-liberal gender order allow women more room to engage in public life and to contest

Women and children, even more than men, are victimized by global capitalist restructuring.

with men for power and place. Yet in the Third World, as in the First, women's continuing responsibilities for and commitment to the work of caregiving disadvantage women in relation to men within the increasingly competitive and individualized economic and political worlds associated with the demands of global capitalism. This continuing differential relationship of men and women to the important and necessary labor of caregiving — work which is increasingly privatized because of the demise of the welfare state — is preserving male dominance albeit in a new form.[6]

In the current situation, feminists, especially those who want to create a movement that reflects the needs and interests of working-class and poor rural and urban women, face intense and difficult political dilemmas. We can appreciate these dilemmas through an analysis of three arenas of political action:

1) How relations of class and racial domination are reproduced or diminished among feminist organizations both transnationally and within national polities;

2) The particular pressures facing women's NGOs and the possibilities for resistance as well as cooptation;

3) The lines of tension as well as alliance between the global feminist and global justice movements.

Feminist Politics in the Space between Patriarchal Nationalism and Neo-colonialism

ORGANIZED FEMINISM HAS BEEN most effective both transnationally and locally in promoting liberal political rights for women and even in raising issues that previously were invisible — such as sexual assault and domestic violence. There is still a long way to go here, of course, but it cannot be denied that in country after country feminist organizations forced debate about sexual and domestic violence into national politics in addition to making some gains in access to formal politics.[7] Locally and internationally, feminists continue to face the difficult and pressing issue of how to argue for and define women's rights in a way that does not align feminism with neo-colonial relations of domination. Women in the Third World are forced to contest two powerful and opposing forces. On the one side is a masculinist nationalism that selectively defines tradition and nation in ways that force women to be the bearers of cultural difference, while men are free to participate in the world of modern political and economic power. On the other side is transnational capital that in its current phase threatens to overpower the national state and subject women along with men to new forms of economic exploitation or even to exclude them from the economy altogether — at the same time that it offers opportunities for escap-

ing from traditional male control. Just as women of color in the U.S. have challenged feminists to recognize that their categories of analysis assumed the universality of white, middle-class experience and defined equality and opportunity in ways that marginalize the political interests of working-class women and women of color, so also have women from the neo-colonized South challenged the dominant voice of women from the North.

Since the first international meeting of women convened by the UN in 1975, international feminism has debated the question of how to define women's interests, including as this conversation has evolved, questioning the unitary category of "women" altogether. An important development in this conversation is the adoption of a "human rights" platform as an organizing agenda that women can cooperate on transnationally as well as use locally. At the World Human Rights Conference, organized by the UN in 1993, women's groups argued that "Human Rights are Women's Rights and Women's Rights Are Human Rights" and called on the Conference to recognize "gender based violence as a violation of human rights requiring immediate action." This effort included promoting the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, finally adopted in 1979 by the UN but still not ratified by the United States.

Nationally, women's organizations have used the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, expanded by the UN in 1966 to include economic, social, and cultural rights, to demand accountability from their governments. However, as might be expected given the current dominance of capitalist class forces, in practice only political and civil rights have real support, while women's social rights, along with those of men, are increasingly violated and marginalized by the destruction of public services in core and periphery. Additionally, there remains the problem of who will define the content of these rights — that is, what criteria should be used to define practices that violate women's human rights.

Raising concerns about human rights as a political discourse is in no way an endorsement of cultural relativism — women from the global South are only too well aware of how assertions of cultural difference could be used to legitimate patriarchal practices. Third World women are also very well aware of the need to defend their nations and cultures against First World hegemony — a hegemony that treats western practices as the measure of progress for women and for society and thus legitimizes neo-colonial domination. Insofar as First World feminists have participated in this kind of "universalizing" political discourse and thereby have denied the possibility that modernization shaped by non-western cultures might in some instances offer women more dignity, power, and respect, they have made it easier for anti-feminist forces in the Third World to define feminism as a part of the western imperial project. There is no better example of the cooptation of "women's rights" for imperialist purposes than George Bush's claim that the U.S. war on Afghanistan was carried out to promote human rights for Afghan women. The ground for this claim was laid in part by the international women's rights campaign begun in 1997 by a coalition of western women's rights organizations.[8] This campaign, which called on the "international community" to deny investment and recognition to the Taliban, completely ignored the complicity of the West in the installation of the Taliban in the first place and the ways in which Washington's tolerance of Taliban rule was bound up in its overall neo-liberal, geo-political agenda.

In practice only political and civil rights have real support, while women's social rights, along with those of men, are increasingly violated.

Under the leadership of Third World feminists, some organizations have tried to chart a course between patriarchal nationalism and colonizing feminism. For example, Women Living Under Muslim Law challenges religio/political fundamentalism from within an Islamic framework of discourse, redefining, just as men have done

historically, what constitutes an "Islamic" practice. Rita Coomaraswamy poses the question: how do we protect human rights in substance at the local level while avoiding being pawns of imperial strategy? She proposes two guidelines: 1) any practices that cause severe pain and suffering to the women concerned should be criminalized, and 2) other practices should be evaluated through debate, dialogue and coalition-building by the women of the particular society who have "in different ways fought racism and communalism but who also struggle against patriarchy and for women's rights. Even within this group there are big differences."[9] The proper role of feminist organizations in the imperialist core countries is to support this local dialogue with resources and with respect.

Parallel tensions and conflicts regarding who defines women's interests and rights serve to marginalize the voices of working-class and poor women within national and transnational feminist coalitions. At first glance the feminist insistence that freedom from sexual violence is a woman's human right offers an obvious basis for cross-class alliance. Yet, working class and poor women in the global South often shape their understandings of male violence in class terms, locating male violence as an issue within a particular social context — for example in relation to government promotion of liquor sales to impoverished districts or rising unemployment and the disappearance of traditional male work. In contrast, when middle-class advocates translate international human rights politics into the local arena, they are more likely to focus on the need for changing laws and police practices in isolation from the broader causes of violence against women.[10]

Transnational feminism has depended for its organizational growth not on funds generated from grass-roots membership but on resources provided by powerful institutions such as the UN, social democratic governments in the North, and private foundations in the capitalist core countries. In the early 1990s, the United Nations, certainly as a consequence of feminist pressure from within, committed to funding the involvement of local women's groups in the national conferences projected to address development issues.[11] Within the Third World, women's non-governmental organizations (NGOs) similarly rely on external funding sources. This context has aggravated what would in any case be an inevitable process of professionalization and bureaucraticization when grass-roots groups become social movement organizations and then primarily *advocates for* rather than *mobilizers of* their constituency. Some organizations have done better than others in maintaining connection with and accountability to their social base.[12] However, stratification among women's groups has grown as those with elite ties, access to international funders, and the organizational characteristics that funders want to support are able to command more resources and political influence. In their structural position vis-à-vis their national states and international funders, these NGOs became advisors and gender "experts" who play a brokering role between the state and its clienteles.[13]

NGOs, Popular Feminism and the Problems of Cross-Class Alliances

ONE OF THE IRONIES OF THOSE STATES that achieved economic development in the golden age of the 60s and 70s was that, even though political rights were relatively circumscribed, some of the development-induced surplus was directed toward expansion of basic services — most particularly education and health care, which did improve maternal and child health, lowering maternal and infant mortality rates in many countries. The struggle for the establishment and expansion of collective or social rights has been fundamental to the political mobilization of women in the working-class, urban and rural poor, and indigenous communities. The assault on standards of living in urban areas, the destruction of rural livelihoods, and the shrinking of the state under Structural Adjustment Programs imposed by the IMF created a virtual explosion of women's activism over the last two decades. This activism has three characteristics. It is motivated by survival needs; it is based in cross-household networks of mutual help and supported by communal values; and it is legitimated primarily by women's traditional gender roles at

the same time as these roles are expanded to include women's engagement in public life separate from men. In the first instance a politics based on maternal care does not challenge traditional gender roles, and may even reinforce women's identification with motherhood. However, political engagement can also lead grass-roots activists to challenge male power and reshape gender identities — if it takes place in a context which includes feminist ideas about women's rights in relation not only to the state but to the men in their own communities, households, and movement organizations.[14]

Stratification among women's groups has grown as those with elite ties . . . are able to command more resources and political influence.

In the 70s and early 80s, there were struggles among women activists both internally in Third World countries and internationally that tended to counterpose a politics of women's needs to a politics of liberal (civil and political) rights, with working-class/peasant women arguing that collective and social rights are "more important" to Third World women than individual civil rights. This conflict was in part determined by the encapsulation of women activists in the politics of the traditional organs of working-class/popular political mobilization — labor unions, organizations of the unemployed, left political parties, and peasant organizations. However, over time, partly as a result of the interchanges among Third World feminist organizations themselves and partly through the increasing resources available externally that were used to support autonomous women's organizations, grass-roots women's groups emerged from the struggles of poor rural and urban women, and women in the new proletariat of the free trade zones developed their own versions of a working-class/popular feminism. Moving out from under the masculinist politics of local social and political movements, working-class and rural women began to address issues of sexual politics and to develop distinctive feminist modes of organizing: consciousness raising, participatory decision-making, and attention to personal empowerment as a basis for collective empowerment.[15] This political evolution would have been truncated without the existence of transnational feminist organizing. Regional as well as international conferences, workshops, and meetings gave locally marginal women's grass-roots organizations moral and practical support.

Middle-class/elite women were the first to articulate a program for women's equality and participation, and to identify new targets of feminist contestation broadly understood as "sexual politics." Although originating outside the working-class, these feminist organizations play a critical role in opening up a political space and, in the best instances, in providing organizational resources that can push forward the emergence of a different kind of feminist politics among women of the working-class, peasantry, and urban poor. However, these same organizations can also play a very negative role — insofar as they reproduce relations of class privilege and domination within movements, frame feminist ideology and strategy within the limits of a liberal political project, and enter into conservatizing alliances with political and economic elites.

One can find no better example of the latter than the proliferation of NGOs throughout the global South managing programs of small-scale loans — microcredit — for women. Although the Beijing platform of action in 1995 proposed a broad range of reforms and interventions to improve women's position in Third World economies, not surprisingly women's NGOs have been most successful in promoting microcredit programs. Emanating from institutions such as USAID and the World Bank, these programs have garnered the vast majority of development funds targeted toward women. Appearing to offer women economic independence through entrepreneurship, microcredit has had the opposite effect in most cases — increasing women's integration into the informal sectors of the economy, forcing them to exploit their own children, especially their daughters, in order to get

their work done, increasing competitive relationships among women, and doing little to lift women or their families out of poverty.[16] Further, ideologically, microcredit reinforces the neo-colonial view that ascribes to Third World women both moral characteristics and personal powers that alleviate the need for state-controlled and regulated development. In valorizing "grassroots" women's maternal virtues and survival strengths, NGOs argue for targeting women as the "best investment" for development funds. Since men are less likely than women to pay back loans, more likely to spend their income on themselves rather than their households, and to participate in the petty corruption that is a route to local political influence, these claims have real force. On the other hand, like all powerful ideologies, they also rest on a very partial picture and have the unintended consequence of further solidifying the neo-liberal agenda. Third World women are set up as a reproach, not to the forces of capitalist domination, but to those who supposedly lack their courage and determination to negotiate the market — that is, the "dependent" men of poor countries who have relied on the state to protect them from the competitive challenges of the market.

The emergence of the "microcredit industry" tells us one story about how NGOs staffed by women from privileged strata in the Third World find avenues for employment, international travel, and political influence through work in which they project themselves as representatives of women who are marginalized in and excluded from the new economic order. Given the formidable constraints posed by the powerful economic and political forces that they confront, women advocates for women are forced to inhabit a niche that is simultaneously empowering and disempowering — incorporating women's representatives into state resource allocation processes at the cost of distancing them from their social base and shoring up, rather than contesting, neo-liberal ideologies and policies. Similar kinds of pressures face NGOs working in the arena of women's reproductive rights.

Reproductive Rights

FROM THE 1950S, under pressure from the World Bank, USAID, and other development agencies, states in developing countries began implementing population control programs. These programs have been accurately described as designed to lower women's fertility "by any means necessary," and their myriad abuses have been well-documented.[17] Beginning in the 1970s, international networks of feminists, most working through NGOs and the United Nations, sought to shift the dominant population policy away from a focus on fertility and onto the promotion of the health and well-being of women and children. They argued that governments should promote real economic development, ensure that women have equal access to the benefits thereof, and provide conditions necessary for women's personal autonomy (education, maternal and child healthcare, changes in family law, etc.) rather than trying to control the reproductive lives of women. Although lowering the birth rate should not be the goal of these initiatives, in fact the outcome of such programs would not only be an improvement in women's lives but also a decline in women's fertility. This transnational feminist effort achieved a significant victory at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development meeting in Cairo which adopted a "Platform of Action" affirming women's reproductive rights and specifically condemning government policies driven by numerical population targets. Unfortunately, partly as a result of strategic compromises engineered by the larger women's NGOs who dominate political processes at international meetings, the "Platform" also endorsed the neo-liberal assault on the state, calling for greater reliance on the private sector and NGOs for service delivery.

While achieving considerable success at the level of theoretical vision and UN (and even World Bank) rhetoric, NGOs have been entirely unsuccessful in promoting women's reproductive rights in practice at the national level. Across the Third World fertility rates have plunged, in many cases achieving in only 20 years a demographic transition that took close to a century in the West. Where fertility decline in the West came as a result of increasing standards of living for the working-class majority, eco-

nomic transition and structural adjustment in the Third World have produced a "crisis-led fertility decline." It is important to stress that the causes of this decline are complex and reflect, at least in part, women's own desires to control their reproductive lives, increasing demand for women's labor, and aggressive family planning promotion that has made sterilization operations, IUD in-

NGOs have been entirely unsuccessful in promoting women's reproductive rights in practice at the national level.

sertions, and hormone-based contraceptives easily available. However, the rapidity and depth of the change in fertility patterns is also the result of more negative factors: women's impoverishment; the rise in female-headed households, increasing demands on women's working days while also reducing their exposure to unprotected heterosexual contact; women's appropriate fears of the health risks of pregnancy, including maternal mortality (the result of illegal abortions); compromised health status from poverty; and lack of access to pre- and post- natal health care.[18] Although numerical targets may no longer drive government programs, abuses of women's basic bodily rights continue to pervade the system. And, in any case, even where women are not lied to, offered cash bribes, or threatened into accepting risky birth control methods or sterilization, the overall institutional context so severely restricts women's choices as to be inherently, if not purposively, coercive. Rates of sterilization among poor women, and especially poor women in racially oppressed communities, are far higher than among women who are racially and economically privileged.[19]

Feminism in the Global Justice Movement

AT THE END OF THE CENTURY, the managers of global capitalism, meeting at the Davos World Economic Forum, were forced to acknowledge a deep crisis of legitimacy in the neo-liberal order.[20] Half-way around the globe, in Porto Alegre, the activists gathered at the World Social Forum sought to create a political agenda for the global justice movement that had put global elites on the defensive. The participation of women, as leaders and as representatives of grass-roots movements at Porto Allegre holds real promise; so also, does the involvement of feminist organizations in the organizational networks that constitute local "anti-globalization" forces. Thirty years ago, it would have been unthinkable, even within radical social movements, to have women in leadership over men or to have issues of gender oppression anything other than a matter, at best, for a woman's auxiliary. The organizations that command the most widespread respect for their militancy, revolutionary vision, and courage are deeply influenced by feminism — in their political agendas and their leadership cadres. For example, in 1993, following a process of convening local women's committees and holding hundreds of community assemblies, the Zapatista Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee in Mexico passed the Revolutionary Laws of Women. This program of women's rights includes women's right to decide the number of children they will have and care for, women's right to work and receive a just salary, the right to choose their partners, and so forth.[21]

Alongside these clear gains, there remain areas of tension between transnational feminism and other parts of the global justice movement. Reflecting a complex set of forces, these "fault lines" cannot be fully analyzed here. In what follows I offer some preliminary observations about two examples of the problems that the global justice movement will have to resolve: 1) tensions between women's NGOs and labor unions, and 2) strategic silences on the issue of abortion and sexual orientation.

Women's NGOs and the Labor Movement

TRADITIONAL MODES of union organizing have proven to be ineffective in organizing women workers for gender specific reasons that cut across industries. The strategies that do organize women are those that cross over the public/private and work/family di-

vides, acknowledging women's caregiving responsibilities and their dense ties to their communities. The nature of the industries that currently employ the majority of women working in the formal private sector of the economy further compromises the effectiveness of the organizing strategies developed by and for male workers. The labor intensive industries were women are concentrated can respond to strikes by simply transferring production elsewhere. Women workers are joining trade unions across the globe, but NGOs have also emerged, sometimes formed by women workers leaving male-dominated unions, and sometimes created when no unions were interested. With the growth of the female labor force and of women's militancy, NGOs organizing women workers now represent an important constituency of the working-class movement. Given the limited opportunities for women in the formal labor market, NGOs are striving to preserve women's jobs in the labor-intensive industries that will hire them, while they organize to improve wages and working conditions. They have tended to rely more on community organizing, moral suasion, international funding, and political support than on union dues and traditional weapons of struggle — especially the strike. If labor unions are unsympathetic to the reasons for the NGO's strategic choices, they fail to enter into supportive alliances with grassroots organizations of women workers, driving the NGOs further away from the trade union movement. In turn, the NGOs become more vulnerable to cooptation by management-dominated international "watchdog" committees, which have become a major tool for transnational corporations responding to the anti-sweatshop movement.[22] Such a trajectory is not inevitable, but depends on the continuing politicization of the trade union movement which, as we have seen in other times and places, opens more space for working-class feminism to challenge and change the strategic and organizational practices of the unions.

Thirty years ago, it would have been unthinkable, even within radical social movements, to have women in leadership over men.

Silences in Community-Based Movements

WHILE WOMEN'S GROWING IMPORTANCE as a constituency within the labor movement represents an historic shift, women's activism in community-based movements, which have mobilized huge numbers over the last two decades, reflects historic continuity. For centuries, women have entered into political struggle in order to secure the livelihoods of their families and communities. In addition to organizing to demand resources from local government — trash collection, potable water, electricity, etc. — many communities, unable to wrest much from the state, began to engage in alternative modes of production and provision of services — cooperative work schemes to produce food and clothing, building crèches and houses, organizing trash collection, etc.[23] What is new in these popular movements is the emergence of women's leadership and the incorporation of feminist demands into their political programs. This is the case especially where community-based organizations are part of broader movements that carry radical political worldviews (e.g., the Zapatistas in Mexico or the Workers Party in Brazil). These developments reflect tremendous gains and offer tremendous hope. Still, there is work to be done. Within the global justice movement, some feminist political ideas and demands are more easily expressed than others. The contrast between the clear progress made on the issue of domestic violence and the glaring silences on the issues of abortion and sexual orientation is interesting.

One possible reason for this difference might be that some feminist claims are more compatible than others with a maternalist politics. For example, for women to demand the right to be free from domestic violence or to control the spacing and numbers of their pregnancies can be framed in ways that preserve the essential relationships of

the traditional heterosexual family. Fertility control can and often has been allied to claims about preserving mothers' health and that of their children. The notion that men have an obligation to care for women in their families — and should not expect to retain familial authority if they violate that obligation — is not fundamentally antagonistic to paternalistic gender norms. Make no mistake: both these shifts in understanding substantially expand women's power and authority within marital relationships and represent a victory for feminism. But as difficult as these changes have been to make, abortion has generated far more opposition to feminism. Abortion could be regarded as simply a form of contraception (and is in some societies framed as "menstrual regulation"). But instead it has come to be defined as an act of maternal rejection and a powerful symbol of women's ability to separate (hetero)sexuality from procreation and to claim sexual pleasure for its own sake. The validation of lesbian sexuality, of course, goes even further in the direction of denying the inevitable, natural, and moral status of families organized around a heterosexual bond.

A second possible reason for the silences around issues that are so central to sexual liberation could be the role that religious organizations, particularly the Catholic Church, play in providing institutional and monetary support to popular movements. Although it might appear that their constituents' religiosity inhibits the political issues that organizers can raise, at least in the case of abortion, illegal abortion is a fact of life for many Catholic women who find ways to make abortion compatible with their religious beliefs.[24] I would argue that it is organizations' dependence on the Catholic hierarchy for funding and political legitimacy, rather than their women constituents' religious beliefs, that enforces this code of silence.

Conclusion

CONFLICTS AND TENSIONS around gender relations and feminist politics within the global justice movement offer hope as well as words of caution. Conflicts exist only because women activists and their organizations are serious players on the political stage, contesting male dominance not as outsiders but from within the networks of the global justice movement. Whether feminism will come to inform the radical vision and the everyday politics of global justice activists, men and women, depends on how well the movements are able to sustain political coalitions that are participatory and willing to engage in dialog. Movements that make a space for the political and strategic interventions of working-class and popular feminist activists and their organizations will constitute a powerful pole of attraction, an alternative for those who now believe they have no choice but to compromise with the neo-liberal order.

NOTES

1. Linda Gordon and Allen Hunter, "Not All Male Dominance is Patriarchal," *Radical History Review*, no. 71, 1998; Denis Kandioyti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy," *Gender & Society*, vol. 2, no. 3 (September, 1988), pp. 274-290.

2. Where 114 women's organizations attended the first UN sponsored women's NGO forum in Mexico City in 1975, 3,000 came to Beijing in 1995. Today, tens of thousands of NGO participate in international conferences and gatherings. Amrita Basu, "Globalization of the Local/Localization of the Global: Mapping Transnational Women's Movements," *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism,* vol.1, no.1 (Autumn 2000), p.73.

3. Asoka Bandarage*, Women, Population and Global Crisis,* (London: Zed Books,1998).

4. Shelley Feldman, "Exploring Theories of Patriarchy: A Perspective from Contemporary Bangladesh," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society,* vol. 25, no. 4 (Summer 2001), p. 1108; Rita Raj et al., "Between Modernization and Patriarchal Revivalism: Reproductive Negotiations Among Women in Peninsular Malaysia," in *Negotiating Reproductive Rights: Women's Perspectives Across Countries and Cultures*, ed. Rosalind P. Petchesky and Karen Judd (London: Zed Books, 1998).

5. Basu, p. 72.

6. For more on this argument, see Johanna Brenner, *Women and the Politics of Class* (New York: Monthly Review, 2000).

7. Basu, p. 81.

8. Basu, p. 73.

9. Radhika Coomaraswamy, "Are Women's Rights Universal? Re-Engaging the Local," *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism*, vol. 3, no. 1 (Autumn 2002), p 16.

10. Basu, p. 76. For the U.S., see Beth E. Richie, "A Black Feminist Reflection on the Antiviolence Movement," in *Feminisms at a Millennium*, ed. Judith A. Howard and Carolyn Allen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

11. Basu, p. 74. Major U.S. foundation grants to

women's organizations working for women's rights and against violence against women increased thirteen-fold between 1988 and 1993. In the two years prior to the Beijing summit in 1995, the Latin American and Caribbean Regional NGO Coordination received $1,007,403 from the U.N. Sonia E. Alvarez, "Translating the Global: Effects of Transnational Organizing on Local Feminist Discourses and Practices in Latin America," *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Autumn 2000), p 16.

12. Millie Thayer, "Traveling Feminisms: From Embodied Women to Gendered Citizenship," in *Global Ethnography: Forces, Connections, and Imaginations in a Postmodern World*, ed. Michael Burawoy et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

13. Alvarez, pp. 55-58.

14. Petchesky and Judd, p. 310.

15. Janet Gabriel Townsend et al., *Women and Power: Fighting Patriarchy and Poverty* (London: Zed Books, 1999); Yvonne Corcoran-Nantes, "Female Consciousness or Feminist Consciousness? Women's consciousness raising in community-based struggle in Brazil," in *Global Feminism Since 1945*, ed. Bonnie G. Smith (New York: Routledge, 2000); Alvarez, pp. 36-37.

16. Deborah Mindry, "Nongovernmental Organizations, 'Grassroots,' and the Politics of Virtue," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 26, no. 4 (Summer 2001), pp.1187-1212; Winifred Poster and Zakia Salime, "The Limits of Microcredit: Transnational Feminism and USAID Activities in the United States and Morocco," in Women's Activism and Globalization, ed. Nancy A. Naples and Manisha Desai (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 189-219.

17. Betsy Hartmann, "The Changing Faces of Population Control," in *Policing the National Body: Race, Gender and Criminalization*, ed. Jael Silliman and Anannya Bhattacharjee (Cambridge, MA: South End, 2002), pp. 259-284.

18. Bandarage, pp. 170 and 183.

19. In Brazil's Northeast, an impoverished region with a large Black population, the proportion of women using sterilization for contraception increased 16.49 percentage points between 1986 and 1992, by which time 64.39 percent of contracepting women were "choosing" sterilization. In the same period, maternal mortality showed a dramatic increase. Thayer, p. 228.

20. Walden F. Bello, *The Future in the Balance: Essays on Globalization and Resistance* (Oakland, CA: Food First Books, 2001), p. xv.

21. Jane H. Bayes and Rita Mae Kelly, "Political Spaces, Gender and NAFTA," in Gender, *Globalization and Democratization*, ed. Rita Mae Kelly et al. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), pp.160-161.

22. Jennifer Bickham Mendez, "Creating Alternatives from a Gender Perspective: Transnational Organizing for Maquila Workers' Rights in Central America," in Naples and Desai, pp. 121-141.

23. Adriana Ortiz Ortega, Ana Amuchastegui and Marta Rivas, "'Because They were Born From Me': Negotiating Women's Rights in Mexico," in Petchesky and Judd, pp.145-147.

24. Simone Grilo Diniz et al., "Not Like Our Mothers: Reproductive Choice and the Emergence of Citizenship Among Brazilian Rural Workers, Domestic Workers and Housewives," in Petchesky and Judd, pp. 61-62.

Debate:

Did Project Censored Whitewash Serbian Atrocities?

Editors' Note

David Walls' article in the last issue of *New Politics*, "How Project Censored Joined the Whitewash of Serb Atrocities" (Volume IX, No.1, Whole Number 33, Summer 2002), elicited commentary from Bogdan Denitch and critical responses from Peter Phillips, Diana Johnstone, and Edward S. Herman & David Peterson, all printed below. Each critical response is followed with a reply from Walls.

The Shame and Scandal of Apologias for Atrocities

To the Editors:

IT WAS GRATIFYING TO READ DAVID WALLS'S review, in the current issue (#33) of *New Politics*, of "How Project Censored Joined the Whitewash of Serb Atrocities" during the reign of Slobodon Milosevic, especially the atrocities committed during the wars against Bosnia, Croatia, and Kosovo. I would like to add a few paragraphs of support to Walls's analysis based in large measure on my own personal experiences in Yugoslavia over many decades.

As a preliminary to my brief contribution to the discussion, I want to at least pose the relevant question, not touched upon in Walls's article, whether the UN-sanctioned NATO interventions in Bosnia and in Kosovo were justified and deserved the support of democrats and socialists. It is not a simple question to answer. Remember that Marx and Engels backed the Allies in the Crimean War against the Russian Empire in the mid-19th century, despite the fact that the Allied forces mainly included undemocratic imperial powers. At the time, England was oppressing Ireland and brutally colonizing India and Africa, France was no less savage in asserting its domination of Algeria and Turkey oppressed most of the population of its own multi-national Empire. Nevertheless, neither the political character nor motives of the anti-Russian alliance were determinant in deciding whether to back the war against Russia; at least not for Marx or Engels, for whom Russia was the greater evil and the main enemy of democratic and social revolutions.

This does not, of course, determine whether the UN-sanctioned NATO interventions in the Wars of Yugoslav Successions, were justified and deserve support of democrats and socialists. It does indicate, however, that support for such actions is not alien to our tradition and has to be argued, for or against, on its own merits. I do believe that while differences on the question of military intervention are legitimate, those who opposed it in Yugoslavia were obliged to offer an alternative way to stop the carnage in Bosnia and Serbia's brutal repression of the Albanian majority in Kosovo.

What is not legitimate is to deny that massive crimes were being committed in Bosnia mainly, though not exclusively, by the Serbs supported by the Milosevic regime in Belgrade, and that for over a decade the Serbian government was repressing the Albanian majority in Kosovo, having first arbitrarily abolished the autonomy of that province. I might add that in both cases the United States was dragged into the intervention quite late by its Allies, kicking and resisting all the way, preferring that the Europeans alone should settle the problem and take all the casualties. In both cases, Russia went along and China did not use its veto.

So it is simply wrongheaded to treat these interventions as solely or even primarily U.S. policy initiatives. It is also a fact that in Bosnia at least for three to four years other methods of solving the civil war and intervention from Serbia and Croatia were tried at no small cost in lives of UN troops

and with no less than 200,000 dead Bosnians, overwhelmingly Bosniak, but including Serbs and Croats, and two million refugees. A part of the cost was the well documented largest single massacre in Europe since the Second World War of more than 5,000 Bosniak men and boys after the surrender of Srebrenica, an enclave declared a safe area by the UN.

Armed intervention was the last thing tried and it did stop the carnage, permitting Bosnia to slowly start recovering.

The decision to intervene in Kosovo was informed by the bitter lessons of Bosnia and the war in Croatia. Only armed intervention stopped the military aggression by the Serbian forces, and unfortunately innocent Serb civilians have also paid a heavy price in displacement and exile for years of brutal aggression and repression by the regime most of them had supported.

Perhaps the worst of Milosevic's crimes was his policy of centralization and Serbian domination which he knew would destroy Yugoslavia and plunge it into bloody wars of succession. In this he was helped by his nationalist rivals, Tudjman in Croatia and Izetbegovic in Bosnia, but the main responsibility for the wars is his and that of the Serbian political establishment.

Milosevic has long ceased to be in any sense of the word a figure of the left, even the authoritarian Titoist "left." For years, while in power, he was allied with such right-wing ultra nationalists as Vladimir Seselj and Arkan, whose militias committed most of the war crimes, rapes and looting during the Croat and Bosnian wars. In the last Presidential election in Serbia he urged his followers to vote for Serbia's Haider, Vladimir Seselj, who is more aggressively nationalist and fascistic than LePen and Haider. Seselj received 23 percent of the vote in a three-way election in October 2002.

None of this necessarily makes me right on the question of military intervention, but I have the right and obligation to shout about massacres and mass rape. I have talked to women in their early teens who had been repeatedly raped by Serbian militia in 1992, I counted corpses in Moslem and Serbian villages and I talked to prisoners of war. And I regard it as a shame and a scandal that people who claim to be on the left in the U.S. still apologize for the atrocities caused by the butcher of the Balkans out of some mechanical formula which supposedly makes the enemies of the U.S. empire politically acceptable no matter how brutal and repressive they might be.

BOGDAN DENITCH

BOGDAN DENITCH is Chair of the Socialist Scholars Conference and heads ToD, an NGO active in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo.

In Defense of Project Censored's Coverage

To the Editors:

A RESPONSE TO DAVID WALLS' CRITICISM requires an understanding of Project Censored's purpose and mission. Project Censored is a 26-year-old media research group at Sonoma State University (SSU). We annually compile a list of the most important Censored/under-covered news stories of the year. Over 200 faculty, students, and community experts participate in the Project. Censored students and staff screen several thousand stories each year, selecting some 900 news articles for evaluation by faculty and community evaluators. Our 90-faculty/community evaluators are experts in their individual fields and rate the stories for credibility and national importance.

Each news story is evaluated on its own merits. We do not evaluate the source publication in its totality or make any claims that our selection of any single story from a source is in some way an endorsement of other news stories by that publication. This strategy has allowed us over the years to recognize individual news stories from a broad spectrum of political perspectives.

Each year SSU students in our Media Censorship class research the top ranked stories to determine the degree of mainstream coverage. This class examines the corporate media's coverage of the story and evaluates the credibility and accuracy of the story in relationship to other news articles on the topic. A collective vote of the students, staff and faculty narrows the stories down to twenty-five each year. This Project-wide voting by some 200+ people establishes which 25 stories will be listed in our annual book. Our national judges, who are schol-

ars, authors, and media experts from across the nation, complete the final ranking of the stories.

While selection of these stories each year is a long subjective judgmental process, we have grown to trust this collective effort as the best possible means of fairly selecting these important news stories. We believe that this group process, involving such a large number of academicians and students, gives us a high-quality annual list of the most important under-covered news stories in the United States.

Every year critics write about one or more of our stories saying that our choices are inappropriate or in some way biased. We always review these concerns and look to our critics for ways in which we can improve our evaluation process. David Walls, however, has taken a somewhat different approach. Walls has linked together a category of stories covering Yugoslavia. He claims Project Censored has hidden political motives and that we have moved into "the netherland of conspiracy theorists, Marxist-Leninist sects, and apologists for authoritarian regimes." Walls names fifteen individuals as participants in this dark underworld including: Michael Parenti, Sara Flounders, Diana Johnstone, Michel Chossudovsky, Martin Lee, Thomas Deichmann, Ramsey Clark, Lenora Foerstel, Richard Becker, Louis Wolf, Ellen Ray, Bill Schaap, Margaret Papandreou, Jared Israel and myself. Walls attacks our individual credibility by red baiting, innuendo, and linking us erroneously to untrustworthy Serb apologist organizations.

The news stories on Yugoslavia covered in our 1999, 2000, and 2001 Censored books, were initially screened by seven different evaluators including faculty from Sonoma State University's War & Peace lecture series, Political Science and Sociology Departments, and a retired U.S. Marine Corp general. Each story was reviewed and voted on by the entire Project. The stories selected were published in the following publications: *The Progressive, CovertAction Quarterly, This* (a Canadian monthly), *El Pais, The Progressive Review, Extra, The Village Voice, In These Times*, *Pacifica Radio*, *Women Against Military Madness*, *Because People Matter*, and the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*.

We stand on the veracity of the original stories. Oil pipeline feasibility studies were for example initiated immediately after the NATO occupation of Kosovo verifying the original story published in our Censored 2000 yearbook. Furthermore, the Trepca mine complex in Kosovo has been taken over by ITT Kosovo Ltd. — a joint venture of U.S., French, and Swedish companies.

The U.S. media was extremely biased during the civil wars in Yugoslavia. The 1992 ITN photo was widely used as propaganda to demonize the Serbs as Nazi-like death camp killers. There was no death camp at that site when the photo was taken. Project Censored never claimed that horrendous civil rights abuses didn't occur on both sides of that terrible struggle. The fact that the *LM* magazine lost a liability suit on the story does not under British law mean the story wasn't true. Truth and liability under British law are not mutually exclusive. Had *LM* magazine been publishing in the U.S. the truthfulness of the story would have been protected by the First Amendment.

Finally, it was widely reported in the media and used as a justification for NATO intervention that the incident at Racak was a Serbian genocidal massacre. These reports occurred well before the forensic team's report was made available and were widely questioned in the European press. To this date the forensic report is at best ambiguous on whether a massacre actually occurred and presents no clear evidence as to the responsible parties.

After reading Walls' piece Carl Jensen, founder of Project Censored, stated "For 25 years, Project Censored's sole objective has been, and still is, to publicize stories appearing in the alternative press that have been overlooked or under-covered by the mainstream media. To suggest that Project Censored is involved in some insidious form of a pro-Serbian conspiracy involving Emperors Clothes, Michael Parenti, Michel Chossudovsky and others is ludicrous."

Herb Foerstel, author of *Banned in the Media* and *From Watergate to Monicagate*, wrote to Project Censored after reading Walls' chapter.

> Having read David Walls' comments and charges, it is clear that he is not seeking a

debate on the issues. Instead, he solicits a defense of the personal and professional reputations of the individuals whose characters he has maligned. On principle, one must refuse to participate in such a disreputable process.

David Walls' emotional defense of NATO intervention in the Balkans resurrects the language of the Red Scare in defining support for the KLA-NLA terrorists as a new litmus test for membership in the democratic left.

Anyone opposing Albanian terror in Yugoslavia or Macedonia is a "Stalinist." That epithet is thrown about so capriciously as to taint everyone from liberal economists to heads of feminist organizations to the youngsters protesting the WTO. In the post-Cold War world, such intemperate rhetoric seems quaint and a bit silly. But there is nothing laughable about Walls' use of guilt by association. His chilling witch hunt, reminiscent of the old HUAC, identifies "Stalinists" on the basis of their personal associations, conferences attended, papers published, and support for political organizations, which he calls "front groups." It matters little that Walls' snooping has produced flawed documentation and groundless accusations. That he should embark on such a witch-hunt at all is sufficient cause for concern. In his view, every journalist who challenges NATO's intervention in the Balkans is a "conspiracy theorist." Every scholar who disputes the legitimacy of the War Crimes Tribunal is a "Stalinist." Every author who believes Serbia has been the victim of aggression is "an apologist for authoritarian regimes."

Walls would censor Project Censored by blacklisting any author who brings the light of day to events in the Balkans. Please do not allow these groundless attacks to silence you or weaken your resolve. This is precisely the kind of political pressure that Project Censored was created to overcome.

David Walls, a retired Sonoma State University administrator now assigned part-time to the Sociology Department, wrote a similar article for the Sonoma State University student newspaper after the publication of *Censored 2000* two and a half years ago. At the time, students from the Project strongly rebuked him in print the following week, and Carl Jensen and I responded later in the student newspaper as well. For the next year, Walls continued to snipe at Project Censored by sending e-mails to various faculty members on campus, but failed to generate any widespread support for his position.

In conclusion, Project Censored will continue our 26-year work of reporting on censored/under-covered news stories that the corporate media fail to cover. In the 1999 and 2000 Censored yearbooks seven out of 96 stories we cited were about the Balkans. This coverage level seems very appropriate given the degree of control the Pentagon exercises over the news with its restricted access rules and media pools. Many important news stories on U.S. military affairs remained uncovered/censored by the U.S. corporate media. We will continue to find independent sources of news on these subjects. To think that the Pentagon, after Vietnam, Granada, Panama, and Iraq suddenly became a humanitarian organization in the Balkans seems ridiculous to us and to most rational observers.

PETER PHILLIPS

PETER PHILLIPS is the Director of Project Censored and an Associate Professor and Chair of the Sociology Department at Sonoma State University.

David Walls Replies

IN MAY 2000 I WROTE IN THE *Sonoma State Star*, our campus newspaper, that Project Censored had joined a cover-up of Serbian atrocities at Bosnian detention camps and a massacre of civilians in Kosovo. Over the past two and a half years Project Censored has offered no substantive rebuttal of even one of my points of criticism, and Peter Phillips presents none here. Instead he repeats that Project Censored was right all along and explains a methodology which is itself under question precisely because — at least regarding the Balkans — it seems unable to detect and reject dubious sources with inaccurate stories. Phillips quotes Carl Jensen that Project Censored's sole objective is "to publicize stories appearing in the alternative press that have been overlooked or undercovered by the mainstream media," which tellingly neglects to emphasize the project's additional claimed criteria of credibility and accuracy.

Phillips continues to defend Thomas Deichmann's story from *LM* that ITN faked

the picture of the emaciated Fikret Alic taken at Trnopolje camp in Bosnia on August 5, 1992. Trnopolje was one of three Serbian-run camps, along with Omarska and Keraterm, in the municipality of Prijedor. Phillips writes, "There was no death camp at that site when the photo was taken." Interesting question: when would a Prijedor death camp cease being a death camp? If the last killings there stopped a month before the photo was taken? A week before? The day before? An hour before? We know from the evidence presented to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in the trial of Dusko Tadic that he was involved in gruesome crimes at Omarska camp as late as July 27, just nine days before the ITN team's visit there. Ed Vulliamy's interview with Alic revealed that he had been forced to help dispose of the nearly 200 bodies of men slaughtered in Room 3 at Keraterm camp on July 24, twelve days before ITN captured his image on videotape at Trnopolje, where he had been moved. One might well conclude the picture of Alic doesn't begin to capture the horrors that took place at the three Prijedor camps.

The ITN libel suit against *LM* was conducted under British law, which is different from that of the United States as Phillips notes, in that it puts the burden of proof on the defendant — which, however, is not to say that truth is not at issue. The fact remains that *LM* was unable to produce for its defense a single witness who was present at Trnopolje on the day of the ITN visit. You can read the blistering comments of Vulliamy, who was there at Trnopolje on August 5, 1992, in his article "Poison in the Well of History," available on the website of the *Guardian*: (http://www.guardian.co.uk/itn/article/0,2763,184815,00.html). Deichmann, in contrast, did not visit Trnopolje until four years later, in 1996. Phillips writes, "Had *LM* magazine been publishing in the U.S. the truthfulness of the story would have been protected by the First Amendment." This is backwards: if *LM* had been publishing in the U.S. the *falsity* of the story may have been protected by the First Amendment.

From a pro-feminist standpoint, I am most disappointed that Phillips has refused to admit that Project Censored was wrong in denying the systematic rape of women during the Bosnian conflict. Both its story about the Bosnian detention camps in *Censored 1999* and Michael Parenti's essay, ch. 6 in *Censored 2000*, scoff at reports of systematic rape (Parenti was the co-keynote speaker at Project Censored's annual award ceremony this year). This is particularly ironic, as one of the greatest recent gains for women in international law has been the precedent-setting decision by the ICTY that the systematic rape of women in wartime is a war crime and a crime against humanity. The ICTY decision came in February 2001 in the case of Dragoljub Kunarac, Zoran Vukovic, and Radomir Kovac, convicted of presiding over the systematic rape of Bosnian Muslim women by Serbs in the Bosnian town of Foca during 1992-3, the same period discussed by Project Censored.

On the story that western capitalism coveted Kosovo's aging and polluted Trepca mine complex, Phillips claims vindication by arguing the facilities have been taken over by ITT Kosovo Ltd. Phillips apparently got this piece of misinformation from yet another story by Sara Flounders, this one in the August 24, 2000, issue of *Workers World*, reported as an update in *Censored 2001*. In fact, UNMIK, the UN agency providing civil administration in Kosovo, took over the Trepca complex and shut down production in August 2000. Their objective was to protect the community from continuing pollution and dangerous working conditions. UNMIK contracted with the ITT Kosovo Ltd. consortium to conduct the environmental clean-up and modernize the plant (the first facilities at Trepca were opened in 1920). UNMIK insists the Trepca complex remains in public ownership, and is sorting out multiple competing ownership claims, most dating from the Milosevic regime's attempts to privatize the complex.

Phillips conveniently presents a list of 15 names mentioned in my critical comments. I would exempt Martin Lee and Margaret Papandreou, who are only tangentially connected to these stories, and Phillips himself, whose role has been to promote the propaganda of others. The remaining dozen individuals constitute a veritable gallery of Milosevic apologists. Indeed, four are mem-

bers of the International Committee to Defend Slobodan Milosevic (Sara Flounders, Ramsey Clark, Lenora Foerstel, and Jared Israel) and two (Michael Parenti and Louis Wolf) are listed as signatories to one or another of its petitions. To the best of my knowledge, Phillips has met personally all but one or two of these people. That's not a conspiracy, just a network of association and influence that has managed to pull Project Censored into its orbit.

Phillips' charge of "red-baiting" is a red herring that functions these days to distract activists from considering the potentially harmful effects of authoritarian political sects like the Workers World Party (WWP) on progressive social movements and institutions. During October 2002 the Internet and alternative press were buzzing with discussions of the impact of the WWP (a major sponsor and organizer of the October 26 antiwar demonstrations) on the nascent peace movement through its front groups, the International Action Center and ANSWER. For example, see the articles by Michelle Goldberg in *Salon.com*, Todd Gitlin in *MotherJones.com*, *The Nation* political correspondent David Corn in the *LA Weekly*, and Michael Albert and Stephen Shalom in *ZNet*. There have also been heated discussions of the WWP's role from the far left (Louis Proyect's Marxmail list) to the right (libertarian Justin Raimondo's *Antiwar.com*). Without such discussions, it's only newcomers to social movements who are innocent of the background, tactics, and impact of such sects and their front groups — until they learn the hard way.

Phillips also quotes Herb Foerstel's rant, which displays him so engulfed in a cloud of revolutionary nostalgia — "Red Scare . . . witch-hunt . . . HUAC . . . blacklisting" — that he's lost track of which century we're in. Fifty years ago if you associated with communists you risked being considered a dangerous subversive; now you only risk being thought a fool. This fog surrounding Foerstel prevents him from reading my actual words. Nowhere do I define "support for the KLA-NLA terrorists as a new litmus test for membership in the democratic left," nor do I argue that "every journalist who challenges NATO's intervention in the Balkans is a 'conspiracy theorist.'" My article is a critique of historical falsification, not "an emotional defense of NATO intervention in the Balkans." I did not "throw about so capriciously" the epithet "Stalinist;" I used the term "Stalinoid" once in an appropriate context. My research drawing exclusively from public sources in print and on the Web is not "snooping." What was it Mary McCarthy said about Lillian Hellman? "Every word she writes is a lie, including 'and' and 'the.'" Foerstel's comments are hysterical, and an embarrassment for Project Censored to put forward as a substitute for reasoned argumentation.

And what's Phillips implying at the beginning of his next-to-the-last paragraph? I surmise he would be happy to demote me to adjunct status, but I remain a tenured professor in the sociology department. I'm enjoying teaching part-time under the faculty early retirement program, a wonderful provision of the contract with the California State University that our union, the California Faculty Association, defends vigorously.

The Media and Yugoslavia: A Reply to David Walls

To the Editors:

IN YOUR SUMMER 2002 ISSUE, an academic named David Walls complains at length about Project Censored for its 2000 awards regarding Yugoslavia. Those reports all challenged the mainstream media consensus on Yugoslavia that led up to NATO's 1999 war. As one of several writers attacked, I am described by Walls as among the most prolific apologists for Serbia, who was once the respected European correspondent for *In These Times*. The implicit threat is clear: anyone who deviates from the standard media interpretation of the Yugoslav drama can only be an apologist for Serbia and ceases being respected.

Back in 1984, when I assume I was still its respected European correspondent, *In These Times* published an article of mine warning of the danger of Yugoslav disintegration. I must have been truly clairvoyant to foresee the disaster several years before the rise of Milosevic if, as Walls tells it, the unraveling of Tito's multi-ethnic and politically balanced Yugoslavia was begun by

Milosevic when he moved to end the autonomy of Kosovo and Vojvodina provinces in 1989.

From 1989 to 1996, I took leave from active journalism to serve as press officer of the Green Group in the European Parliament. While there, I watched how complex events in Yugoslavia were transformed by prejudice and propaganda into a simplified moral tale of good and evil that suited the self-justifying ideology of the new European Union as privileged champion of human rights. I had known Yugoslavia first hand from my student days, and resolved, once I left the Parliament, to investigate for myself what was happening there. By then, the one-sided anti-Serb dogma was established. Neither *In These Times* nor *The Nation*, whose editors previously had sought my contributions, would publish my unorthodox — because balanced — first hand reports from Kosovo in 1998.

So my twenty-five years of first-hand experience of European politics, including Yugoslavia, suddenly counted for nothing. Any story about Serbs committing rape, murder or ethnic cleansing would be eagerly accepted — whether or not it was true. I saw journalists in Pristina hiring absurd all-terrain vehicles to go out on daily safari looking for Serbian atrocities. That was what editors were clamoring for and that was the path to career advancement. Background pieces giving more than one side to the story were definitely not wanted. Meanwhile, a number of veteran reporters with insight based on years spent in the region could no longer be published (for example, the former Belgrade correspondent of the French Communist Party newspaper *L'Humanité*).

Western media coverage of the Yugoslav conflicts throughout the 1990s represented an altogether extraordinary case of bias and self-censorship, culminating in a unilateral war waged by NATO in blatant defiance of international law, supposedly on humanitarian grounds. This was the censored story not of a year but of the decade, perhaps of the last half-century. If anything, Project Censored gave too little, not too much, attention to this story. But since even the alternative media rarely published truly alternative reporting about the Balkans, there was not much for Project Censored to find.

The Oil Pipeline Story

AT A TIME when it was being widely trumpeted that Western interest in Yugoslavia could be only humanitarian because there was nothing there of economic interest, the ongoing project to build an oil pipeline across the Balkans through Bulgaria, Macedonia and Albania was so little reported that Project Censored (to my surprise) singled out for mention an e-mail message I had sent to friends in Minnesota, who published it in the November 1998 bulletin of Women Against Military Madness (WAMM). Walls describes my message as the dubious Balkan oil pipeline tale and dismisses it as follows:

> Although a Balkan pipeline route has been the subject of a modest feasibility study, the U.S. government continues to support a pipeline proposed by BP Amoco and Chevron from Baku in Azerbaijan to the Turkish port of Ceyhan on the Mediterranean. That puts the pipeline through the Caucasus, nearly a thousand miles east of the Balkans.

Now, my WAMM item mentioned the Ceyhan project, which at the time (and for several years to come) was stalled because it was extremely long and expensive, and running through insecure Kurdish territory. To speak of the pipeline overlooks the fact that several pipelines are in the works. The one planned by the U.S.-based Albanian-Macedonian-Bulgarian Oil company (AMBO) is shorter and its estimated cost is less than half that of the Ceyhan pipeline. What Walls calls a modest feasibility study cost $980,000, most of it U.S. taxpayers' money. Ted Ferguson, the CEO of AMBO, used to work for Dick Cheney's company, Brown and Root, which has been making handsome profits from contracts to provide infrastructure and services to the giant new U.S. military base in southern Kosovo, Camp Bondsteel. In September 2001, Ferguson announced plans to complete the AMBO pipeline in 2005. Who knows whether this will happen? The point is that in 1998, when NATO was preparing to go to war to force the Yugoslav government to accept NATO occupation of Kosovo, the claim that there were no Western economic interests in the

region was simply untrue.

Much later, in the February 15, 2001 issue of *The Guardian* (London), George Monbiot wrote:

> During the 1999 Balkans war, some of the critics of NATO's intervention alleged that the western powers were seeking to secure a passage for oil from the Caspian Sea. This claim was widely mocked. The foreign secretary Robin Cook observed that 'there is no oil in Kosovo'. This was, of course, true but irrelevant. [. . .]
>
> For the past few weeks, a freelance researcher called Keith Fisher has been doggedly documenting a project which, as far as I can discover, has been little reported in any British, European or American newspaper. It is called the Trans-Balkan pipeline, and it's due for approval at the end of next month.

Shouldn't this belated 2001 discovery of the AMBO pipeline be enough to vindicate Project Censored for having cited the item on the pipeline published in November 1998?

Personally, I have always considered these direct economic interests secondary to broader geopolitical motives. I never claimed that the Kosovo war was waged for oil. Rather, my view is that the primary motive for the 1999 war was to establish a new humanitarian mission for NATO beyond the Treaty area and to reinforce U.S. military presence in Europe.

The Role of Project Censored

WALLS DESCRIBES THE ACTIVITY of Project Censored as searching for hot stories that the mainstream media fail to cover and giving awards which have become 'Alternative Pulitzers,' commendations for excellence in independent reporting. I am not particularly familiar with Project Censored, but I would have thought that the search was less for hot than for politically significant stories that have been neglected because their content does not fit the agenda of the major interests that own and direct U.S. mainstream media. The notion of Alternative Pulitzers strikes me as rather comic. The Pulitzer Prizes awards money to reporters whose work is supported by the rich mainstream media establishment. Project Censored awards no money at all to reporters who had no money to start with when they wrote their alternative reports. In short, the Pulitzer Prizes are career trophies. Project Censored on the contrary is not about journalistic careers or even about excellence in reporting: it is about truth that is suppressed.

Walls is identified as a sociology professor at Sonoma State University. He claims first hand acquaintance with Project Censored. However, there is nothing to indicate that he has any particular competence to judge events in Yugoslavia. From his article, one may conclude that he bases his criticism precisely on the dubious sources of the mainstream media, whose gaps and misrepresentations were the target of Project Censored in the first place.

Alternative media are few and far between, usually operating on a shoestring and often connected to leftist political groups whose devotion to a cause inspires staff to work for next to nothing and without the infrastructure available to rich commercial media. Thus it is easy for Professor Walls to employ McCarthyite tactics to discredit a priori such sources as *Workers World* (the publication of [. . .] a Leninist sect) or *Living Marxism* (some sort of Trotskyist) and Jared Israel (a former Maoist). Personally, I am allergic to ideologies in general and have never been part of any of those political currents, but I can respect other people's commitments so long as they are honest. I consider articles should be evaluated on their merits, including mainstream reports, regardless of the bias of their owners or editors. Such evaluation is admittedly difficult and requires a mixture of background knowledge, awareness of how stories develop, and that mysterious human faculty called judgment.

NATO and the Democratic Left

WALLS WRITES: On the subject of the former Yugoslavia, Project Censored, I sadly concluded, had departed the terrain of the democratic Left for a netherworld of conspiracy theorists, Marxist-Leninist sects, and apologists for authoritarian regimes.

It is rather comic that Walls backs his indictment of conspiracy theorists with a sort of conspiracy theory of his own, relegat-

ing all the unorthodox reporters to the same netherworld, apparently because a number of them were invited to a conference in Athens attended by radical journalists, most of whom were anti-NATO and pro-Serb. Now from this one might conclude that being anti-NATO already indicates a departure from the democratic Left. This is the crux of the matter. The democratic left represented by Walls, instead of acting as a main force for peace, has been reducing its function to providing the ideological alibi for war. Even if, when war comes, this democratic left complains about some of the most inescapably noticeable violence and destruction wrought by the United States and NATO, it has already legitimized their operations by credulously echoing every allegation of human rights violations committed by other people's governments and dismissing contemptuously any suggestion of ulterior motives on the part of their own national leaders.

Professor Walls complains that stories selected for the 2000 Project Censored awards and Michael Parenti's commentary "lack [. . .] a balanced historical perspective on the last decade of war in the former Yugoslavia." Well, of course. Pieces cited by Project Censored are necessarily too short, too fragmentary, to provide historical perspective. But it is clear from the details of Professor Walls' article, themselves fragmentary, biased and sometimes inaccurate, that he himself is very far from having a balanced historical perspective on the subject.

After over a decade of confusion and distortion, deception and self-deception, a balanced perspective is indeed hard to achieve — but it is imperative for the revival of critical thinking on the left and for the development of a clear-sighted movement for international justice and peace.

DIANA JOHNSTONE

DIANA JOHNSTONE's recent book, Fools' Crusade: Yugoslavia, NATO and Western Delusions *(Pluto Press, London), will soon be distributed in the U.S. by Monthly Review.*

David Walls Replies to Diana Johnstone

DIANA JOHNSTONE DESCRIBES her extensive experience covering European politics over 25 years, and questions my standing to speak about Yugoslavia. For me, this raises an important issue: are only experts or movement celebrities privileged to address matters of international affairs? What about the voice of the ordinary informed citizen? I claim no academic or journalistic expertise on the Balkans, but I have been interested in Yugoslavia since my student days in the 1960s, when Tito's earlier break with Stalin appeared to create an opening for a possible "third camp" between the Soviet Union and the West. I first visited Yugoslavia in 1966, a trip that sticks in my memory because I was in Belgrade during the celebration of Tito's 70-something birthday. The parks were full of children's art, and the family I was staying with had tickets to the gymnastic spectacle in the sports stadium honoring Tito, who was there, in the distance, in his white marshal's uniform. I left with a fond feeling for the people of Yugoslavia that remains with me to this day.

Johnstone didn't need to be clairvoyant in 1984 to warn of a possible break-up of Yugoslavia. During a week's visit to Yugoslavia in 1972, vacationing with another family from Belgrade, I remember discussing the prospects for the country after Tito. I was startled, in my naïveté, by the family's apprehensions about the country's ability to stick together (and that was eight years before Tito's death in 1980). For that matter, the Praxis group of Yugoslavian philosophers had been warning of centrifugal forces threatening their country at least since 1971. Later, as the Eastern European bloc was beginning its dramatic upheavals in the late 1980s, I had the opportunity with a group of academics in February 1988 to enjoy lunch and conversation at the Yugoslavian embassy in Washington, DC, with Ambassador Zivorad Kovacevic (mayor of Belgrade from 1974 to 1982). Kovacevic clearly saw that Yugoslavia's future was with Europe. He was recalled by Milosevic in 1989, and retired from government service. He formed an NGO to advocate for democracy in Serbia and the other former Yugoslavian republics, and remains active in pro-democracy movements today. I have long known there to be many people of great decency, courage, and goodwill in Serbia.

That's what made it all the more dismaying to see the direction Milosevic began to lead the country.

I mention these personal reminiscences not to suggest the experiences give me any unusual insight into Yugoslavia, but because they did give me additional motivation to look deeper into the conflicting reports we began to receive on developments in Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. Few of us are authorities on every corner of the globe. Most of us rely on reporters and magazines we have come to trust for analysis of world events. When these trusted sources confront us with diametrically opposed interpretations, the resulting cognitive dissonance presents us with three possibilities. We can ignore the discrepancies and push the whole matter out of our minds. Or we can choose to believe the report that's most consistent with the mental model we carry in our heads of how the world works. Or we can take the time to dig into the matter, trying to the best of our ability to ascertain what the truth is, even if it means painfully revising our conceptual map of the world. Most of us don't have the time or motivation to follow the latter path very often, but with Project Censored based at my home campus, I felt a responsibility to try to determine the truth of their stories on Yugoslavia.

One such story that drew my initial skepticism was Johnstone's report on the proposed Albanian-Macedonian-Bulgarian Oil Company (AMBO) pipeline, supposedly an important motivator of NATO intervention in the Balkans. Johnstone criticizes me for describing the $980,000 AMBO feasibility study as "modest." To us as individuals a million dollars sounds like a lot of money, but it's pocket change in the pipeline business, and a small slice of political pork for Congress. Compare it to the actually proceeding Baku to Ceyhan pipeline (construction began in September 2002), whose engineering study alone cost BP $76 million, and whose total cost is estimated to be $2.9 billion.

Pipeline fever continues to grip Project Censored. In the recently released *Censored 2003* the hypothetical AMBO pipeline resurfaces for story award #10 in the imagination of Michel Chossudovsky, who sees it as a major cause of NATO intervention in Macedonia. This story was hard to swallow even for the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, a stalwart Project Censored booster, in its annual coverage of the top ten Censored awards that delicately described Chossudovsky's thesis as "more of a starting point than a smoking gun." A pipeline plot also figures in *Censored 2003*'s story award #4 on the causes of the war in Afghanistan, although it plays a relatively minor role in the featured book, *The Forbidden Truth*, by French authors Jean-Charles Brisard and Guillaume Dasquie.

Peter Phillips also serves as national and international news editor of a local biweekly alternative newspaper with which Project Censored has a cooperative relationship, the *North Bay Progressive*, which featured a long essay in its June 13-26, 2002, issue by Karen Talbot, "U.S. Oil Profits Drive Policy in Central Asia." Talbot argues the now-abandoned Unocal proposal for a gas pipeline across Afghanistan to Pakistan and India drove U.S. policy first to support the Taliban and then to fight it. Anyone who takes this theory seriously should read Ken Silverstein's "No War for Oil!" in the August 12, 2002 issue of *The American Prospect*. Talbot is yet another member of the International Committee to Defend Slobodan Milosevic. She also worked for the World Peace Council (WPC) in its old pro-Soviet days, and is now a board member of its surviving remnant, which has migrated from Helsinki to Athens. An earlier version of her article appears on the WPC web site. I guess we should expect her story to turn up on the award list in *Censored 2004*.

Although Johnstone is more sophisticated than these economic reductionists, seeing broader strategic interests underlying NATO intervention in the Balkans, some of her readers have clearly taken the pipeline interests to be the ultimate explanation of NATO's actions. One critic has described the explanations of groups like Workers World as "kindergarten Marxism." Marx and Engels famously described the executive of the modern state in the *Manifesto* as a committee for "managing the *common* affairs of the *whole* bourgeoisie" (emphasis provided), not for going to war over the individual interests of any specific corporation at any given moment. Even their

necessarily simplified epigram is considerably more subtle than the parody of Marxian analysis offered by theories that find the causes of war in obscure pipeline and lead mine interests.

Johnstone claims to be providing a balanced account of events in the former Yugoslavia, but she is the source of the *Censored 1999* story denying systematic rape in Bosnia. Her article "Seeing Yugoslavia Through a Dark Glass" from the Fall 1998 *CovertAction Quarterly*, (available on the journal's web site) was first delivered as a paper at that May 1998 Athens conference of radical journalists. The precedent-setting ICTY verdict in the trial of Kunarac and associates for the systematic rape of Bosnian women in Foca has been available since February 2001, but Johnstone does not take the opportunity presented here to revise her earlier denial. Maybe she will get around to it in her forthcoming book.

A couple of minor matters: Johnstone takes issue with my describing Project Censored's awards as "Alternative Pulitzers." I don't think that's a particularly apt characterization either, but I was quoting others who have used the term. *AlterNet* founder Don Hazen attributes the coinage to former *In These Times* publisher Paul Obis. Johnstone laments my dismissing her as a "formerly respected correspondent," but she herself points out that *The Nation* and *In These Times* came to this conclusion well before I did. I'm comfortable following their lead.

Walls and the Hegemonic Truth

To the Editors:

ON NO SUBJECT HAS THE HEGEMONIC TRUTH serving establishment interests been as effectively disseminated as on Serb atrocities and Serb responsibility for all the ills of the Balkans. This view rests on a simplified, and essentially ideological picture of what caused the ethnic cleansing and killings of the 1990s, supported by highly selective and often outright false evidence. It has captured and overwhelmed numerous liberals and leftists, who have been unable to cut through the huge propaganda barrage, and have made the NATO war there a humanitarian enterprise overcoming true evil. Now that it has become evident that al-Qaeda played a significant role in helping both the Bosnian Muslims and KLA, and that under NATO control of Kosovo a true ecumenical ethnic cleansing has taken place covering the Roma, Turks, and Jews, as well as Serbs, the liberals and leftists who crusaded for the NATO war maintain a sturdy silence on these developments (as do the mainstream media) as a necessary part of preserving their mythical history of good versus evil.

David Walls' piece is a perfect illustration of the swallowing of a hegemonic propaganda line based on ignorance and a selective use of evidence. Johnstone notes Walls' statement that the "unravelling" of Yugoslavia began when Milosevic "moved to end the autonomy of Kosovo and Vojvodina provinces in 1989," which is ideology parading as history, that ignores the significance of the fall of the Soviet Union; German, Austrian and papal interests and intervention; U.S. intervention; Croat nationalism and Croat and Slovenian economic interests, and other factors.

Beyond this demonstration that Walls is out of his league, we believe that every illustration of bias given by Walls disintegrates on close inspection. He cites Tribunal judgments, as against Radislav Kristic, "convicted of genocide," as if that court was an objective institution of justice rather than an arm of NATO—and, in John Laughland's words, "a rogue court with rigged rules." Walls never digested the significance of the fact that when criticism of NATO became troublesome in May 1999, after NATO had moved to attacking Serbian civilian targets in straightforward violation of the Genocide Convention, the Tribunal issued a hastily concocted indictment of Milosevic based on unverified U.S. intelligence claims. This was only the most spectacular Tribunal PR move serving NATO, allowing continued de facto war crimes by the Tribunal's masters.

We only have space here to examine one of Walls' cases, so let's take the first, Racak. Just as he takes the Tribunal as an objective source of information, he relies on Helena Ranta, the woman selected by OSCE to do the forensic study of this alleged massacre, although her forensic expertise was lim-

ited to dentistry. On March 17, 1999, Ranta's team submitted a report whose findings were substantially identical with those of a Serb team; but for purposes of a press conference Ranta issued a separate report that was acknowledged to be her personal views and "not to be interpreted in any way as the authorized communication of the Department of Forensic Medicine of the University of Helsinki, or the EU expert team of pathologists."

The Serb expert and team spokesperson, Professor Dusan Dunjic, found evidence of gunpowder on the hands of 37 of 40 victims, suggesting the handling of firearms; in 38 of 40 cases there was evidence of killing from a distance; and many of them were clothed in a manner suggesting paramilitary service (see his "The (Ab)use of Forensic Medicine," www.suc.org/politics/kosovo/documents/Dunjic0499.html). Is his evidence less trustworthy than Ranta's? Walls fails to mention that the report she and her team prepared on the massacre has to this day not been publicly released.

Walls neglects all other sources and context. He fails to mention that Racak was a KLA stronghold, and that the KLA had reoccupied the town after a Serb-KLA shootout, and that it was the KLA that "found" the bodies on the following morning. He doesn't mention that the attack on Racak was observed by OSCE monitors, with two APTV photographers present, by invitation of the Yugoslavs. Why would the Yugoslavs invite observers to an action where they intended to slaughter civilians? Why would they leave a lot of dead civilians in a heap for their enemies to use against them (and we would wager that Walls swallows the belated claims of Serb mass removal operations where bodies are not found)?

Christopher Chatelet of *Le Monde* was in Racak the day of the massacre, found the site calm, OSCE observers helping some elderly people, but telling Chatelet that nothing important had happened. There were no signs of a massacre. After the report of a massacre Chatelet and *Le Figaro* reporter Renaud Giraud insisted on seeing, the AP photographers' tapes of the days events, which Chatelet and Renaud say showed fighting but nothing supporting a claim of a massacre. These were independent observers on the scene. The AP photographers and OSCE representatives who were at Racak have not been available for further inquiry. Have they and the final big OSCE report been kept unavailable ever since to protect Yugoslavia?

The "preferential method" of research that Walls displays in discussing Racak we believe characterizes his other analyses of Yugoslavia, so he, not Project Censored and its authors, is the true "apologist" — for an institutionalized but false NATO party line swallowed by the *New York Times, In These Times*, Christopher Hitchens, and many more.

EDWARD S. HERMAN & DAVID PETERSON

EDWARD S. HERMAN is an economist and media analyst; his most recent book, co-edited with Philip Hammond, is Degraded Capability: The Media and the Kosovo War *(Pluto, 2000).*

DAVID PETERSON is a freelance researcher and writer based in the Chicago area.

David Walls Replies to Edward S. Herman and David Peterson

ONE MAY SAY OF EDWARD HERMAN what Norman Thomas said of Henry Wallace: he is a man "so firmly in possession of the truth that the facts don't matter very much." Herman and David Peterson get one thing right, however; I do base my conclusions about the crimes in Bosnia on the extensive body of evidence amassed at the ICTY trials. It's ironic that just as progressives are excoriating President George W. Bush for opposing the treaty establishing the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Herman has been relentlessly attacking an actually existing prototype, the ICTY (see, for example, his articles in the April and May 2002 issues of *Z* Magazine).

Herman's brief against the Tribunal is based on claims regarding NATO crimes he believes the ICTY should be prosecuting but isn't. Aside from the Milosevic trial, which he spends most of his articles attacking, Herman pays no attention to the dozens of ICTY trials that have often gone on for several months, with each side presenting scores of witnesses and compiling massive documentation. Although the majority of cases have involved Serbs, Croatians and

Bosnians have also been arrested and brought to trial. Judges have scrupulously followed strict rules of evidence, throwing out the testimony of unreliable witnesses and finding some of the accused innocent. By ignoring the Kunarac case (which declared for the first time that systematic rape of women in wartime is a war crime and a crime against humanity) Herman and Peterson appear to be blinded by their own vulnerability to a component of "hegemonic truth"— namely male chauvinism. Given the vital importance of this precedent to women world-wide, even the harshest male critics of the ICTY ought to be able to grant its significance.

Most of Herman and Peterson's comments are directed at the January 1999 Racak incident in Kosovo, and argue that no massacre has been proven. They aim to discredit Dr. Helena Ranta, the director of the EU Forensic Expert Team in Kosovo, by claiming she is only a dentist. Once again Herman and Peterson are revealed buying into a piece of the "hegemonic truth" they purport to decry — by adopting the dated idea that a physician must be at the apex of forensic science. For one thing, forensic odontology is a central forensic discipline, as teeth are a vital means of identifying human remains. And Ranta is not only a D.D.S., but has a Ph.D. in microbiology (a key field in this day of DNA analysis) and an appointment on the faculty of Forensic Medicine at the University of Helsinki. She is an internationally recognized forensic authority.

Herman and Peterson ask whether the evidence of Professor Dusan Dunjic is less trustworthy than Ranta's. In a word, yes. One doesn't need to impeach Dunjic's integrity to acknowledge that he had access only to initial autopsy evidence. Ranta's team returned in November 1999 and March 2000 to the site where 23 bodies were found in a gully near Racak with a full complement of photographers, surveyors, and other crime scene analysts. They found bullets at the points where the bodies were positioned, and linked these to the bodies by DNA evidence. Shell casings were also recovered, which allowed identification of the number and types of weapons fired. The evidence makes clear the victims were executed where their bodies were found. In a separate interview, available at the Balkan Witness web site, Ranta estimated the bodies at the Racak gully had been shot from a distance of a couple meters. Dunjic reported using a paraffin test to determine whether the victims had recently fired guns. As Ranta's report notes, however, modern forensic science advises using a more reliable test. When Ranta's team employed that more reliable test, the results came up negative. Contrary to Herman and Peterson, the executive summary of the final report of the EU Forensic Expert Team has been available since February 2001, and it may be read at the Balkan Witness web site.

For all who would whitewash the realities of war crimes, genocide, and systematic rape of women in the former Yugoslavia, I can do no better than conclude with the words of Ed Vulliamy from his "Poison in the Well of History" article. "Shame, then, on those fools, supporters of the pogrom, cynics and dilettantes who supported them, gave them credence and endorsed their vile enterprise."

Class, Gender, and Race in The Newark Teacher Strikes

Lois Weiner

DRAWING ON PRIMARY AND SECONDARY sources as well as extensive oral interviews with participants in the events, Steve Golin's fine book* describes the formation of the Newark Teachers Union and its heart-breaking confrontation with black nationalism and African American parents. He tells an engrossing story that is simultaneously respectful to the activists whose struggle he documents, supportive of their aspirations to be treated with dignity as workers, and critical of the ideological limitations that led to the violent strike and battle with black parents. This story of the Newark teachers crosses boundaries of many fields of history. As Golin correctly comments, it is "urban history as the history of education, it is labor history brought up to date as the unionization of public sector workers, and it is a study of ethnicity, gender, and race in class formation" as well as "a book about the 1960s, one of a growing number of local studies." (p. 6) Although I am not a historian and cannot evaluate the book as a historian might, I can advise readers of *New Politics* who are interested in education, unions, gender politics, race, and social justice to put Golin's book high on their reading lists.

The Newark Teacher Strikes is a narrative about teachers who built the union and led it through two strikes, facing mass arrest, jail and loss of their jobs. The story begins with an insightful analysis of the motivations of people like Hannah Litzky and Bob Lowenstein, who started the union, Local 481, in 1937. Most of the union's founders were Jewish high school teachers from families with radical and socialist leanings who saw the struggle for teacher unionism as a vehicle for advancing social justice. These pioneers were joined in the 1960s by a group of Italian American activists, like Tony Ficcio, who pushed the union to focus on collective bargaining and more immediate economic concerns of teachers. Two of the Italian American male activists were elementary school teachers who expressed resentment felt by elementary teachers towards teachers in higher grades: "The lower you go in school, the harder you work." (p. 18)

Golin notes that activists were aware of a tension between "the new strand of bread-and-butter unionism and the older strand of socially committed unionism," (p. 29) and comments that not all of the teachers active in the union during this time experienced the conflict in the ethnic terms he has used in the book to configure the difference. Typical of the way Golin allows the voices of Newark teachers whom he interviewed to come through in this narrative is his description of two teachers' critique of his analysis: "Doesn't ethnicity hide class? Weren't Jews really more middle class, and Italians more working class?" (p. 29) Golin's response is that the Italians and Jews made different sense of their working-class identity. Italian teachers tended to define class "in terms of relations on the job: employees versus management. Jewish teachers were more likely to define the working class politically, in terms of what it had already accomplished in transforming American society and might yet accomplish." (p. 29) Golin concludes that ethnicity and class identity mutually reinforced each other and influenced but did not determine how individu-

**The Newark Teacher Strikes. Hopes on the Line* by Steve Golin, Rutgers University Press, 2002.

LOIS WEINER *teaches education at New Jersey City University. She was previously a public school teacher and teachers union activist and is the author of* Urban Teaching: The Essentials *(TC Press, 1999).*

als might regard themselves and the issues the union confronted.

Golin looks at race as well, explaining that although the union "aggressively courted African American teachers" (p. 30) during the collective bargaining campaigns in the 1960s, seeking to sign up teachers like Janice Adams, a Newark native who eventually joined and became an activist, black teachers rarely signed-up immediately. Because of their exclusion from many unions, few African American teachers grew up with the pro-union sentiments Italian and Jewish teachers brought to teaching, along with a proclivity to join the union in its early years, before collective bargaining was possible. When black teachers did join, their explanation and reasoning related to the history of slavery, or as teacher Charles Nolley said when told to remain after school to work with no pay, "That's bondage." (p. 31)

Golin does a strong job of explaining how gender, especially a sense of what it meant to be a man, influenced the way teachers understood their identity as teachers and unionists. For instance he observes that when Bob

Lowenstein talked about his dignity as a worker, he "spoke from a long tradition of masculine independence." Also, he observes that the organizing in the 60s was done by men who were not especially sensitive to the nuances of gender," (p.20) a point not often understood by historians. Though Golin is alert to gender as an influence on identity formation he misses the gendered aspects of the tension between elementary and high school teachers, perhaps because in Newark two male elementary school teachers were leaders of the union. Another reason the book misses the gendered division between elementary and high school teachers is a factor I return to later in the review, the ways in which the definition of work is itself a gendered construct.

In the first strike, a three-week stoppage in 1970, black and white teachers fought for the union to have a say in decision-making. Golin traces the evolution of the demands, demonstrating that the monetary demands were part of a social movement to maker teachers' voices heard in decisions about their work. In the second, eleven-week strike in 1971 that erupted over a union provision to eliminate "non-professional" duties as well as the board's attempt to revoke binding arbitration, many black teachers crossed the lines, siding with the board and parents. The strikes led to mass arrests and eventually to teachers

Teaching as work is affected by a definition of "work" that is gendered.

serving jail terms of up to 3 months, also described in the book. The second strike became violent and polarized Newark racially, pitting the union and its supporters, among them Anthony Imperiale and his Italian American white supremacists, against black activists and the black mayor, Kenneth Gibson.

The story of the second strike is one that continues today, a destructive conflict between two forces that should and could be allies: teacher unions battling for better wages and a voice for city teachers in school policy are pitted (and pit themselves) against poor, minority parents and activists organizing to improve schools that have failed to educate children. In Newark the alliance was undercut because "the protagonists denied each other's legitimacy." (p. 112) Golin is careful to show that the denial on the part of both sides in Newark was mutual and symbiotic. "Striking teachers saw their struggle as one of working people against management. Their opponents saw Black parents and citizens against white teachers. There was tremendous pressure to choose between these two competing views, rather than to seek what was true in each . . . Either the strike was seen through the lens of class, or it was seen through the lens of race." (p. 140)

Black teachers were under the most pressure and ultimately many who were union members identified "community" with race and crossed picket lines. Even when the strike ended the strife did not, and many striking teachers returned to schools at which parents physically barred them from

entering. Golin notes, correctly I think, that an alternative possibility was for a teacher-parent alliance, which occurred in a few schools, ones in which teachers had been proactive in reaching across the border of race and class — and as I will explain, gender — to parents.

Defining "Work"

THE FULL EXPLANATION of why the union failed to reach out to parents, to regard them as partners and allies, includes not only the issues Golin analyzes, but also one he misses, the way that teaching as work is affected by a definition of "work" that is gendered. As Sari Biklen explains in her book *Schoolwork*, "work" is defined in traditional sociology as what we do outside the home, so "family" or "home" and "work" or "career" are opposites. If one accepts this dichotomy as natural, immutable, or given, what should we make of paid labor, "work," done outside the home that consists of functions mothers traditionally do in the home, like caring for children? Taking into account the gendered construct of work explains the perception of teaching as "women's work" and other things that are germane to Golin's analysis, for instance why teaching has low status and why it is not well-paid or well-regarded in the dominant society — or considered "work" at all by many academics whom one might expect to be interested in the subject of teacher unions and teaching, including labor historians, feminists, and educational researchers. A full explanation of why teaching and teachers have been unpalatable topics for leftist academics in the U.S. is not possible in this review, but a brief examination is important to understand why the gendered construction of work and teaching is central to teaching's low status in the society and the academy.

First we should understand the circumstances that make the absence of attention to teachers noteworthy. Overall, more than two-thirds of all teachers are female, and as students' ages rise, the proportion of female teachers in the school declines steeply. Public school teaching is one of the largest occupational groups in the nation, with more than two million workers organized into unions in almost every community. Even in states that do not have automatic dues payment or mandatory union fees, social norms within schools prompt a majority of teachers to join their local affiliate of the National Education Association or American Federation of Teachers. (The exception is in states that have not yet legalized collective bargaining for teacher public employees.)

Despite the size of these organizations and their predominantly female membership, teacher unionism was not taken up by academics interested in labor, women's rights, or educational reform until the late 70s, when *History of Education* carried an article about Margaret Haley, a socialist elementary teacher in Chicago who organized the first local of the American Federation of Teachers. *Labor History* carried an article (and cover photo) about women miners almost a decade before it mentioned teacher unionism, in an interview with Dave Selden, the one-time president of the American Federation of Teachers who was ousted by Albert Shanker. Certainly the romanticization of the "real" working class, the industrial proletariat, is a factor that partly explains the lack of interest in teachers, despite the fact that during the 60s and early 70s almost every major city in the U.S. saw the emergence of militant teacher unions, as Newark did. I argue, however, that one cannot fully understand the construction of the "real" working class without acknowledging the gendered construction of work that makes some occupations "real work" and the workers "real working class."

Teacher education is a "cash cow" for higher education.

For feminist academics writing in *Signs*, examining challenges faced by female professionals, like school administrators, was of much more interest than scrutinizing teachers or their unions. Their disinclination to examine the subject of teaching as work, an occupation that has been identified as "women's true profession" since the Civil War, was probably nurtured by the anti-working class bias that was prevalent

in the New Left and the student movement, the breeding ground for the women's liberation movement, or second-wave feminism as it is now called. And as feminism became lodged in the university, the class stratification of higher education certainly made intellectual work about teachers, who are primarily working class and lower middle class in their social class origins, less inviting. Even now among educational researchers there is not much interest in teachers' work and teacher unionism. Although the American Educational Research Association, the professional organization to which most educational researchers belong, has a small "special interest group" for researchers interested in teachers' work and teacher unionism, a majority of its members reside outside the U.S. Although they maintain research departments, neither the NEA nor the AFT has much interest in the scholarly examination of class or gender issues in teaching, nor of teacher unionism itself. Their lack of concern mirrors the stance of much of organized labor in the U.S.

The Gendered Construction of Work

ONE EXPLANATION FOR THE ABSENCE of much intellectually serious study of teachers' work in the U.S. is the class biases embedded in and supported by our stratified system of higher education, coupled with the ideological blinders that have traditionally kept class as an object of study off the radar screen of academics and unions. However, the gendered construction of work and teaching's low status due to this construction is a factor as well, seen simultaneously in the research university's notorious disregard for the quality of instruction in its own classrooms and in the lack of resources devoted to teaching and education as subjects and objects of study. A little known fact about university finances is that because of the practice of having students do practice teaching in schools while paying hefty tuition to the university, teacher education is a "cash cow" for higher education. Yet the money that teacher education brings in is almost never returned to its source. Teacher education's low status even within schools of education themselves is demonstrated by another phenomenon that is rarely acknowledged: The closer faculty members' work takes them to schools and young children, the lower their salaries, the higher their teaching loads, and the greater the proportion of females and minorities.

The Newark Teacher Strikes demonstrates not only that teaching and teacher unionism provide rich territory that should be mined for insights about the formation of class-consciousness, but also that one cannot make sense of what occurs in teaching or schools or teacher unions without reference to gender. One of the arguments that has bedeviled teacher unionism is how to deal with the issue of professionalism. If we want to elevate the regard in which teaching is held because we think it is socially useful work that is difficult and deserving of recognition and remuneration, how should we proceed? Should we try to make teaching like the other professions that have high status, such as law and medicine? Or should we propose that teachers act like other workers who want to improve their income by forming a union? But is teaching a working class occupation? In his rumination about "Who is working class?" (p. 23) Golin writes: "Of course teachers are working class. Of course they are not working class. That's what it means to be working class: to be defined by your role as worker, and to struggle to be more than your role." (p. 24)

Understanding that the "role" of teacher is gendered allows us to understand in a different way the reluctance of elementary school teachers to join the union and their identification with a sense of "professional obligation to serve students," as was true of Edith Counts, an African American teacher who did not join the union. Golin's account makes clear that the Newark Teachers Union defined "professionalism" in a way that did not encourage teachers, especially elementary school teachers, who understood their work as serving children and families, not a school system or an institution, to join — unless they agreed that the well-being of the particular children they were dedicated to serve could not be advanced without a commitment to social progress and social justice generally. Or as Vic Cascella described this definition of being professional, "you had to be concerned with civil rights, you had to be concerned with the learning

of the kids." (p. 23) I explain below why one reason that race and class became constructed in opposition to one another in the second strike was that the union never allowed for a definition of professionalism that took into account the gendered nature of teachers' work, the importance of teaching's "mothering" functions.

As Golin demonstrates, teachers' notions about their relations with parents, children, and the subjects they teach influence not only how they teach but also their conception of what a union should be. Teachers who consider themselves in service to communities often view the school as an extension of the family in socializing and educating children. Because of this definition of their work, they are more likely to experience the tensions that emerge from unionization.

Successful teaching (like parenting) demands attention to children's needs, which are individual, personal, and at times seem to have no limit. Especially in cities, teachers work with children in schools that are hierarchical and bureaucratic, impersonal and anonymous. Teachers are treated as expendable and interchangeable, while to do their jobs well they must take moral responsibility for children's well being. So to represent teachers' interests, a union must take up the conditions that make teaching a job like any other. Albert Shanker, longtime boss of the American Federation of Teachers and the New York affiliate, articulated clearly and well this function of a teachers union. But what his vision of teaching and unionism excluded was acknowledgment of the inevitable contradictions that arise between teachers' personal and individual responsibility for children, the ways their work continues the functions of the family, and the location of these functions in a bureaucracy as paid labor. While this contradiction is exacerbated by conditions of scarce resources it is not eliminated entirely even when financial support for schools is ample.

We can understand people's motivations and thinking . . . without recourse to the jargon so often used in academic studies.

This tension emerges as a conflict in decisions about how non-classroom duties such as supervising children at lunch or on the playground should be handled. Most teachers loathe these duties because they are so far removed from intellectual aspects of teaching, the responsibilities that make teaching seem more than "babysitting" — or understood in terms of work's gendered construction, more like "work" and less like "home." However, if we view schools as extensions of the family and home, then another way to view these responsibilities is that they represent the school's role in children's socialization, so functions like supervising children at play are no less essential than attending to their cognitive development.

It is difficult for teachers to see the educative value of activities like lunch and recess because in almost all public schools they are structured in a bureaucratic fashion, constructed more like they are in prisons and factories than the way they are experienced in homes. Children take lunch and recess en masse; the activity and setting are impersonal and the children are anonymous; the activity is robbed of its personal, human element. But what if lunch occurred in the classroom with the teacher, a time for relaxed interchange? What if school resources and organization allowed teachers to have lunch and recess with children as well as time away from the classroom for other responsibilities, planning or socializing with other adults?

As Golin explains, the issue of "non-pedagogical" responsibilities was a critical factor in the second strike in Newark, and the union leadership's insistence on holding onto a victory in arbitration that released teachers from these jobs pitted the union against community activists. The union's most persuasive argument in organizing elementary schoolteachers was that unionism made teacher professionalism possible by improving teachers' salary and working conditions. It would elevate their status and in so doing make teaching more

like "work" and less like "home." But this definition of "professionalism" reinforced a conception of teachers' work that led in short order to internecine conflicts with black parents. Some teachers, however, understood teaching's worth in its being of service to families and neighborhoods, and, in other words, wanted teaching to transcend the dichotomy between "work" and "home." As Golin quotes one black parent observing, these "non-professional" chores were "the only human aspect of teaching," (p.116) and in one alternative school Golin describes, a school in which parents and teachers had a strong working relationship, the issue of "non-professional" responsibilities was moot because lunch was a communal activity.

Two High Points

THE BOOK CONTAINS TOO MUCH that is intelligent, informative, and moving to summarize. It must be read, but I will mention two high points for me. One often reads about "white workers" as if they are indistinguishable from one another. Golin's analysis of how the ideologies of the Italian American and Jewish teachers diverged and how the differences influenced the union's formation and demise demonstrates that the categorization "white workers" masks critically important differences as well as similarities. He also gets at how the black teachers who joined the union understood their commitment, how they made sense of being black and being workers. Golin's work is evidence that we can understand people's motivations and thinking as they are influenced by ethnicity, class, gender, and race without recourse to the jargon so often used in academic studies of these topics and without reference to the notion of "culture," which at least in educational research is the primary lens for explaining the phenomena Golin addresses as a historian.

The most dramatic part of the book is the discussion of the second strike and the description of the escalating violence, which threatened to explode in race war. Despite the excitement of this chapter, for me the most moving section of the book was the chapter in which he describes and analyzes the ways that the teacher activists faced their long prison sentences. Golin shows how the worldviews that configured their involvement in the union did the same in prison. For some women this meant organizing to change conditions, forming relationships with the black prisoners, starting classes, understanding the intentional brush of a leg as the expression of human desire for warmth and comfort, rather than as a threatening lesbian advance.

For one teacher, Alice Saltman, an artist, jail was the occasion for meditation and drawing. The sketch of her cell is reproduced. In contrast, for the men jail was a competition, a test of their masculinity and a measure of how they stacked up against their jailer-opponents. As Golin recounts these stories we see how each person struggled to feel human in this most barbaric environment. I think that most readers of *New Politics* will agree with me that it is close to impossible to read this chapter without identifying with their struggle, along with a feeling of great sadness that their sacrifice followed the defeat of their union and vision.

Golin ends the book with a hopeful look at the Newark Teachers Union today, which underwent eclipse and suffered from corruption in the 70s and 80s. He links the union's decline to the withering of its democratic traditions shortly after it won collective bargaining, which also occurred in New York City. (In fact, the comparison between what occurred in Newark and New York City is suggested but not explored so often in this study that it seems impossible that it will not be undertaken in a subsequent study, by someone else if not by Golin himself.) The Newark Teachers Union has a new president, one of the activists who helped build it, Joe Del Grosso.

Golin is reassured that the union is now heading in the right direction because Del Grosso emphasizes the importance of union democracy and participation of the membership. But I am less confident that the definition of "union democracy" that Del Grosso projects and Golin accepts is sufficient to heal the union's relations with Newark residents. First, there is no explicit mention of race and how this continues to influence the way teachers in Newark view their work and their union. Del Grosso's analysis of how the union should proceed, as Golin

presents it, gives no indication that the union has come to grips with the contradictions that arise for teacher unions in the construction of "school" as a workplace that has no connection to home or family. Just as critically, although the generation of teachers who created the union is now starting to retire, the issue of race has not disappeared with the passage of time or the departure of the activists who built the union. Race and the way it influences one's view of schools, teaching and teacher unions is still the "elephant in the closet " for teacher unionism in Newark and in most cities.

I saw an ominous indication of what is in store for the Newark Teachers Union, despite Joe Del Grosso's hopes, in a class I taught last year. Several young Newark teachers, all African American, born long after the story Golin narrates, were taking the course to complete their certification as principals. When we discussed teacher unionism, reading an inspirational speech by Margaret Haley about why teachers should organize, they expressed enthusiasm for her arguments about the need to reduce class size, about the critical importance of education in and for a democracy, about teachers having an alliance with other working people. As I always do when using this speech, I asked my students how their own union compared to Haley's vision. The tenor of the discussion shifted abruptly. Of the five young teachers in the class, only one had ever attended a union meeting, to find out about benefits. She presented the fact of her attendance at a union meeting as almost accidental and indicated that she would not return to another. The business of the union seemed irrelevant to her main concern, the quality of children's education. She made another comment that sent a chill down my back, even before I read Golin's book and learned how savage and bitter the racial divide in Newark had been during the second strike. "You know," she said, "I never knew there were so many white teachers in Newark." All the other African American teachers who worked in Newark nodded in agreement, a young male adding, "Yeah, you only see them at union meetings."

Race and the way it influences one's view of schools, teaching and teacher unions is still the "elephant in the closet."

FOR UNION DEMOCRACY TO BE REAL in the Newark Teachers Union and other unions as well, it can't be discussed in a race-free fashion. The union has to understand, as Golin does, that teachers are a varied group who want many different things from their union, some of which are contradictory. One of the main tensions is that the work that teachers do is not esteemed or valued by the dominant society in good part because it is "women's work." As Golin's book demonstrates, if those of us who support the struggles of all workers for dignity don't put race and gender on the table, our enemies will, and they will be joined by people who should be our allies.

Debating the Future at the European Social Forum

Martin Thomas

I WENT TO THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FORUM, in Florence on November 7-10, on a coach organized by No Sweat, a group which campaigns against sweatshop labor conditions both internationally and within Britain.

On the cross-channel ferry coming back from Italy, we held a short impromptu meeting on what we made of it and where to go now. It was a very tiny cross-section of the 60,000 people attending the Forum. One thing struck me immediately as we talked: the Forum itself had had much less of the debate and exchange between different anti-"neoliberal" viewpoints that we had here in this small meeting.

Talking to people at and after the Forum, I found that most had attended very few of the many hundreds of formal sessions. Overwhelmed by the vast welter of events, they had spent more time joining the swirl of humanity at the Forum's main sites, dropping in and out of sessions, picking up the atmosphere. Few formal sessions — none that I heard of — had any structured, systematic debate.

Our little meeting started off with a young man complaining that the Forum's "non-party" stance had been insufficiently enforced. He had been dismayed on arrival at the Forum's main site to find people selling *Socialist Worker* outside, just like back home in Huddersfield. He was happy to have gone to the Forum, but, more generally, he had found just "too much information" there, presented in too scattershot a way, to take in.

Others replied that the "non-party" stance was a fake. In fact, the main shaping influence in the Forum had been Rifondazione (the Party of Communist Refoundation: it originated from the left wing of the Italian Communist Party when it broke up after the collapse of the USSR, but now contains more activists from non-CP backgrounds, including Trotskyists, than old Communists). The "non-party" policy cannot abolish party influences, but only keep them behind the scenes. Better that the parties' contention be upfront, where they can be openly disputed and assessed.

A number of people wanted us to make sure that we, coming as we did from very diverse groups, kept in touch after we returned to Britain. Some of the middle-aged comrades proposed that we could meet up again at one or another environmentalist gathering, preferably in the open air, in "mud and rain," which would heighten togetherness. The younger people did not want that. When an assembly organized by "Earth First" was mentioned, the young woman next to me muttered: "What about humanity first?"

Gatherings are good, others said, but they have to draw on ongoing activism. The fuel of the Forum in Italy had been activism — trade union struggles, agitation against the planned U.S. war on Iraq. We should develop such activism in Britain. We mentioned anti-war agitation and a conference called by No Sweat for a couple of weeks after the Forum, focused on such issues as building international links with the Mexican workers who have successfully established a trade union at the Kukdong/Mexmode factory, subcontractors for Nike and Reebok, and working with British unions to inform sweatshop workers in East London about their legal rights.

One of us, an art student who (so he had explained to me on the coach) had got into politics by way of studying situationism in college, then branching out to read Negri, and now a bit of Marx, was skeptical about the trade unions. The trade unions are conservative, he said, and tied to the Blair gov-

---

MARTIN THOMAS *is a member of the staff of the London-based socialist magazine* Workers' Liberty*, and active in the Socialist Alliance.*

ernment. They will never do anything radical. Another person, from the older generation, had a different objection. She would find it difficult, though maybe not impossible, to work with people involved in production she found ethically unacceptable, like building new cars. Others of us were in favor of working in and with the trade unions, especially with the rank and file.

From a Mood to a Movement?

SOON WE WERE DOCKING in Dover. We decided to keep in touch by email. For me, the meeting had brought back memories of another political epoch — the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament of the 1960s. That had something of the same kaleidoscope of political colors, mobilized together by a common opposition to the ruling infamy of the day.

CND, however, was a movement — a more or less common structure, with recognized common goals, demonstrations, activities. The "anti-neoliberal" or "anti-capitalist" movement assembled at the Forum is not a single movement in anything like the same sense. Back-to-nature greenies, liberal NGOs, and militant Marxists will, like it or not, mostly go their own ways after the Forum, criss-crossing again to be sure, but not converging into a single movement.

I am writing this article in Brisbane, Australia. Here much more has been done to organize the new anti-capitalist mood into a "movement." The Brisbane Social Forum held a gathering in March this year of 400 people (huge for here), has a committee which still meets, and is planning another large Forum next year. Yet it remains a get-together point, rather than an organizing center for anti-war, refugee-rights, environmental or trade union agitation.

The mood is significant without being a movement — an entry point to radical politics for many young people. To sneer would be as stupid as it was in the 1960s to stand aloof from the "middle-class, pacifist" CND. The job is really to build a movement, or movements, from the mood.

The main center of the Forum was an old military base, the Fortezza, with meeting halls spread across its large area. At any given time there were half a dozen large "conferences" running, with a thousand or two thousand people in each, 20-odd middle-sized "seminars" (up to two hundred strong), and dozens of smaller "workshops." Translation facilities ranged from excellent to nil. There were two main sites outside the Fortezza for conferences and seminars, and the workshops were spread across Florence and the surrounding villages, sometimes a long bus journey away.

To get an overview of the discussions was physically impossible, and I doubt that anyone tried. Most of the participants simply took in the atmosphere. Mind you, they thought that atmosphere worth coming to Florence for. The 60,000 were mostly young and mostly Italian; on a rough sample count they included as many young women as young men; posters, leaflets, banners, placards everywhere proclaimed enthusiastic, generous identification with people's struggles everywhere against entrenched power. The Fortezza was constantly swarming with people looking for meetings (to find where they were was not always easy!), searching for food, holding impromptu extra meetings or demonstrations of one sort or another.

For those who came from Britain, the highlight was the anti-war march on the Saturday. Contingents started to move off at 11a.m., four hours before the scheduled start of the march. The crowd was far too big to fit into the scheduled finishing area, so we stopped short, and marchers filled the streets for miles around.

There were large contingents from the most militant of Italy's big trade union federations, CGIL, and hundreds of thousands of young people. At the head of the demonstration, a contingent of Fiat car workers, engaged in strikes against 8,000 planned job cuts. Songs — Bandiera Rossa, the Internationale, Bella Ciao — dominated the demonstration, rather than chants. Banners and placards denounced the Berlusconi government and its attacks on workers' rights. Many demonstrators carried Palestinian flags and wore keffiyehs to show solidarity with the Palestinians, but I saw none of the sour, calculating "hate Israel" agitation common on the British left.

Another Europe is Possible

DESPITE THE CAUTIOUS MODERATION of the Forum's official slogans — "against neo-lib-

eralism, war and racism" — and the political diversity of the people there, no one felt the need to demur visibly or audibly from the dominant political tone of the demonstration, set by the red flags, banners and insignia of Rifondazione.

The younger, at least, of the people in the new anti-capitalist milieu feel a kinship with the idioms and ideals of working-class struggle, common ownership and solidarity, even if they hesitate to label themselves "socialist" or "communist." I was reminded of France in the 1990s, when tens of thousands of school students would proclaim their hostility to "parties," including those of the revolutionary left, yet sing the Internationale with enthusiasm.

Another example. Many of the younger people who came to the Forum were sleeping in a sports center. On the bus back from the Fortezza to that sports center one evening, someone shouted, in English, "The workers united will never be defeated!" The chant was quickly taken up in Spanish, Italian and German, and the busload ended up singing the Internationale in English and French.

The main building at the Fortezza had two floors of political stalls, almost all from campaign groups rather than parties. Sitting on the Workers' Liberty stall, I had Women in Black on one side, a Kurdish solidarity group on the other, Peace Brigades International opposite us, and a campaign against sanctions on Iraq next to them. Political debate was not very upfront.

One "conference" I attended, on "social and state economy," illustrated that too. So far as I can tell it was not untypical. If the Forum's aim was, as the official slogan said, to show that "another Europe is possible" than that of "neo-liberalism, war and racism," then the "conference" on social economy looked as if it should be a pivot of debate on how Europe could be other than "neo-liberal."

But it was a debate that wasn't a debate. The long introduction from the chair, Giorgio Dal Fiume, his interpolations between speeches, and most of those speeches, focused on building a "social economy" alongside the private business and state sectors.

Felice Scalvini, president of a European federation of cooperatives, thought that cooperatives could influence the conduct of private big business if they chose their tactics right. Carola Reintjes from Spain explained that her dream was an alternative supermarket chain across Europe, selling social-economy products.

Michael Albert from the USA expounded his model of participatory economics, which excludes all central planning but has been put into practice in a small publishing firm, South End Press. Giorgio Dal Fiume himself thought it necessary to stress that in advocating the social economy he was not proposing privatization of services currently run by the state.

Then, at the end — after the late hour, and the lack of heating in the hall, had reduced the audience to a few hundred — the last speaker was called: Yannis Milios, a Marxist economist from Athens.

Briefly and coolly, he argued that an economy regulated by money cannot but be capitalist. Those with more money buy the labor power of those with less, and use the transaction to make more money by way of exploitation. No persuasion, no good example, can make the money-owners guide their business affairs other than for profit. There is no way out without a fundamental political change through which the working people can collectively take over the productive wealth of society.

Milios got warm applause from the audience; but the short discussion that followed, around written questions from the audience, suggested that his arguments had gone way over the heads of the other platform speakers.

Fighting the New Czar

THE FORUM GAVE ME an encouraging, exciting sense of a new political generation emerging. But the formal arrangements of the Forum seemed old-fashioned. The typical scene of those formal arrangements was a meeting hall; rows of chairs; a table at the front; the audience addressed by speakers much older, much more likely to be male, and probably more prosperous and settled than themselves; then a quick chance for "questions" at the end. (Also, a disproportionate majority of the speakers were white. But that was true of the people attending

the Forum too.)

I did not attend the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, but at a socialist conference in Sydney, Australia, this Easter, I listened to four people who did. Two were from Europe or North America, two from the ex-colonial world. The leftists from the North offered warm, avuncular words about the Forum representing a wholesome process within which the left should not be too pushy. The Third World speakers were altogether less bland. A comrade from Aceh recounted how he had unexpectedly got finance to go to Porto Alegre, hoped to meet revolutionaries from Indonesia there, and been disappointed that instead he mostly found NGO people; a comrade from India explained how the "non-party" rule of the Forum had actually been a cloak for domination by the PT, the Workers' Party of Brazil. Neither of them wanted to dismiss the Forum as worthless; but neither was as reverential as the speakers from the richer countries.

A whole Social Forum "process" is indeed under way. There is to be another European Social Forum in Paris in October-November 2003; an African Social Forum and an Asian Social Forum, both in early January 2003; a pan-Amazon Social Forum in mid-January; the next World Social Forum at the end of January 2003; and many other more local Forums. Reverence; eager behind-the-scenes scurrying to secure key positions in the various organizing committees; and efforts to establish a distinctive profile by rather abstract bluster about "revolution" — those have been the three approaches, often combined in different ways, most used by organized socialists to relate to this "process." None seems quite to meet the case.

For now, probably the nearest thing the new mood has to a unified movement tying it together in activity is mobilization against the USA's planned war on Iraq. Shortly before going to the Forum, I attended a left-wing conference on globalization, in Brighton, where Alex Callinicos of the British Socialist Workers Party argued that the "anti-capitalist movement" now faces a political sorting-out, its best elements being separated out from the dross by extending their anti-capitalism into anti-imperialism.

I suppose there may be a smidgeon of truth to this for the USA. In Europe, and, I would guess, worldwide, it is false. Practically everyone who identifies with the "new anti-capitalism" also opposes the planned war. And to tell them that "anti-imperialism" is the higher wisdom to which they should graduate from the kindergarten of "anti-capitalism" is radically false.

In somewhat the same way, maybe, as Russian rebels of the late 19th century wanted not to dally or digress, but to knock out with a single blow what they saw as the keystone of the oppressive order, the Czar, so also the "new anti-capitalists" have wanted to go straight for the Czars of the current world order, the WTO, the IMF, the G8. That they also call themselves "anti-capitalist" or "anti-corporate" or "global justice" activists points to a broader view, to be developed by analyzing the internal contradictions of capitalism or "corporate power."

As Rosa Luxemburg put it: "Where the chains of capitalism are forged, there they must be broken . . . The socialization of society can be achieved only through tenacious, tireless struggle by the working mass along its entire front, on all points where labor and capital, people and bourgeois class rule, can see the whites of one another's eyes." To judge by the titles of workshops, seminars and conference, the discussions at the Forum had mostly not yet moved along to such ideas: the concepts "class" or "worker" occurred very seldom. That can change. But to point new activists toward a nebulously defined "imperialism" (often, only a Marxist-jargon way of denoting the U.S. government and its closest allies) as the true ailment behind the symptom "capitalism" is to turn them away from investigating the inner workings of the system and into vague populist coalitions against the supposed Czar.

Class criteria — whether the anti-capitalist and anti-war enthusiasm of the new radicals leads them to get involved in the vital, but lengthy, work of involvement in grassroots working-class and trade-union organizing — remain central.

The Rise and Fall of Sidney Hook

Christopher Phelps

THE PARADOX OF SIDNEY HOOK'S THOUGHT is that while by conventional measurements — renown, prestige, influence, and power — he reached his apex in the 1950s and 1960s, his writings from that period taken as a whole now seem rote, formalistic, and predictable, of far less interest than the creativity and boldness displayed when he was a young upstart in the 1930s.

As one might expect, Hook did not acknowledge this decline. Not only that, he denied *any* change in his thought. He preferred to think of himself as, across his life, a consistently independent thinker — *Out of Step,* as his memoir's title put it.

But was Hook really "out of step" in 1972, when he called publicly for a vote for Richard M. Nixon? Was he in 1980, when voting for Ronald Reagan?

Was Hook really of the same independent cast of mind in the 1950s when calling for stripping Communist teachers of their professional positions on the basis of party membership alone, regardless of classroom conduct, as he was in the 1930s when helping form and lead a revolutionary socialist organization, the American Workers Party?

Consider two forgotten movements in the Hook adagio:

> • The First: *The Fail-Safe Fallacy* (1963), one of Hook's lesser-remembered books, a refutation of the popular novel positing a computer-generated nuclear nightmare. Containing a vigorous defense of the Strangelovean thermonuclear strategist Herman Kahn, *The Fail-Safe Fallacy* concludes with a crescendo of guilt by association, branding *Fail-Safe*'s writers suitable candidates for the Lenin Peace Prize. *The Fail-Safe Fallacy* illustrates how the later Hook tended to find those who disagreed with him not merely erroneous or misguided, but guilty of ignorance, naiveté, or bad faith. It shows how, on the verge of the Vietnam debacle, he treated any fundamental criticism of American foreign policy as tantamount to pro-Communist apologetics. If Hook was an independent thinker, he was an independent thinker in the service of the national security state.
>
> • The Second: a political hearing, 1958. For ten years the Independent Socialist League led by Max Shachtman and its predecessor organization, the Workers Party — a small group through which had passed Gertrude Himmelfarb, Irving Kristol, Irving Howe, and many other New York intellectuals — fought against their inclusion on the attorney general's "subversive" list. Asked to testify on behalf of the ISL before the Justice Department's appeals board, Hook refused. The issue at stake could not possibly be construed as Stalinism or "conspiracy." The ISL was devotedly opposed to the Soviet state and the Communist Party. Its members were as anti-Stalinist as they come. At issue was the right of democratic radicals to express themselves without government harassment. How feeble the appreciation for heresy left in the author of *Heresy, Yes; Conspiracy, No* (1953). Hook's anti-Stalinism had transmogrified. His revolutionary opposition to Stalinism of the 1930s had been replaced in the 1950s by a liberal-conservative centrism. Even though Hook claimed to support democracy and freedom, he would not risk a finger to help remove the lingering Truman-McCarthy stigmata from independent socialists who were, in some cases, his former comrades. When the ISL won its case, it was with testimony by Dwight Macdonald, Norman Thomas, and Daniel Bell — and no thanks to Sidney Hook.

To reclaim what is of value in Hook we must reach back farther in time to the decisive decade in his thinking, 1927-1938. This was the period of his philosophical synthesis or blending of pragmatism and Marx-

CHRISTOPHER PHELPS *teaches history at Ohio State University. He is the author of* Young Sidney Hook *(Cornell University Press, 1997) and the introductions to Sidney Hook's two books* From Hegel to Marx *(Columbia University Press, 1994) and* Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx *(Prometheus Books, 2002).*

ism, in which he cast Marxism as a revolutionary method of action, *practice*. It was the phase of his greatest intellectual creativity and brilliance, in which he wrote *Towards Understanding of Karl Marx* (1933) and *From Hegel to Marx* (1936), as well as such crucial articles as "On Worker's Democracy" (1934) and "Communism Without Dogmas" (1934). It was the pinnacle of his left-wing political engagement, including sustained cooperation with socialist groups (in part derived from favorable reading of Lenin on socialist organization) and his defense of Leon Trotsky against the Moscow Trial fabrications.

Hook's thought of this period had a double-sided quality, conveyed by the rubrics — *rubric* I offer as a more pragmatist word than *principle* — of *flexibility* and *revolution*.

To combine flexibility and revolution may seem paradoxical. Revolutionaries are often thought unyielding, flexibility to imply compromise. To Hook, however, they were complementary. *Revolutionary socialist conviction seasoned by flexibility* describes the political method guiding Hook at the pinnacle of his youthful intellectual attainment.

Permit me to elaborate on these rubrics in turn:

Flexibility: The writings of the young Hook often invoked the term "flexible." By this he meant an experimental intellectual method holding knowledge to be hypothetical, fallible, and provisional. Ideas, he held, are only true insofar as verified in experience or practice. Knowledge is created and obtained, not only received as sense-impression, as in prior empiricisms. These pragmatist themes derived from Hook's training under John Dewey, but equally, however, from Karl Marx — as in the "Theses on Feuerbach." Historical materialism to Hook *was* experimental naturalism. Writing in the short-lived *Marxist Quarterly* of 1937, he defined Marxism as "critical, historical, and experimental," and wrote: "Socialism, democracy, and scientific method…are indissolubly connected. Neither one can fully come into its own without the others."

Flexibility, experimentalism, and revision according to the dictates of experience were intended by Hook as a challenge to reductive, schematic, dogmatic versions of Marxist theory. In the first half of the twentieth century, these came in a variety of forms, including economic determinism, Stalinist and social democratic positivisms holding Marxism to be an infallible science, and fatalistic postulations of historical inexorability and inevitability.

Today such theoretical matters may seem passé. American intellectuals and the left are almost wholly free of the dogmas Hook pilloried. Who here today needs to be disabused of a belief in the inexorability of Communism? Social democracy, likewise, is hardly given to fatalistic forms of Marxism — indeed, hardly to left impulses of any sort. The triumph of neoliberalism worldwide in the 1980s and 1990s meant that as bureaucratic Communism vanished from the scene, social democracy was pulled rightward, stripped even of its commitment to basic social welfare provision.

If the objects of Hook's original criticism have faded, however, the general method informing Hook's early polemics remains quite relevant. Admission of fallibility and celebration of experimentation — in a word, *flexibility* — remain essential to intelligent action and moral wisdom in politics and social action. They are useful guides to action for a new generation of anti-capitalists and anti-war activists seeking to change the world, overturn exploitation, and challenge injustice, if they wish to ensure that their own dreams of a better future are not distorted by some new version of cancer within the left.

Our situation, however, is not for the most part that of a misguided left, but rather the collapse of any meaningful left. The novelty of Hook's thought of 1930s today is not in its chastened and experimental disposition, its emphasis on flexibility, so much as in its radicalism.

This brings me to revolution.

Revolution is a word to which many fantastic meanings attach. Hook's thought of the 1930s was uncompromisingly radical. He was a revolutionary. Marxism, he wrote, is a "theory of social revolution," if nothing else, and he held classless society a prerequisite to human emancipation.

It may seem curious today, but Hook had *pragmatist* grounds for this radicalism. What society, he asked, would best permit the widest use of free and critical intelligence? Socialism. Class society, capitalist society, blocked genuine community of inquiry. Social experimentation was stunted under capitalism because ruling classes would block any proposal that made significant inroads on their prerogatives of property and profit.

To extrapolate to the present, Hook's thinking explains why, despite compelling scientific knowledge of global warming, measures are not being taken with sufficient rapidity to reorient the advanced economies toward sustainability. Detroit, Houston, and Riyadh, not the established conclusions of the community of inquirers, drive energy policy.

Hook's revolutionary outlook was defined in opposition to two competing perspectives:

• *Stalinism:* Long before the Khrushchev revelations, Hook recognized that the road to barbarism can be paved with Communist intentions. Stalinist malignance, however, was not the consequence of socialism, Marxism, or Leninism; it was a repudiation of communist egalitarianism. As Hook wrote in 1934, "the only valid criticism of the Communist Party is that it is not communist enough." His was a far-reaching criticism of Stalinism, beyond what even Trotskyists were willing to make. In the mid-1930s, he was among the first to challenge concepts of the Soviet Union as a "workers' state." State property is insufficient, he held. The baseline of revolutionary judgment is whether power is accorded to working people.

• *Liberalism*: Hook's admiration for his teacher John Dewey was tremendous. They shared liberal values of free inquiry, free expression, and individual personality. But Hook jousted with political liberalism across the 1930s. The pursuit of reforms was desirable, he held, but reformism, or gradualism, as a strategy was inadequate. In *New Republic* in 1931, Hook faulted Dewey for "failure to appreciate the instrumental value of *class struggle* rather than class collaboration in effecting the transition from Corporate America to Collective America." Ultimately, he posited, social movements will fall short of socialism and fail even to win and defend reforms successfully if confined to the horizons of capitalist politics. Hook had differences too with liberal conceptions of democracy: "actual power," not mere "registration of consent," had to be considered the heart of democracy, he wrote in 1934.

The central concept of Hook's revolutionary thinking was *workers' democracy*. Socialism, he argued, was impossible without popular power: democracy. Workers must forge their own liberation, and the aim must be workers' control (direct rule in factories, offices, and workplaces).

Many difficult theoretical issues followed: What should be the relationship between necessary representative forms and direct democracy? What allowances should be made for expertise, skill, and experience? How can complex institutions be administered without some degree of organizational structure comparable to what we call bureaucracy? Hook had only begun to explore these before his revolutionary thinking was cut short. He had no total plan.

But the evaporation of workers' liberation as the central basis for his political judgment helps unlock the riddle of Hook's life. The Moscow Trials of late 1930s unmoored Hook, sent him on a rightward trajectory. Hook called himself a social democrat, but by the 1950s he had adopted a politics of the conventional center, absent any concern for workers' control, lacking any objection to capitalism. Despite a nominal attachment to pragmatism and socialism later in life, without recourse to revolutionary intellectual method, without the ultimate objective of worker's democracy, Hook's political thought narrowed, his social experimentalism withered.

He came unmoored from allegiance to the interests of the working class, hard in any circumstance for an intellectual to sustain. He ceased to pay attention to ownership, property forms, or the social and economic system, the very issues that confront us again in an age of profit slowdown, Gilded Age distinctions of wealth and poverty, and corporate scandal. The democratic ideal shrank in his thought from power to consent, from a consistent commitment to the expansion of popular participation and rule

to a liberal formalism that looked upon representative institutions as sufficient in themselves.

The thought of the young Hook is no Rosetta stone for the present. But it has more to offer than Hook's end-point. In his later work, the occasional valuable idea or essay is overshadowed by the cumulative effect of a sustained Cold War polemic. Irving Howe was correct to write, "Within that first-rate mind, there had formed a deposit of sterility, like rust on a beautiful machine." A revival of "cultural freedom" — that catchphrase of the 1950s — today requires sources other than the old saws of the Cold War. As Philip Rahv warned in 1952, anti-Stalinism alone cannot provide a "total outlook on life . . . or even a philosophy of history."

The Hook who fused experience, action, revolution, and practice; the Hook who recognized capitalism as class society, stunting of equality and democracy; the Hook whose idea of cultural freedom extended to the problem of work and the promise of the working class; the Hook who called democracy, socialism, and scientific method "indissolubly connected," and meant it — *that,* I submit, is the Hook whose thought is most likely to serve as a resource for cultural and political renewal in our own time.

This is the text of a talk the author presented at the conference "Sidney Hook Reconsidered: A Centennial Celebration" held on October 25-26, 2002, at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

Victor Serge: Portrait of a Revolutionary

Richard Greeman

BACK IN 1984 THE *Village Voice Literary Supplement* headlined "Who Was Victor Serge (And Why Do We have to Ask?)"[1] James Hoberman's question is still valid, although the last decade has seen the publication in English of a goodly number of books by or about Serge, culminating in Susan Weissman's *Victor Serge: The Course Is Set on Hope*.*

To answer the first question, Victor Serge (*neé* Kibalchich) was a French-language writer and international revolutionary whose activity spanned the first half of the twentieth century. Born in 1890 in Brussels to a family of Russian revolutionary exiles, he became a professional militant and pamphleteer in his teens. His commitment to freedom and social justice evolved from involvement in the Belgian Socialist Young Guards through French anarchist individualism and Spanish anarcho-syndicalism to Russian Communism and its Left Opposition. A stateless exile and internationalist "from birth," Serge was a participant-observer at crucial turning points in world revolutionary history, including the "tragic bandits" of pre-WWI French anarchism, the Barcelona syndicalist uprising of 1917, the Russian Civil War (he joined the Party in Petrograd in 1919), the failed German Revolution of 1923 (he was a Comintern publicist in Berlin), the Left Opposition's battle against Stalinism (he was expelled from the Party in 1928 for denouncing Stalin's betrayal of the Chinese Revolution), the fight against fascism and Stalinism in Spain (he was a fraternal member of the Workers Party of Marxist Unification, or POUM), the Nazi Occupation of France, and exodus of revolutionary refugees to Mexico (where, as Weissman's research reveals, he was on the NKVD assassination list).

As a result of his intransigence and revolutionary honesty Serge never held a high position and spent more than 10 years in various forms of captivity (a French penitentiary, the Russian *gulag,* various jails and concentration camps). Frequently hungry, Serge was persecuted, exiled, slandered and died in poverty and obscurity at a premature 57. A brilliant and lucid writer, Serge distilled his life experiences in twenty-odd books including seven novels, a marvellous volume of *Memoirs of a Revolutionary*, and essays on politics and contemporary history. His writings are well-documented, incisive, lucid, shaped by a sense of history, and grounded in critical, humanistic Marxism.

Serge's books have lived a rugged life of their own. Frequently marginalized or suppressed, they have also been translated into a dozen languages and reprinted every time a new generation of activists rises to seek honest answers to the problems of socialism and revolution.

Such was the situation of the New Left when Peter Sedgwick and I translated Serge into English in the 1960s, while in France François Maspero revived Serge's books in the wake of May '68. Such is the situation today, when young people are seeking their political bearings in the context of the collapse of Stalinist Communism and the scary offensive of capitalist barbarism posing as a New World Order. As early as 1991 two of Serge's novels were published for the first time in Russia, and in 2001 Serge's *Memoirs* (Russian title: *From the Revolution to Totalitarianism*) were translated and pub-

**Victor Serge: The Course Is Set on Hope* by Susan Weissman. London, Verso, 2001. 364 pages, $35.

RICHARD GREEMAN *(rgreeman@laposte.net) has translated four of Serge's novels into English and written numerous literary and political essays on Serge. He is Secretary of the International Victor Serge Foundation and Serge's literary executor. He is based in Montpellier, France.*

lished in Moscow and Orenburg (where Serge was exiled by Stalin in 1933).[2] Simultaneously, Serge's *Memoirs*, long out of print in France, have been reprinted (along with his other writings on Russia) in a permanent collection of popular French classics, while the *New York Review of Books* is preparing to publish another forgotten classic, *The Case of Comrade Tulayev*, Serge's novel of the purges. Let us hope that this revival continues, for in a chaotic and violent world where even the anti-Stalinist left has become demoralised, Serge offers a political and moral compass needed to help us regain our bearings.

Serge, the Uncategorizable Maverick

AS FOR THE SECOND QUESTION, "Why Do We Have to Ask?" Susan Weissman's book gives a credible account of the reasons why Serge and his works have remained relatively marginalized (as compared, say, to figures like Arthur Koestler and André Malraux) despite his skill as a writer and the uniqueness of his testimony as an insider who had worked close to Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Zinoviev and other Bolsheviks, and could explain "mysteries" like the purges and the Stalin-Hitler Pact, (which he foresaw early on in the 30s). The problem was that Serge remained a committed socialist to his death in 1947, and so was of little use to the cold warriors of the Congress for Cultural Freedom. At the same time, there were enough crypto-Stalinists in the left and liberal publishing houses to insure that he was effectively boycotted, despite the efforts of Dwight Macdonald and George Orwell to promote his books. Alas, even the Trotskyists denigrated or ignored this heroic survivor of the original Left Opposition because, as we shall see, Trotsky, embittered and misinformed, called him names shortly before he was assassinated.

To these answers, I would add two more. As a novelist, Serge is really a figure out of Soviet Russian literature. However, he wrote in French and was published in Paris. He thus falls through the cracks between university departments, which are divided along the bureaucratic fault-lines of nationally based literatures. Indeed, to this day, Serge is not mentioned in any French dictionary or textbook of French literature. Moreover, Serge's pre-eminence as a political witness, often cited by historians and Sovietologists, has overshadowed and obscured his achievements as an outstanding novelist and literary innovator, the only survivor of the Soviet literary renaissance of the 1920s who was able (because he wrote in French) to continue writing truthfully into the Stalin period and deal with contemporary events. Yet paradoxically it was precisely Serge's literary achievement that was turned against him by Trotsky and his epigones, who dismissed him as a petty bourgeois who "merely writes poems about revolution!"

The Uses of Dissent

WEISSMAN'S BOOK FOLLOWS a number of highly interesting English-language books about Serge, none of which has to my knowledge been reviewed in the U.S.

The most original is Bill Marshall's *Victor Serge: The Uses of Dissent*, which was published in 1992 by Berg in Oxford and New York, where it was distributed by St. Martin's Press. Marshall's book, based on his Oxford French Studies doctoral dissertation, focuses on Serge's intellectual development. Although Marshall makes use of all the techniques of modern and post-modern criticism, quoting Adorno, Foucault, Jameson, Bakhtin, and Barthes, his book is aimed at a wide audience and is quite readable. He begins with Serge's "Political Itinerary" and gives us an intelligent, concise, and accurate 30-page review of Serge's life before undertaking the intellectual biography of this brilliant, precocious, self educated, humanist and internationalist. Marshall traces the various influences young Victor absorbed including the positivism he inherited from his father (Herbert Spencer, Mach, Taine, Einstein), the anarchists he read as a teenager (Elisée Reclus, Kropotkin, Stirner), and of course the Russian writers (Korolenko, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Gorky). Marshall focuses on the philosophical *Essay on Nietzsche*, written in Barcelona in 1917 soon after Victor's release from a French penitentiary (one of the first texts signed "Victor Serge"), in which he comes to grips with authoritarianism at a crucial turning point in his life, before en-

tering the Russian Revolution.[3] Marshall analyzes Serge's fiction as well as his ideas, showing that it is the "openness" of Serge's texts, whether literary or political, that gives them the special quality of being committed without being dogmatic. Marshall's comparison of Serge's purge novel, *The Case of Comrade Tulayev*, with Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* is nothing short of brilliant. This is a concise, rich book that manages to analyze Serge's political and intellectual complexity in 200 pages. It's a shame it didn't receive more attention when it came out.

The Serge-Trotsky Drama

DAVID COTTERILL'S ANTHOLOGY *The Serge-Trotsky Papers* (Pluto, 1994) contains the English translation of Serge and Trotsky's private and public correspondence from 1936 to 1940. Cotterill has completed and published these translations, found among Sedgwick's posthumous papers, and combined them with essays by Philip Spencer, Susan Weissman and himself. The correspondence itself is fascinating, and divides into three periods that I compare to courtship, marriage and divorce.

The first letters between these isolated and exiled survivors of the Russian Left Opposition are warm and personal, tinged with grief for comrades and family. Serge is in Belgium, having just been released from the *gulag*. Trotsky is in exile in Norway and eager to see to what use he can put Serge's talents and political sympathies. Serge is shocked to learn that Trotsky has broken with his closest French supporters from the days of the original 1923 Opposition: the Rosmers, Pierre Monatte, and Boris Souvarine; Serge also feels that Trotsky's call for a new International is ill-timed, when what is needed is a broad campaign to warn the working class about Stalin's lies, murders and intrigues. But despite his misgivings, Serge goes right to work translating Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed* into French and agrees to join Trotsky's organization. Their exchanges during this eventful period (Spring-Summer 1936) show much political agreement and rather mild differences of emphasis in discussing the French general strike, the Popular Front, the Moscow Trials, Franco's coup. If Serge is less optimistic about the significances of the French strikes, they agree that in Spain, all revolutionaries should sign a "no calumny" pact and that Marxists should work honestly with the anarchists. This period ends when the Norwegian liberals kidnap Trotsky and cut off his correspondence with the outside world.

By the time Trotsky gets to Mexico and freedom, much has happened. Serge has withdrawn from the Fourth International, appalled at all the sectarian infighting when there is vital work to be done defending Stalin's victims in Russia and Spain, but he continues to collaborate with Sedov (Trotsky's son) and to translate Trotsky's books. There are real disagreements over the POUM and the problem of revolutionary repression (Kronstadt). These are envenomed by provocation from the Stalinist counteragent Etienne. Trotsky ends up hurling invective at Serge for "abandoning Marxism" — this ostensibly in a *Partisan Review* essay Trotsky never read — and for inserting a denigrating publicity blurb in the French edition of *Their Morals and Ours,* with which Serge was blameless.[4] Serge remains loyal to Trotsky and decides not to publish the "Reply to Trotsky" he had prepared,[5] preferring not to join the Old Man's tormentors. Cotterill's anthology includes the judicious private, unpublished essays Serge later devoted to Trotsky and Trotskyism. The epilogue to this sad three-act romance gives us Serge and Natalia Trotsky in Mexico collaborating on *The Life and Death of Leon Trotsky*, the book on which subsequent biographers like Isaac Deutscher and Pierre Broué based their work (although neither acknowledge this source while slighting Serge whenever he appears as an historical person).

Other New Serge Studies and Translations

LET ME NEXT JUST MENTION in passing *Victor Serge: The Century of the Unexpected* published in London in 1994 as part of the series *Revolutionary History* (Vol. 5, No 3). It contains three lengthy, previously untranslated works of Serge: *Lenin in 1917* (1924)*, The Class Struggle in the Chinese Revolution* (1927)*, and Planned Economies and Democracy* (1945) as well as a memoir of Serge's "Last Years" by Julian Gorkin of the

POUM and essays by Ernest Rogers on the Etienne affair and Richard Greeman on "The Victor Serge Affair and the French Literary Left." The 1927 analysis of the class forces in China (and Stalin's betrayal of the Chinese masses) got Serge expelled from the Party when it was published in France and is still worth reading. It may be the first European text to mention Mao Tse Tung.

Finally, Ian Birchall, the British socialist and French scholar, has translated two extremely interesting Serge works into English for the first time. The earliest in date is *The Revolution in Danger* (London, *Redwords,* 1997) that includes three of Serge's 1919/1920 writings from Russia. The first two, *During the Civil War* and *The Endangered City: Petrograd, Year II of the Revolution*, are Serge's eyewitness accounts of the defense of the revolution's exhausted, starving capital twice besieged by Allied-backed White armies. The second time, in October 1919, it was Trotsky with his famous armored train who saved the city with an injection of optimism, will-power, fake wooden tanks and wild Bashkir cavalry, equally frightening and useless. Serge's stirring accounts, which he wrote in order to persuade his anarchist comrades in France, make us understand why this libertarian joined the Communist Party in May 1919.

Serge offers a political and moral compass needed to help us regain our bearings.

Serge followed these up in 1920 with *The Anarchists and the Experience of the Russian Revolution*, a polemical essay written in the same perspective. Birchall has also translated Serge's *Notes from Germany: 1923* (Pluto), a collection of the journalism he wrote for the Comintern Press Service, which covers the whole German crisis up to the bungled October 1923 Communist coup that spelled the end of any hope for the European revolution in that period. Although Serge wrote as an official Communist in a party organ, the articles are typically Sergean, full of personal observation, sure-footed analysis, and telling detail. Serge has no illusions about the Weimar Republic, dominated by big business and right wing militarists, and he foresees the danger of fascism from the start. Ian Birchall provides marvelous, concise introductions and notes to both works, giving us everything we need to know about the historical contexts, the people, the events.

Weissman as Editor

BEFORE TURNING TO *The Course is Set on Hope*, I want to mention two other recent publications that bear Susan Weissman's name, this time as editor. The first is a reprint of Max Shachtman's translation of Serge's (1937) *Russia Twenty Years After* to which she has appended Serge's 1914 essay "Thirty Years after the Russian Revolution," written a few weeks before his death. In this short essay we see that Serge, for all his doubts and rethinkings, had abandoned neither Marxism nor the October Revolution. For Serge, if Marxism had failed in certain circumstances, it nonetheless remained the only tool by which we can understand our defeats, which enrich it with new experiences.

Conservatism, Christianity, and liberalism, which did nothing to prevent fascism, he sees as bankrupt. He defends the Bolsheviks' historical role in 1917 and reminds us that had the revolution spread to Germany and beyond as expected, the world would have been spared Hitler *and* Stalin. So much for Victor's "deathbed" conversion to Gaullism as portrayed by that all-purpose liar, André Malraux, who, after Serge died, published excerpts of a compromising private letter Serge had written to him in the hope of getting a visa to return to France (where Malraux was in government and the order for Victor's banishment as a foreign anarchist was still in force). Weissman contributes an excellent, well-written biography of Serge as an introduction to the volume, published in 1996 by Humanities Press.

Weissman has also edited an anthology of essays on Serge under the title *The Ideas of Victor Serge*: *A Life As A Work of Art* (Critique Books, Glasgow, 1997). Most of these essays were presented during the Serge Centennial colloquia held in London, Glasgow, Brussels and Barcelona, which

were instigated and coordinated by the Victor Serge Foundation. Weissman has judiciously pruned a few of these contributions and added others, including moving testimonials from Serge's daughter Jeannine Kibalchich, his son Vlady, and Wilebaldo Solano of the POUM. She has also included Peter Sedgwick's classic "On Socialism." There are essays on Serge as a novelist (by Ian Birchall, Neal Cornwell and myself) and on his politics (by Alan Wald, Phil Spencer, Guy Desolre, Luc Nemeth, and Weissman) as well as two previously untranslated pieces by Serge — some pages from his *Notebooks* and "Thirty Years after the Russian Revolution." This is a book worth sending away for,[6] but don't be put off by the many, many typos, sloppy editing, and inaccurate translations. One example: Solano writes that after Franco's victory the remnants of Central Committee of the POUM went to Serge's tiny Paris flat to hold a meeting (*celebrar un reunion),* but Weissman has them there "to celebrate a reunion" (Class of '39?).

The Course is Set on Hope

LET US TURN NOW to *The Course is Set on Hope.* Although Weissman's book attempts to span the full range of Serge's life, activities and ideas, its actual subject is Serge's analysis of Stalinism. Weissman bases her study largely on Serge's *Memoirs* and his *Russia Twenty Years After.* She shows convincingly how Serge, while avoiding abstract theoretical arguments about "degenerate" or "deformed" workers' states, or speculating over whether the ruling bureaucracy that exploited workers was a "class" or a "caste," compiled a large synthesis of statistical and anecdotal material to present a compelling picture of a Russian "socialism." Here, a vast majority of exploited, undernourished, workers driven by police terror and deprived of any say over their conditions of labor are sandwiched between privileged bureaucrats and party bosses on the top 10 percent of society, and a reserve army of slave laborers in the camps (some 16 percent of the population) on the bottom.

Weissman, who apparently favors a "bureaucratic collectivist" analysis, is somewhat uncomfortable with what she considers Serge's elusiveness and "inconsistency" on the question of the class nature of Stalinism. Nor is she totally satisfied by Serge's 'sociological' explanation of Stalin's rise based on the votes of thousands of opportunists inducted into the Party after Lenin's death in 1923. On the other hand she appreciates Serge's description of the "chaos" of the Plan imposed from above by a panicky Stalin lurching from one crisis to another. She also expounds Serge's explanation of the Moscow Trials, where the fake confessions of Zinoviev, Bukharin and other Old Bolsheviks were obtained by a combination of psychological and physical torture, prior selection of defendants (the majority of Bolsheviks refused to confess and were shot in the cellars of the GPU), and "Party Patriotism." On this last point, she agrees with Serge's hindsight conclusion that excessive loyalty to an increasingly bureaucratic Party hamstrung first Trotsky, who remained passive between 1923 and 1926, and later the 1927 Left Opposition, which out of "party discipline" denied itself the right to appeal to the non-party masses long after it had been expelled, deported and jailed.

Serge's own claim to originality as an analyst of Stalinism was that he was apparently the first (in 1933) to describe it as "totalitarian" and compare it to the Nazi and fascist systems. However, as Weissman points out, Serge made it clear that Nazi totalitarianism stemmed from a failed socialist revolution and the inability of German capitalism to solve its problems through democratic means, whereas the origin of Stalinist totalitarianism was a proletarian revolution that had been hijacked by a party bureaucracy that still used, or rather misused, Marxist language in order to legitimize its rule.

Yet, Weissman does not take this analysis the one step further that Serge did, both in his 1937 book and in his final essay, "Thirty Years After the Russian Revolution." There, with a good deal of prescience, Serge suggested that the Soviet bureaucracy, an unstable formation driven by terror, would eventually be tempted to legitimize its privileges in property forms and seek an alliance with the international capitalist bourgeoisie, as apparently happened after 1989. Serge also predicted that in such a case, the language of Marxism would inevitably be

discredited in the eyes of the masses for a whole period (thus leaving them without the tools to comprehend their situation), and that the rise of nationalism among the vast Muslim populations of the Soviet Union would represent a serious reactionary threat. Moreover, unlike other "totalitarianism" theorists and Western Sovietologists who saw the Communist system as immune to change from within (thus justifying Cold War military containment of Communism), Serge saw the system as inherently unstable and in any case never doubted the continuing resistance of ordinary Russians, based on his own experience. ("Russia is More Full of Revolutionaries than Ever" is the title of one of his posthumous essays).

Weissman's self-described "modest first examination of Serge's political, social, literary and economic writings on the Soviet Union" (xii) is thus a welcome addition to Serge studies. However, like many enthusiasts and academics, she is somewhat less modest about the importance of her particular topic of interest. "Serge's critique of Stalinism was the core of his life and work," (6) she states at the outset, and reiterates: to "analyse the nature of the social organism emerging in the USSR. This became his life's work" (6); and again "Serge spent the rest of his life trying to analyse and characterise the new social formation, to define its nature." This singular emphasis gets her into trouble when she comes to deal with other aspects of Serge, who after all led a rich and adventuresome life, thought deeply about many topics, and will probably be remembered as much for his achievements as a novelist as for his politics.

Propaganda or Literature?

ON THE TOPIC OF LITERATURE, Weissman has this to say: "Serge was first and foremost a political animal, and it was only when barred from political action that he turned to literary activity." (67) Writing, for Serge, was something to do only when one was "unable to fight." (110) "Serge wrote with a mission: to expose and analyse the significance of the rise of Stalinism. He worked continuously until he died, churning out novels, histories, pamphlets and polemics. In the years 1928 to 1936, while still in the Soviet Union, Serge wrote four [sic] novels, two [*sic*] short stories, and six works of history, politics and literary theory; he translated novels and poems and seven volumes of history, politics, theory and memoirs. Considering the difficult circumstances under which Serge labored, his prodigious output is extraordinary." (111) However, I wonder if Serge, who took literature seriously and considered himself "in the line of the Russian novelists" (e.g. Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Turgenev, Korolenko), would have been flattered by this quantitative appraisal of his writings.

On the qualitative side, although Weissman does sprinkle in the words "poetic" and "lyrical" in praising Serge's writing her aesthetic criterion is actually utilitarian. The most she has to say about Serge's complex and moving novel *Midnight in the Century* is that it is "useful" for its account of certain theoretical discussions among exiled Left Oppositionists. (152) She praises Serge's "ability to see social reality clearly and honestly and write about it poetically," as if the poetry were the icing on a sociological cake.

As for Serge's contribution to the debate on revolutionary literature, Weissman writes: "Serge based his ideas on Trotsky's *Literature and Revolution* . . . in which Trotsky denied that a proletarian literature could exist" during the period of transition to socialism. (After that literature would become "classless.") But in 1932 Serge replied to Trotsky in his own *Literature and Revolution,*[7] pointing out that "the period of transition might be very long." Whole generations of workers might live and struggle and die during that period, and "they too would have their bards." For this reason Serge defended the Proletcults and, from 1928 on, struck out on his own as the revolution's "bard" bringing to life the comrades he had seen fall in the struggle and singing their heroism and their tragedy. Serge himself defined his mission as: to "speak for those who have no voice or whose voice has been silenced," to recreate the "atmosphere" in which his characters struggle, to tell a truth he considered deeper than economist's figures, the historian's facts and the theoretician's abstractions. His ultimate goal was "to form the mind" and "the character" of new generations, a task he consid-

ered essential in the face of the extermination of his own revolutionary generation by Stalin and Hitler.[8] I think he succeeded, judging from the number of people who have told me over the years of the profound effect reading Serge had on their personal and political outlook.

Biography or Political Science?

"CHARACTER" WAS AN IMPORTANT NOTION for Serge, who wrote biographies of many revolutionaries, including book-length portraits of Lenin, Stalin, and Trotsky in which he attempted to understand their psychology and show how these outstanding minds and personalities were forged by the revolutionary struggles of semi-feudal Russia. Although Weissman's book takes the form of a biography (and is praised as such on the jacket), it has nothing to say about his activities, up to age 30, as an anarchist (except that he rejected anarchism for Marxism). Apparently she is not really comfortable with the notion of biography, claiming they "often fall into the genre of exposé…and speculation about emotional affairs designed to titillate the reader." (7) Yet she titillates us on the first page of her Preface, telling us breathlessly that one of the people she interviewed in preparing her biography "was murdered just days before our appointment!" But she never gets around to telling us the person's name or the circumstances of this sensational crime.

Nonetheless, the best pages of *The Course Is Set on Hope* are precisely the most sensational ones, concerning assassination and espionage, where Weissman departs from summarizing Serge's *Memoirs* and treats us to the fruits of the biographical research she has done in the files of the FBI and the NKVD. Weissman leads us through the labyrinth of plot and counterplot among Stalin's "killerocracy," using as a red thread Serge's involvement with NKVD defectors Walter Krivitsky, Alexander Barmine, and "Ignace Reiss" (who actually was murdered on the way to an appointment with Serge) but going far beyond Serge's role to explore the chilling world of assassins and agents-provocateurs.

Her principle quarry is the Stalinist agent "Etienne" (Marc Zborovsky), who wormed his way into the Left Opposition in Paris, became the closest collaborator of Trotsky's son Leon Sedov (who died under mysterious circumstances in a Russian émigré hospital to which he was taken by Etienne), spied on all of Trotsky's correspondence, turned his followers against each other (for example, by casting suspicion on Serge), and fingered the Trotskyist militant Rudolf Klément (assassinated in Paris) and Reiss, who was about to break openly with the NKVD and join the Trotskyists when he was murdered. Like a bloodhound, Weissman followed Zborovsky's trail through the newly opened archives in Moscow, the files of the FBI and the U.S. Senate committee (before which he testified in 1956) to San Francisco, where she camped on his doorstep demanding an interview. (Zborovsky refused to open the door and shortly thereafter dropped dead.)

Still, Weissman is ambivalent about whether she is writing an *analysis* of Serge's ideas on Stalinism or tracing his political development biographically. The result is a narrative that, although it begins with his birth and ends with his death, jumps around confusingly, and ignores chronology in order to make general points. Sometimes she narrates the same incident twice. The story of the suspicious murder by "bandits" of Serge's Left Opposition comrade Chadayev in 1928 is told in full in two different places. Other stories, she disperses, such as the Stalinists' brutal 1943 attack on Serge and his comrades in Mexico City. She first introduces this dramatic event in the middle of her book, (right after dealing with Serge's 1936 release from the *gulag*), in a section confusingly titled "Part II Another exile and two more: the final years." She develops the story for several pages (178-182), and then drops it to pick up the thread of Serge's return to Europe in 1936. Eighty pages later, when she finally gets Serge to Mexico, she

The articles are typically Sergean, full of personal observation, sure-footed analysis, and telling detail.

picks up the rest of the story, again at some length. But without continuity the reader gets lost in the details and loses the point, not to mention the drama.

Weissman's casual approach to chronology can be actually misleading. For example, in order to demonstrate Serge's democratic credentials, she claims "he opposed one-Party rule in 1918, and declared in 1923 that a coalition government, although fraught with risks, would be less dangerous than Stalin's secret police state." (4) She repeats these claims later, stating: "Serge consistently defended broad democratic rights both inside and outside the Party, and had even suggested in 1923-24 that a coalition government was preferable to the bureaucratic rule on its way to becoming the "dictatorship of the secretariat and secret police" (119).

In fact, Serge proclaimed no such view either in 1918 (when he was a prisoner in a French concentration camp) or in 1923-24 (when he was a party-line Comintern journalist and undercover agent in Berlin and Vienna). Although he had private doubts about the dangers of bureaucracy and dictatorship early on, Serge first put forward these conclusions in hindsight, first in the 1933 "Profession of Faith" he arranged to publish in French on the occasion of his arrest, and then after he escaped from Russia in 1936 (e.g. in *Russia Twenty Years After*), when he tried to draw lessons from the revolution's mistakes. To be charitable to Weissman, this is probably what she intends to say, but since she gives no references for these claims there is no way for a reader to be sure or to avoid being misled.

Serge's 'Inconsistencies'

UNFORTUNATELY, WEISSMAN'S rejection of biography and confusion over dates like these are so prevalent that the reader never gets a sense of Serge's *development* as a man and a thinker, only a set of "positions." And since Serge's "position" developed over time, Weissman inevitably ends up finding him inconsistent. For example, on the essential issue of liberty and revolutionary necessity, she writes: "Serge never succeeded in reconciling these contradictory stands. He clearly demonstrated the revolution was hemmed in from all sides: from within the anarchists, Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs), Mensheviks and Kadets all opposed the Bolsheviks and formed part of the counter revolution…along with the White generals…and the armies of fourteen capitalist powers." Yet, she continues, "later Serge examined the measures taken out of necessity and theorized that certain of them [e.g., the Cheka secret police - R.G.] formed the foundation of Stalinist totalitarianism." (28)

To begin with, Serge did not lump the Russian anarchists with the counterrevolutionaries, as does Weissman. Moreover, she ignores the central concept that guided Serge's conduct throughout his revolutionary career: the militant's "double duty" to defend the revolution from *both* its external enemies (the counter-revolutionaries) and its inner enemies (intolerance and bureaucracy). Serge first discussed "double duty" in print in *Literature and Revolution* (1932), and it may be his most original contribution to revolutionary morality. The problem, of course, is how to balance these two duties of criticism and support from inside a movement.

Serge's revolutionary career was just such a balancing act, and as such it is instructive when seen chronologically and in context. Victor was already a seasoned 29 year-old anarchist militant when he arrived in Red Petrograd at the height of the Civil War, and he was immediately shocked by the grim uniformity imposed on the press by the regime. How did he apply his concept of "double duty?" As he wrote back to his friends and to anarchist journals in France, he saw no group other than the Communists effectively defending the fledgling Russian republic; and since he had come to Russia to defend it, he decided to join them as a libertarian, hoping for the day when he could successfully fight the Communists' authoritarianism. As we have seen, Serge took up arms in defense of Petrograd against the White armies at the gate. He patrolled the city at night with a rifle, forcibly entering peoples' apartments to ferret out counterrevolutionaries. He defended the Red Terror with his pen as well.

At the same time, Serge used his personal connections with Gorky (who spoke directly to Lenin), with Zinoviev, his boss, and with various Chekists, to intercede and save

anarchist militants who had run afoul of the regime. He attended Kropotkin's funeral, probably the last legal anarchist demonstration in Russia, and he and Alfred Rosmer were the only Communists there (not counting menacing policemen). He met privately with the more trustworthy of the delegates who came from France, Italy and Spain to attend the early congresses of the Comintern and the Profintern, opened their eyes to the contradictory realities of the "dictatorship of the proletariat," and shared with them his doubts and misgivings about the revolution. These rather risky private initiations bore fruit. These comrades — revolutionary syndicalists like Alfred Rosmer, Francesco Ghezzi, Andres Nin and Joaquin Maurin, then the surrealists Rosenthal and Naville — were later at the core of the anti-Stalinist Left in the 20s and 30s.

Serge and Kronstadt

SERGE'S ATTITUDE TOWARD the Communists' repression of the revolt of the Kronstadt sailors was a typical embodiment of his sense of "double duty." At the beginning, he intervened personally, along with his anarchist father-in-law, Russakov, and the American anarchists, Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, attempting to mediate the conflict between the government and the rebels. (Rather daring for a disciplined Party member in the middle of a Civil War.) He criticized the brutal way the regime handled the affair: refusing to negotiate or listen to the sailors' quite justifiable demands and slandering them as "counter-revolutionaries" commanded by a White general. In the end, however, with the ice melting and enemy battleships approaching the island fortress of Kronstadt, which was no longer defending Petrograd from the Whites, Serge reluctantly sided with the Communists in repressing the rebels, believing that the country was too exhausted to begin a "third" revolution. Disgusted, he then left politics to join a short-lived farming commune with his anarchist friends. When this failed, he accepted a Comintern job in Berlin where he hoped to help bring to birth a new European revolution that would end Russia's isolation and revive the participatory, democratic side of socialism on an international scale.

Concerning what Weissman calls Serge's "contradictory stand" about the Cheka leading to "Stalinist totalitarianism," it is true that Serge, as we have seen, justified the Red Terror as a necessary defense

Serge never abandoned socialism and defended the historical justice of the October Revolution to the very end.

against the White Terror, which he considered much more bloody — since the counter-revolution must massacre large and numerous classes of people to triumph. (Weissman is excellent on this point in her discussion of the bloodbath of workers that followed the defeat of the peacefully elected Finnish Socialist Republic, abandoned by the Bolsheviks at Brest-Litovsk.) Serge also concluded that the Cheka was "Lenin's biggest mistake."

What Weissman fails to tell her readers is what Serge thought Lenin *should have done* (and what future revolutions should do). Serge thought that the counter-revolutionaries, who were numerous and dangerous behind the Red lines, could have been identified and brought before mass tribunals. There suspects could at least hear the charges against them, face their accusers, contradict witnesses, speak in their defense, and — if found guilty — be jailed or shot. I remember this happening in Havana during the first days of the Cuban Revolution, and although the spectacle was at times quite horrifying and probably contained some injustices, these mass trials were to say the least effective in allowing the victims to confront and accuse their torturers. On the other hand the Cheka secret police method of condemning a suspect to death on the basis of written reports, without seeing or hearing her or permitting any defense, could only lead to the creation of an all-powerful and professionally paranoid inquisition, one which could and did turn on the revolution and devour it. One may not agree with Serge's solutions, but it is perhaps misleading to contend, as

Weissman does, that he was inconsistent and had no solution.

Finally, Serge did away with the false problem of "Bolshevism leading to Stalinism" as follows: "It is often said that 'the germ of all Stalinism was in Bolshevism at its beginning'. Well, I have no objection. Only, Bolshevism also contained many other germs, a mass of other germs… To judge the living man by the death germs which the autopsy reveals in a corpse — and which he may have carried in him since his birth — is that very sensible?"[9]

Serge's interpretation of his double duty was thus complex, evolving through time and dependant on concrete circumstances. Although one could argue with the politics of any one of Serge's judgments, I find his attitude of "double duty" exemplary. On the other hand, our ability to understand Serge's specific "positions" depends on our understanding of the context: *where* Serge wrote what he wrote (in an official Party publication, a letter to comrade, a polemic, a novel, his *Notebooks*, his *Memoirs*?) and *when* he wrote it (at the time or in retrospect?). Unfortunately, context is not Weissman's strong suit, and only readers thoroughly conversant with Serge and Bolshevik historiography will be able to follow her arguments. Newer readers would be better advised to read Serge's *Memoirs* and *Russia Twenty Year After*, on which much of Weissman's interpretation is based.

Serge in Mexico

SERGE ENDED HIS *Memoirs of a Revolutionary 1901-1941* with his arrival in Mexico, where he died in 1947, and so readers familiar with Serge look forward to an account of his life, his struggles, and his ideas during those seven final years. Unfortunately, Weissman devotes a scant fifteen pages to the Mexican years and tells us precious little about Serge's Mexican writings (mostly unpublished), which were prolific on every subject from the military conduct of WWII and the problem of Stalinism in post-war Europe to literature, psychoanalysis, Mexican anthropology, the atom bomb, and the role of human intelligence in history (not counting the three novels he completed in Mexico). Weissman summarizes them as follows: "In the end Serge left hundreds of essays, all of which deserve publication. His thoughts expressed throughout were broadly similar." (170)

Not all these essays are equally deserving of publication, since many of them (for example on Russian, Japanese and Nazi military tactics in 1943) are quite dated. But one thing is certain: the tentative and contradictory conclusions Serge expressed during this period of re-examination and revision were not "broadly similar," and they do deserve to be read and analysed by Serge scholars. Unfortunately Weissman's book refers (and only glancingly) to just three of the manuscripts Serge left in what she refers to inaccurately as the "Serge Archive, Mexico."

Serge's posthumous papers in fact reside in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Yale University. The Catalogue of the Victor Serge Collection there is available on line[10] and runs to 77 pages: rich fodder for future Serge scholars, but missing from Weissman's bibliography.

Another problem is that, where Weissman does discuss some of Serge's Mexican-period writings, they are (with the three exceptions mentioned above) based mostly on published works available in English or Spanish translation (including John Manson's wonderful unpublished translations of Serge's *Notebooks*, available on line at www.victorserge.net/), not on his extensive French writings. Her few attempts at coping with Serge's French (the English version of the *Memoirs* being abridged) are problematic. In 1936 she has the newly liberated Serge "worried" that he'll "end up full of resentment," when the French text makes it clear that he was worried that his French friends would *think* he had arrived from Russia "full of rancor." (194) She has him say that "political deportation is *never* ended because of firm convictions" (which makes little sense) when the French text means that Oppositionists who stick firmly to their convictions (as opposed to "capitulators") never get released. (164)

Serge's posthumous manuscripts, many of which were probably not intended for publication, explore a variety of solutions to the problem of socialism and democracy in a world economy he saw as increasingly "collectivist," whether nominally capitalist

or Communist. Far from being "broadly similar," Serge's thoughts need to be sorted out and analyzed (especially now that photocopies of his manuscripts are available from Yale). Weissman takes a few shots at analyzing some of the bits that have been translated, but lacks a coherent overview. She concludes: "Serge thought the new (post WWII) Europe would be totalitarian and fascistic." (273) Yet two pages later she declares: "Serge was certain that socialism would ultimately win, and that it would first come in Europe, because Stalinism was inherently a weak system, even though he considered it more powerful and more dangerous than capitalism." Right.

Comedies of Errors

CLEARLY VERSO WAS NEGLIGENT in letting *The Course Is Set on Hope* go to press without serious editing. Leaving aside myriad problems of disorganization and sloppy writing, the number of factual errors is disquieting. For example, Weissman has Victor "expelled from Belgium in 1909," although no such order was issued and Serge wrote that he was "drawn by the revolutionary aura of Paris." She says the peaceful Spanish anarchist educator F. Ferrar was hanged in Barcelona for organizing "a popular uprising at Montjuich," the mountain-prison-fortress where he was executed. She tells us Victor became a member of "the infamous Bonnot gang" in Paris (thus guilty as charged of being an accomplice to multiple robbery and murder). (16) Leaving Spain in 1917, Serge "makes the mistake of passing through France on the way to Russia," (I suppose he could have gone west via China) where he is arrested and sent to a French concentration camp. There, according to Weissman, "the prisoners kept abreast of events in Russia and discussed all the questions facing the Bolsheviks" (12) apparently despite wartime censorship, a near-total news blackout, and the vigilance of the guards. In Russia in 1919 she has him join the "RSdRP(B)," although the Party had changed its name to "Communist" a year earlier, and she constantly refers to Serge, who was proud to be a Civil War Communist, as "an Old Bolshevik," thus needlessly puffing up her subject's prestige. In the same way she brags that Serge "befriended Maxim Gorky" (rather than the other way around) (23). Under Weissman's pen, Vladimir Mazin, a martyred revolutionary Serge idolised and under whom he worked at the Comintern becomes "his assistant and comrade." A Joint Declaration Serge signed but did not write is praised as "characteristic of Serge's writings."

Finally, recounting the tragic suicide of Serge's colleague, the Russian poet Sergei Yesenin, Weissman writes that he "hanged himself in his hotel room after writing his last lines in blood for lack of ink." As every student of Russian literature knows, it was not "lack of ink" but despair over the direction Soviet literature was taking that prompted Yessenin's gesture. To trivialize it with a made-up "fact" betrays a mind that, however sharp in political science matters (Weissman's field), turns obtuse when confronted with literature and the human drama of revolutionary artists like Yessenin and Serge.

Nevertheless, Weissman is right on the mark in insisting that Serge never abandoned socialism and defended the historical justice of the October Revolution to the very end. This point is essential, since, as Weissman shows, his willingness to publish articles in right social democratic papers like the *New Leader* (for money: he was poor) and the famous "Malraux letter" allowed his detractors to spread the rumor of his "deathbed conversion" to anti-socialism, as we have seen.

On the other hand, Serge, ever a maverick, was searching, in his last years, for new answers in a rapidly changing world, which got him more or less expelled from the rigidly "Marxist" exile group of Marcel Pivert, Gironella, and Jean Malaquais who were convinced that WWII would be followed by a new edition of 1917. In that search for new answers, Weissman's work is not very helpful.

NOTES

1. James Hoberman, "Who Is Victor Serge (And Why Do We Have to Ask)?" *Village Voice Literary Supplement*, No. 30, 1984.

2. Translated by Julia Guseva and published by Praxis, the research and publication arm of the Victor Serge Public Library in Moscow, which was established in 1997 with the support of the International Victor Serge Foundation created by Serge's son, Vlady

Kibalchich, and myself. Guseva's translation of Serge's novel *Conquered City* is now ready for the presses, and the papers of our September 2001 Serge Colloquium in Moscow are being prepared for publication. Praxis is planning a second Moscow Conference in June 2003 around the theme of the tradition of revolutionary dissident minorities and their relevance today. For information write (praxis2001@mail.ru) or FAX 7095 292 6511 "Box 385."

3. This text, presumed lost for many years, was rediscovered by Peter Sedgwick in Spain, at the end of the Franco era. It had been translated by Serge's friend Costa-Iscar for the syndicalist paper, *Tierra y Libertad*, in 1917.

4. Although Serge dedicated a novel to Trotsky, the Old Man (who kept up with French fiction and wrote articles about Malraux, Malaquais and Céline) never bothered to read it. See Richard Greeman, "Did Trotsky Read Serge?" in *Revolutionary History* Vol. 7 No2, special issue on "Culture and Revolution in the Thought of Leon Trotsky."

5. Discovered by Peter Sedgwick in the archives of *La Révolution proletarienne*. It was already set up in galleys. Peter published it in *Peace News* in 1961, but the calumny sticks to this day and is passed on to this day by "scholars" like Michel Dryfus.

6. Write to *Critique*'s managing editor, Bob Arnot, Dept; of Economics, Glasgow Caledonian University, Glasgow G4 0BA (rar@gcal.ac.uk)

7. *Littérature et Révolution*, Paris 1933, 1976 and 1978. Serge also wrote a regular chronicle of Soviet literary and intellectual life in the 20's for the French review *Clarté,* edited by Henri Barbusse.

8. For further reading, see Richard Greeman, "Victor Serge and the Novel of Revolution" in Weissman, ed., *The Ideas of Victor Serge: A Life as a Work of Art*, Critique Books, 1997.

9. Serge's "Reply to Ciliga" in *New International,* February 1939. Quoted by Weissman p. 324.

10. http://webtext.library.yale.edu/xml2html/beinecke.SERGE.con.html#a3

Dystopia Revisited

Martin Oppenheimer

THE DOMESTIC FRONT of "the war on terrorism" has thrown not only the usual civil libertarian crowd, but even the "libertarians" of the right, from William Safire on out, into a panic. The USA Patriot Act following on the heels of Clinton's 1996 anti-terrorism bill, the State Department's list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations, the arrests, and in some cases disappearances, of more than a thousand aliens, several hundred of whom are still unaccounted for, the granting of domestic snooping rights to the CIA, surveillance cameras in public places, the use of secret evidence in closed hearings with no access to legal counsel, the abrogation of attorney-client privilege and the monitoring of conversations of federal "detainees," the use of military courts to try enemy soldiers on vague charges related to "violations of the rules of war" — it seems to many observers uncomfortably reminiscent of, well, you name it: the Palmer Raids, the internment of Japanese-Americans in World War II, the Smith Act, Truman's Attorney General's List, McCarthyism, blacklisting from jobs, and loyalty oaths. The patriotic fervor from kindergarten to the universities with dissenters labeled as terrorist-symps rather than comsymps, gives people with historical memories nightmares, even as the general public accepts blatant violations of the Constitution, the Geneva Convention and other international law without a murmur as a necessary price to pay for a sense of security, false though it may be.

Is this just another unfortunate period of hysteria in a long history of such periods in American history going back to the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, to be overcome, hopefully sooner rather than later by a combination of time, common sense, wise court decisions, public protests, and some intervention by enlightened members of the ruling class? Or is this a new phase in an ongoing process of "creeping authoritarianism" (*In These Times*, Dec. 24, 2001) leading to a "National Security State" (*The Nation*, Dec. 17, 2001)? Is this a big step in the direction of a police, or garrison state? Is this the beginning of 1984, just a few years late, or are the prophets of doom being unduly panicked?

The dystopian view has almost as long a history as the hysterias that have afflicted the country from its earliest days. In Jack London's *The Iron Heel*, first published in 1907, a fascist dictatorship (without that name, of course) takes over the country. Two decades later, Sinclair Lewis published *It Can't Happen Here* (1935) in order to warn us that it could. Then there was, and is, the extensive literature of science fiction and fantasy, of which, in left circles, George Orwell's *1984*, published in 1949, was perhaps the best known. It is well to remember that although most people saw *1984* as an attack on the Soviet system, many also perceived it to be a critique of tendencies in Labor Britain.

Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, first published in 1932 as the world's economies were collapsing, was similarly pessimistic. Huxley's book was prescient in that it contained fictionalized versions of many contemporary scientific "marvels," the best-known of which was his "soma," a prozac-type drug. But more interesting is his introduction to the 1946 edition, written just after Hiroshima. He believed that "highly centralized totalitarian governments" would soon emerge everywhere. However, they need not brutalize the population through firing squads and mass imprisonment because control will be exerted through the use of scientific propaganda. People will come to "love their servitude."

But the prophets of doom were not lim-

MARTIN OPPENHEIMER *has just retired from the front lines at Rutgers University, but still works with the faculty union (AAUP) as a grievance counselor. He is an associate editor of* Critical Sociology. *His most recent book is* The State in Modern Society *(Prometheus/Humanity Press, 2000). Portions of this essay have been excerpted from that book.*

ited to writers of fiction, nor, by the 1930s, to descriptions of real-existing Naziism or of Stalinism. An analysis subsuming those two historical phenomena in the term "totalitarianism," and expanding that to an even broader framework that included liberal and social-democratic states, soon appeared.

ONE OF THE FIRST VENTURES in what might be called a backlash to the view that the postwar world would see a triumph of democracy if not of socialism, was James Burnham's *The Managerial Revolution* (1941). Burnham, an ex-Trotskyite and ex-comrade of Max Shachtman's splinter group, the Workers Party, came to believe that such (superficially in his view) different societies as the U.S. under the New Deal, Nazi Germany, and the USSR, were birds of a feather in that they shared similar forms of planning and management. "The economic framework," he said, "in which this social dominance of the managers will be assured is based upon the state ownership of the major instruments of production…the state…will…be the 'property' of the managers. And that will be quite enough to place them in the position of the ruling class." This had been the view of Shachtman and others, with regard to the Soviet Union. But Burnham held that Germany and the U.S. (and by implication a Labor Party-led Britain that was soon to come) were also advanced stages of managerial society. This negative prognosis led Burnham into the conservative camp, and to *The National Review*.

In the same year that Burnham's book appeared, the political scientist Harold Lasswell published a famous essay called "The Garrison State" in a sociological journal. Approaching this issue from the perspective of the sociology of elites, Lasswell argued that "specialists on violence" would surface as the dominant group in society. He said a garrison state would be characterized by "a deep and general sense of participation" if morale problems were to be avoided. Hence the importance of the manipulation of symbols. Second, there must be work for all, if necessary by compulsion. Third, there would be government by plebiscite, with opposition parties banned, despite the outer trappings of democracy. Fourth, while the garrison state would be one of battle potential with military men playing a leading role, actual violence would more likely be directed at internal rather than external enemies, particularly the potentially troublesome unskilled, and suspicious elements among intellectuals. Fifth, all organized social activity would be governmentalized and highly centralized.

Finally, in the interest of morale, there would be some moderation of income differences. It would not be too difficult to reinterpret most of these conditions to fit the current situation. But Lasswell was wrong, or at least premature, on the last two points.

While this description fits that of many discussions of "totalitarianism," of which Hannah Arendt's 1951 *The Origins of Totalitarianism* is probably best-known, Lasswell's point of departure is his view that this development held for Western, democratic societies, at least potentially. Intensive governmental intervention in the economy to the point of nationalization of some industries in countries like Britain, Germany, and France, and the move towards lessening economic inequality in the social-democratic states of Western Europe after the war, seemed to fit with Lasswell's description. In the 1960s and 1970s, moreover, states such as West Germany and the U.S. did engage in considerable internal repression of a "military" kind. Nor have we seen the last of that by a long shot.

We often think of this kind of formulation as conservative. Indeed, a book that is virtually a bible to the libertarian right was Friedrich Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom* (1944). But quite apart from a broad range of anarchist and left-socialist analyses of the Soviet Union, other leftists have also contributed to this broader Orwellian outlook (not the least of whom was Orwell himself, almost needless to say). The work of the German "Frankfurt School" theorists Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (originally published in German in the U.S. in 1944, but not in English until 1972), and Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* (1964), were similarly gloomy in outlook. But these analyses, originating in what seemed to be the indestructible nature of the totalitarian regimes of the 1930s, went beyond the structural or bureaucratic nature of these dicta-

torships to explore the nature of culture in technologically-advanced societies.

Horkheimer and Adorno argued that social progress itself had led to its opposite: ". . . the evolution of the machine has already turned into that of the machinery of domination…successful progress [is] its contrary. The curse of irresistible progress is irresistible regression." Horkheimer and Adorno saw this as rooted in the psychic realm, in the problem of what happens to the human consciousness in the era of commodity fetishism and mass society. The prime product of the Enlightenment leads almost inevitably to Auschwitz and The Bomb, they believed.

It was Marcuse, also a refugee from Germany, who explored the manipulative forms of repression most thoroughly. Totalitarianism, he wrote, "is not only a terroristic political coordination of society, but also a non-terroristic economic-technical coordination which operates through the manipulation of needs by vested interests." This need for commodities, implanted by the culture, in turn requires us to toil, to compete aggressively, and ultimately to exploit others. People become incapable of distinguishing false, manipulated needs from real needs. The capacity for critical thought is also subverted through the very freedoms modern society provides, especially in the sexual arena. Liberties that strengthen repression are granted: we enjoy music, film, drugs, sex, but in such a limited and commercialized way that we become in effect co-opted. And all this without violence, without concentration camps.

A policy and planning professor, Bertrand Gross, coined a new name for this phenomenon, "friendly fascism," in a book of that name published in 1980. In his book Gross organizes, synthesizes, and elaborates many of the ideas put forth years earlier by Lasswell and others, but also incorporates many of Marcuse's critiques of culture, including his critique of the liberalization of sexuality. Gross' analysis, unlike that of Lasswell, not to mention conservatives like Burnham, is fundamentally anti-capitalist, and spends considerable space indicting the American corporate structure as being the driving force in the development of "incipient" friendly fascism. The work is replete with references to power structure research. And, although his overall argument appears to be pessimistic, "It Hasn't Happened Yet" (the heading of chapter 18), and he remained cautiously optimistic about the chances for an effective struggle against this new and grim phenomenon. Perhaps because of its quite personal and nonacademic style the book is less known than several more academic works along similar lines that appeared about the same time, or even preceded it, among the best-known of which was Alan Wolfe's *The Seamy Side of Democracy*, appropriately subtitled *Repression in America* (1973) and his later *The Limits of Legitimacy* (1977). Wolfe's work was influenced, in turn, by the social theorists Juergen Habermas and Claus Offe, who were close to the German student movement and on hand to observe the repressive apparatus of the Federal Republic as it attempted to deal with widespread protest activity in the 1970s. All of these analyses shared, with Gross, a fundamental critique of capitalism, the inherent dynamic of which they saw as inevitably repressive in character — repressive both in the police, and in the cultural, senses.

MARCUSE'S *ONE-DIMENSIONAL MAN* is considered a major influence in the political education of the New Left, but many older leftists saw it as not entirely a positive one. He wrote off the working class and looked to the more marginal elements of the population: students, the lumpenproletariat (especially the Black lumpen), the third world, in short elements totally alienated from capitalist society, as a source of hope because they would less likely be co-opted. While it cannot be said that one book, no matter how important, led to marginalizing the student new left, and to its distrust and distancing from the labor movement, it surely didn't help forge broader alliances. Despite his protestations of hope, the overall sense of his work was that between outright state repression and the manipulations of the hegemonic culture, any form of real criticism, much less revolutionary action, was almost hopeless. His readers were forced to choose between coat-tailing adventurist movements on the fringes, and despair. Inevitably, for some, the former led to the lat-

ter, and to a retreat from politics altogether.

But another similarly pessimistic voice, from quite another quarter, had equal resonance for the New Left, and chronologically preceded it. This was the work of C. Wright Mills, especially his *The Power Elite* (1956). As the civil rights and anti-poverty movements grew in the 1960s (shortly after Mills' untimely death), and then the anti-Vietnam War movement, the question of power structures and their resistance to change became a central issue, especially in community organizing circles, and in Students for a Democratic Society. Mills' work, although of course not the first in the U.S. to analyze and describe the upper class, somehow caught on (in part because he had also been opposed to the cold war and nuclear arms). Power structure analyses at both the local and national levels became popular, whether in the minimal form of investigating university portfolio holdings in corporations and the linkages between those corporations and a myriad of social ills, or in the larger sense of trying to understand how governmental decisions are made. This inevitably meant an analysis of the interlocking networks between the corporate rich and the personnel of the State. The problem was, and is, that his analysis, and those of many of his disciples even today, tend to leave the reader with a sense of helplessness in the face of the overwhelming power of the "military-industrial complex," the "military-industrial-university complex," the "prison-industrial complex," etc. etc.

Mills was not a Marxist. He was more in the tradition of such American populists as Lincoln Steffens and Upton Sinclair than of American Marxists like Lewis Corey, whose *The Crisis of the Middle Class* (1935) preceded his own very important *White Collar* by 16 years. In populist times there was always a way forward, a progressive solution. But by Mills' time, the era of Eisenhower and McCarthyism and the Cold War, signs of protest were very few and far between. Sociology was seeking respectability, conservatism held sway, and Mills was a maverick in that he spoke of the unspeakable.

The Power Elite provided little beyond an indictment. Later, in *The Causes of World War III* (1960), Mills lectured intellectuals on their social responsibilities. If only they were honest to their "calling," he said, they would involve themselves in politics in order to "reveal the way in which personal troubles are connected to public issues." They would become "consistently and altogether unconstructive" vis-à-vis the ongoing social order. This view was based on the assumption that neither the blue-collar nor the white-collar working class could be mobilized for change. Mills shared with Marcuse the belief that students and intellectuals would be part of the force that would have to displace the proletariat as the primary vanguard for change.

Both Mills' and Marcuse's pessimisms were soon to be contradicted by the very movements that used their own words as indictments of the system. Yet those movements faded away after the end of the Vietnam War, and after the civil rights movement's reformist successes. And very soon the organized labor movement would also go into decline, primarily due to "deindustrialization," the movement of jobs offshore.

Power structure research, and more broadly left theorists' concern with theories of the state and state power, continued into the 1980s, the 1990s, and to this date. But this work, despite its utility for those who are looking for data to support an anti-capitalist analysis (including an anti-globalization analysis) continues to be politically bleak. In the latest edition of G. William Domhoff's popular *Who Rules America?* (1998), for example, he advocates that a liberal-left coalition try to take over the Democratic Party (something that Marcuse, and probably Mills, would have scoffed at), but concludes that "the corporate-conservative coalition is likely — but not certain — to prevail even if" such a coalition were to be created. This for a combination of reasons that boil down to the overwhelming power of the corporate community. Similarly, Michael Parenti, in his *Democracy for the Few* (1995) proposes only the most minimal measures, such as reforming the electoral system and democratizing the media (!?) to curtail the power of the capitalist class. Yet the burden of the evidence carefully presented by these writers, both more or less in the Mills tradition, is that such minimal programs are either impossible to achieve, or pointless even if they were to be enacted

because they would simply help further to legitimate the continuing domination of the ruling class. In the Marcusean sense, they would function to liberalize rather than to liberate. The choice, then, is between organizing marginal people, and tinkering. Small wonder that university students who are exposed to Marcuse and Mills and their respective followers are often in despair.

MOST REAL, THAT IS LIBERTARIAN, conservatives also have a pretty dismal view of the future, although for them the root causes are obviously of a completely different character. For the left, anarchists aside, it is not the state as such that lays the track and drives the train to totalitarianism; it is, rather, the capitalist state operating in specific historic conditions. Even the left critique of Stalinism was not a critique of the state as such, but of a dictatorial state developing out of specific historic conditions. For the right, as for many anarchists, it *is* the state as such. It is the social reform apparatus of liberalism and social democracy that grows, octopus-like, to enslave us. The solution, if there is to be one, is to dis-integrate (downsize) the state. The logic of libertarian conservatism, in this historical moment, coincides with that of the civil libertarians of the left: It opposes the integration of police forces, the militarization of domestic life, the prospect of national identity cards, the creation of neighborhood watch committees that will inform on suspicious activity. Where it differs from the left is that conservatives (such as William Safire) do not seem to understand that the very super-patriotism and reflexive counter-revolutionary responses that they generally espouse logically takes us into an atmosphere in which authoritarian measures thrive.

To what extent is the U.S. becoming a "friendly fascist" state? No one phenomenon alone justifies a prognosis. Even with a pattern of symptoms, no modern state is a "perfect" model. Each state is somewhere on a range, with Germany perhaps farther toward the type envisioned by Lasswell or Gross than others. What are the indices of such a development?

- The gradual encroachment of the state into areas formerly operated by private, voluntary, alternative institutions, what is often called "civil society," so that state expertise supplants spontaneous efforts to participate in public life. Yet this development is in the process of being reversed in the U.S., and there is pressure to do the same in other Western countries. "Voluntarism" as a cop-out for the state's responsibility to care for its worst-off citizens is very much in vogue, private corporations are called in to run public school systems, automobile inspection systems are handed over to private contractors, etc.
- A welfare structure guaranteeing a minimum income or some form of job in a context of planning. Yet this too, presumably undertaken as a cooptative reform move in order to undermine more radical solutions, is also being reversed in the U.S. and efforts in this direction in Western Europe are stalled only because of mass protests.
- A gradual merger of welfare and criminal justice apparatuses so that they are no longer easily distinguishable: police do social work, social workers identify potential criminals, teachers flag potential future deviants, privacy rights are undermined. Such a merger necessitates an information exchange system, which is in fact under way (partly under the rubric of anti-terrorism).
- The cross-national coordination of police forces, including information exchange, training, special assistance on projects, even command of one nation's personnel by officers from another nation, are also under way (see: war on drugs, war on terrorism).
- An internal passport and registration system so that all changes in residence and virtually all travel is susceptible to checks.
- An international centralized data processing information bank on all residents of the countries involved, something that is well underway in the European Community states.
- Legal measures covering crimes that are at least partially political in nature, such as the new anti-terrorism legislation. Such measures have been in place in other countries for years. Provisions

for extradition, so that, for example, alleged Irish Republican Army or Palestinian, terrorists can be extradited from the U.S. to the U.K., or from Pakistan to the U.S., are implied.

- The integration of national public and private policy-forming and advisory bodies with those of other nations. The best example is the Tri-Lateral Commission, which years ago generated study groups on, among other subjects, the alleged dangers of an excess of democracy.
- The increasing use of computer technology to develop a range of accountability measures ("objective" testing, strategic plans, standardization of social and educational services, etc.) that function to intensify supervision and undermine professional and intellectual independence.

A series of contradictions inhibit these developments to some degree. The clearest contradiction (in Western Europe at least) is the declining credibility of the social democratic reform state. The economic competition that comes with globalization has forced it to cut back on social benefits and become ever more integrated with the global capitalist project. As unemployment and social disruption (including both protest and crime) rise, the system becomes more ungovernable. This means that the march towards total integration (what the Nazis called *Gleichschaltung*) is slowed, although sometimes at the cost of a resurgence of ultra-right-wing political movements.

A deeper contradiction, which is implied in the above, is what is called the legitimation crisis. The state must maintain some degree of popularity, especially in a parliamentary republic. This requires the maintenance of democratic forms and acts as a check on repression. However, as more people become disadvantaged, and this disaffection takes political form, the efficient operation of capital forces the state to repress popular forces, hence de-legitimating itself. Short of the kind of total crisis in which capital is prepared to discard legitimacy altogether and introduce fascism in some form, the state's need to maintain legitimacy functions to preserve spaces for political dissent.

In the U.S., moreover, historical developments and traditions serve to undermine many aspects of the drive towards friendly fascism. Law enforcement is still relatively decentralized compared to Western European countries. There is resistance to an internal passport system, even in the post 9-11 context. Domestic travel is virtually uncontrolled except by air. Both geography and economy provide interstices where people can make a living outside the formal economy (quite apart from organized crime). Finally, the American rhetoric and tradition of individual rights itself acts as a brake on state interference for better, or (in the case of ultra-right militias) worse. Nevertheless, legislative and executive measures, often confirmed by the courts, have over the years moved the country many steps in the direction of a stronger, more repressive state. And when it comes to minorities (particularly, today, immigrants of color), the fine traditions embedded in the Constitution and in tradition have more often been honored in the breach. For many millions in this country, a discussion of whether or not repressive apparatuses are on the rise is therefore irrelevant, since they have lived with them all their lives.

The Garrison State in its developing "friendly" form will be with us for some time, short of the final form envisaged by the pessimists of both right and left. Contradictions will continue to exist, leaving room for non-institutionally-integrated loci of political and economic power. Given the assumption that some form of parliamentary democracy must be permitted in order to provide an arena in which to attain a functioning consensus among the fractions of the ruling class, as well as providing a sense that the state is legitimate for most of the populace, it will be possible to protest, slow, and even reverse excessive security measures.

Finally, there is the critique that has been leveled over the years at Marcuse, and more so at Mills and many others of those schools: That these approaches are insufficiently dialectical. That is, cogent critiques that they are, they fail adequately to consider the contradictions within the system that inevitably, if inconsistently and erratically, give rise to its opposite, to protest and insurgency.

Reification and Conspicuous Consumption in *The Great Gatsby*

Robert Woods Sayre & Michael Löwy

IN ONE OF HIS MORE INTERESTING COMMENTS on literary matters, Marx claimed that one could learn more about the social situation in contemporary England by reading certain novelists than by studying all of the current analyses being published on the subject.[1] For the author of *Capital*, then, literature can give access to knowledge of society. It can fulfill a cognitive function in areas of what we now term the social sciences, in some cases more relevantly than in productions of those sciences themselves. However, while this proposition is doubtless true, it is equally important to recognize that literary discourse and that of the social sciences constitute deeply specific forms of knowledge. As the sociologist of literature Lucien Goldmann often insisted, theory formulates concepts, analyses, and laws of functioning, while literary works brings to life individuals, characters in situations. While the former follows the logic of scientific rationality, the latter follows that of imagination, and in so doing generates an irreplaceable "knowledge effect," illuminating — from inside, as it were — the contours and forms of social reality. This implies, clearly, a possible — and fruitful — complementarity between the two forms of discourse.

We will attempt here to illustrate this proposition by asking what F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925) can contribute to the understanding of two crucial aspects of modern society — reification and "conspicuous consumption" — aspects that are both intimately related and relatively distinct. We will trace some of the major outlines of a *sui generis* mode of knowledge of these phenomena — a mode that can be articulated only by literary means. It should be noted at the outset that the author of *The Great Gatsby* was particularly well placed to observe the workings of these characteristic dimensions of his period. Fitzgerald's first novel, *This Side of Paradise* (1920) made him immediately famous . . . and enormously rich, which allowed him to lead a life of luxury and frequent the most well-heeled and idle of milieux. He was able to see at first hand, then, the most extreme forms of conspicuous consumption of the "roaring twenties." His sumptuous lifestyle, though, quickly put him deeply in debt, and he discovered the underside of the American Dream as well. Although partially dazzled by the fabulous charms of great wealth, Fitzgerald remained lucid and was a severe critic of American society as a whole, particularly as regards the degradation of human values due to the reign of money in the United States.[2]

It may be useful first to recall the general outline of the narrative in *The Great Gatsby*. The main action takes place during the summer of 1922, and the narrator, Nick Carraway, participates in the events. A native of the Midwest, he moves to West Egg — a suburban town for the newly rich on Long Island — where he becomes a neighbor of Jay Gatsby. The latter, whose past is a mystery, lives in an immense manor where he regularly throws extravagant parties. Nick is the cousin of Daisy Buchanan, who lives with her husband on the other side of a bay, in East Egg, inhabited by people with older fortunes. Progressively in the narrative certain elements of Gatsby's past life are revealed: he had courted Daisy during the war, and has bought his manor so as to be near her; coming from a family of poor farmers, his fortune is clearly founded on criminal activities, particularly bootlegging; and in these activities Gatsby seems ready to do anything, including murder. Gatsby again takes up his relationship with Daisy;

MICHAEL LÖWY *is research director in sociology at the CNRS, National Center for Scientific Research, Paris.* ROBERT WOODS SAYRE *is professor of American literature at the University of Marne-la-Vallée.*

her husband, Tom, a brutal and hypocritical man, has a mistress, Myrtle, the wife of a poor garage owner, George Wilson. The dénouement is played out among these characters. As the result of mistaken identity, Daisy accidentally kills Myrtle at the wheel of Gatsby's car, and Gatsby is killed, in an act of vengeance, by Myrtle's husband.

Reification, Or the Magic of Commodity Fetishism

IT IS NO EXAGGERATION to say that the fundamental principle that controls the fictional world of *The Great Gatsby* is reification in the sense given to that concept by Marx and Lukács.[3] For in the novel the power of money penetrates everywhere, transforming the human landscape into a "wasteland," to borrow the title of T. S. Eliot's poem of 1922 that was a major inspiration for Fitzgerald. In the representation of the human devastation engendered by reification, the novel manifests originality in several respects. First, its protagonist, Gatsby, reveals himself to be someone in whom the most exalted emotions — love and the dream of human potentiality — are infiltrated and intimately corrupted by the obsession with money. Rarely has it been so well shown how reification can invade even those areas of life that are polar opposites to exchange value. But at the same time — and here it is even more innovative — the novel transmutes into its very form the experience of reification, making its illusory, magical charm manifest at the same time that its pernicious, underlying essence is exposed. The metaphors employed (ironically) by Marx in his analysis of commodity fetishism are of the supernatural and magic, and in several ways *The Great Gatsby* incarnates this highly ambivalent and deceptive magic.

The representation of reification in the novel is both extensive and intensive. On the one hand, it touches every nook and cranny of the novelistic world, while on the other its ruses, and the depths of its penetration are explored, particularly in the central characters — Nick, the narrator, and Gatsby himself. If we look at the geography of its world, we can observe that it is structured by two related oppositions that correspond to conventional social and cultural distinctions: the East and the West[4] of the United States, often seen as polarities (a region of established culture versus a region of uncontrolled exploitation and accumulation), and East and West Egg, suburban towns inhabited by old and new wealth respectively. But the novel destabilizes these oppositions, showing that in terms of the power of money the differences disappear. In the novel, Tom, Daisy and Nick, all from families of old wealth, come from the Middle West, and everything we know about their families indicates the overweening importance of wealth for them, while no signs of countervailing cultural values appear. Moreover, in the very first pages of the novel Nick demystifies the "aristocratic" aura of his family by revealing its origins, three generations earlier, in a wholesale hardware business; the "old" family of today was, in a none-too-distant past, newly rich.[5]

As for the East, it is in and near New York that the action of the novel takes place — a New York that is the realm of the Jewish gangster who is Gatsby's associate, and in which, once one crosses a bridge into Manhattan, any social reversal is possible. (p. 67) Between the Eggs and New York is located the novel's symbolic geographical center: the Valley of Ashes. As a dumping ground for the civilization of money and merchandise, it symbolizes the whole: America is a Valley of Death where human beings, covered with ash, resemble zombies. (p. 26)

In this fallen world all the characters — with one exception — are corrupted by the power of money to mold their lives — motives, emotions, actions. Tom, for example, uses his wealth to control and dominate others, and his identity is defined by the things he possesses — things that he doesn't enjoy but which function as signs of his power. His wife Daisy is, on the other hand, a sensitive being entrapped in her milieu; but she is rendered incapable of connecting with her love for Gatsby by her attachment to the life of material luxury of her childhood. She ultimately marries Tom after the war for this reason. And at the end, when Gatsby is threatened, Daisy opts again for Tom and the security of the monied. Myrtle, Tom's mistress, is equally motivated by money and merchandise. What attracted her to Tom at their first encounter was his suit and expensive shoes; and the apartment that Tom has

installed her in is overstuffed with furniture in bad taste, paid for by him. (p. 38) While they are together Myrtle continually has him buy things for her, and what she dreams of is to buy more. Having married a poor man, Myrtle feels extreme frustration in a society in which status is measured by wealth, and she illustrates how the have-nots as well as the haves of this society can fall under the spell of reification. The latter, then, is all-powerful in the novel, and it could be shown that its hold extends to all the secondary characters as well — with one exception, however, Myrtle's husband. Paradoxically, George Wilson appears to be the one true lover of the novel. Silently adoring his wife, he is devastated by her death, and his murder of Gatsby — through misunderstanding — is arguably the only action of the novel that is not sullied by pecuniary considerations.

The demonstration of the quasi-universality of reification — the extensive dimension of the phenomenon in *The Great Gatsby* — is powerfully made, but one finds similar depictions in other modern novels. The real originality of Gatsby, it seems, lies in the portrait of the protagonist and the modes of presentation of the character by the narrator, which explore the nature and the experience of reification intensively. For one can see in Gatsby the penetration of commodity fetishism into the most essential aspirations — the dream of possibilities, and love — while Nick's narration reifies the person of Gatsby and effects a (partial) mystification of the overall phenomenon in the novel.

From the first mention of him, Gatsby is characterized (according to Nick) by his "heightened sensitivity to the promises of life" and his "extraordinary gift for hope." (p. 8) The projection of this sensitivity is part of the inexpressible charm of Gatsby, a charm which is manifested in his creations — the parties — which exude an atmosphere of "romantic possibilities." (p. 105) This spontaneous opening toward the possible and the future explains in large part the impression of eternal youth conveyed by Gatsby. But in the course of the narrative we discover that the life dreamed by Gatsby was from the very start identified with the most classic form of the "American Dream": wealth and material "success." The young boy in fact set for himself a list of guiding rules — strongly resembling those of Benjamin Franklin — as aids to "bettering" himself, with those goals in mind. (p. 164) The act by which, as a young man, he begins to put his plan into practice, and in so doing creates himself as "Gatsby," is to help a millionaire yachtsman bring his boat out of danger, with the calculated intention of using that action to his advantage. This, then, is a striking example of the inversion of values characteristic of reification. Aiding another human being is instrumentalized with a view to material rewards; altruism is transformed into self-interest.

The following years, spent as the factotum of the millionaire yachtsman who made his fortune in the gold rush, are an apprenticeship for Gatsby, and to the end of his life he keeps a photograph of his mentor, the prospector — "a grey, florid man with a hard, empty face" — in his bedroom. (p. 97) When he is dispossessed of the millionaire's inheritance through the machinations of another pretender, Gatsby turns to illegal means in the pursuit of his dream, and does so with such ferocity that when Nick looks at him in a moment of crisis he has the impression that Gatsby must have killed someone, as rumor would have it. (p. 128)

Gatsby's dream, then, ultimately leads to this murderous impulse, and by extension, so does the "American Dream." But at a certain point in its trajectory Gatsby's original project also becomes mixed up with love — a love which is consequently as corrupt as the dream itself. For we discover progressively that Daisy is inseparable from wealth in Gatsby's mind. We learn first simply that she is very rich; her family has the "largest of the lawns" of Louisville. (p. 72) But later, when Gatsby recounts to Nick his first encounter with her, it appears that he is impressed above all by the luxury of her house. Daisy's power of seduction is indissociable from that of her house. (p. 141) The most striking revelation concerning what Daisy means to Gatsby, involves her voice. Repeatedly, and from the start, the text insists on the power of fascination of Daisy's voice, for Gatsby in particular but also for anyone who hears it. Its warmth and musicality are invoked, as well as the "promise" it seems to conjure up. But one day Gatsby astonishes Nick, who recognizes the truth of the remark, by putting his fin-

ger on the essence of its charm: "'Her voice is full of money,' he said suddenly." In the same passage Daisy is called "the golden girl." (p. 115) Thus it seems clear that Gatsby's dream of possibility, which from the start was a dream of money, in transforming itself into love for Daisy has reified this love as entirely as the original dream.

It should be added that Gatsby himself appears to us as a reified man — a man who has reduced himself to the commodities he possesses and to his monetary value. His relations with others are systematically mediated by exchange value, for he regularly seeks to "buy" the aid, acceptance or affection of others through his liberalities. This approach is applied to Daisy as well as to others, and on the day they are reunited Gatsby, dressed in gold and silver-colored clothes, hastens to show her his manor and all it contains, room by room. At the end of the visit he displays his collection of expensive shirts. This scene — which culminates in Daisy's bursting into tears and sobbing: "It makes me sad because I've never seen such-such beautiful shirts before" marvelously illustrates the ascendency of merchandise in the world of the couple and of the novel as a whole. (p. 89)

The ultimate refinement of this demonstration is the narrative voice, that of Nick Carraway, which translates the very experience of reification by becoming intoxicated with its charms and denying its reality, yet at the same time giving clues that allow the reader to understand and to demystify. But first there is the trap: from the beginning Nick announces that Gatsby was different, and better, than the others around him, and near the end of the narrative Nick fully identifies himself with Gatsby. (p. 8) In the face of the general indifference to the latter's death on the part of those who had known him, Nick begins to have "a feeling of defiance, of scornful solidarity between Gatsby and me against them all"; the scion of old wealth sides with the arriviste. (p. 157) Throughout his narrative, moreover, Nick presents Gatsby as a captivating, "gorgeous" being, one whose presence is, finally, quasi-magical. (p. 8) His whole mode of life and manner of being appear under the guise of enchantment. In this way, then, the reality of reification is veiled, mystified by the narrative voice, and the reader is undeniably under pressure to become subjugated by Gatsby's charm, such as it emanates from Nick's voice.

The latter, however, also gives the reader tools which would allow him or her to deconstruct the mystification. Nick is an ambiguous character, divided between a mercantile tendency (he resembles his great-uncle, founder of the family fortune) and a certain taste for literature. When he comes East for the summer of 1922, it is with the purpose of working in a bank, but also with the intention of returning to literary reading abandoned since college days. The only reading he actually does during that summer, though, involves technical, financial questions, and thus he finally chooses banking over literature in the same way that he takes sides with Gatsby. Yet it could be said that it is his literary side which, even though the weaker of the two, allows Nick a certain critical distance in relation to Gatsby. This critical distance, which coexists uneasily with his "false consciousness," can be seen in the crucial last paragraphs of the novel. The originality of *The Great Gatsby*, then, resides in this double vision, and it would seem that within Nick's ambivalent discourse it is the literary dimension of his sensibility which provides keys to the demystification of reification.

Conspicuous Consumption

ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING aspects of *The Great Gatsby* is its dramatic representation of the phenomenon of conspicuous consumption as a striking expression of reification in the life style of the leisure classes. While all the manifestations of the former are not directly the product of the latter, the affinity or convergence between the two is undeniable. One can consider conspicuous consumption as, in some measure, a form taken by reification in a hierarchical society. We are confronted, once more, with the domination of "things" over the individual's social being and the degradation/reification of social relations.

In order better to bring out the originality and cognitive power of Fitzgerald's novel, we will relate it to the well-known book by the sociologist and economist Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*.[6] This juxtaposition is possible be-

cause both observe the same phenomena: the mores, life style and culture — in the anthropological sense of the word — of the idle classes, particularly in the U.S. Both direct a critical gaze — full of irony and sarcasm — on the superficial and "magnificent" glitter, the noisy and flashy luxury of this parasitic and rapacious elite. It is not known whether Fitzgerald ever read Veblen's book. In any case, he did not draw his main inspiration from any theory whatsoever, but rather from his personal experience. As a "participant observer," both outsider and insider, critical of but fascinated by the American leisure class, the novelist makes a unique contribution, which the Veblerian sociology can never supercede.[7]

LET US EXAMINE from this point of view the question of conspicuous consumption, which plays such a prominent role in *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. For Veblen this term describes the unproductive consumption of goods and services as evidence of pecuniary ability to afford a life of idleness[8] — the permanent display of the superfluous and the useless, and the unremitting demonstration of one's monetary ability, so that "the signature of one's pecuniary strength should be written in characters which he who runs may read." (pp. 46, 72) In the novel, this need to show off wealth is particularly striking in the behavior of Gatsby, the newly-rich man who was raised "out of nothing, right out of the gutter" by the Jewish speculator/crook Wolfshiem — who needs to overdo, to exaggerate in waste and squandering in order to compete with his rival, Tom Buchanan, the man of hereditary wealth. (p.162) Gatsby's "monstrous" car, stuffed with a multitude of "triumphant" boxes and decorated with "a labyrinth of wind-shields that mirrored a dozen suns," is a good example of this ostentatious excess. (p. 63) The same applies to his house, "a colossal affair by any standard," a fake Norman castle (or "Hôtel de Ville") with its tower, its immense garden and its marble swimming pool, and to his sumptuous social receptions, whose guests were "agonizingly aware of the easy money in the vicinity." (pp. 11, 53)

The hereditary rich man is no less conspicuous in exhibiting his pecuniary power. "I've got a nice place here," he boasts to the narrator, including in one sweeping gesture the elaborate mansion, the Italian garden, half an acre of roses and the motor-boat. (p. 13) But he spends in a more natural way. Heir to an "enormously wealthy" family, he squanders with an ease that "took your breath away." (p.11) Both use conspicuous waste as an instrument for what Veblen calls "invidious comparison" — pecuniary rivalry, the struggle to crush the rival by the visible demonstration of one's financial superiority. (p.36)

Among the most important forms of conspicuous consumption, Veblen mentions "the giving of . . . expensive feasts and entertainments." (p.65) But he does not analyze the social content of this ritual and the specific form it takes in modern capitalist societies, in strong contrast to the old aristocratic feasts. In one of the most impressive passages of his novel, Fitzgerald shows, through successive small brush-strokes, the "spirit" of one such noisy and flashy party. We see a crowd of people — most of whom are uninvited guests — conducting themselves according to "the rules of behavior associated with an amusement park" and dancing in "eternal graceless circles" (pp. 43, 47), while a stream of champagne pours out and "vacuous bursts of laughter rose toward the summer sky." (p.48) The most striking feature of these brilliant, "joyful" and glittering manifestations of wealth is the solitude of the individuals in the midst of the crowd — starting with Jay Gatsby himself, the host of all this rejoicing, whom most of the revellers don't know and don't want to know. Alcohol, even in huge quantities, is not able to fill the abysmal emptiness of this "social event" and its fake "conviviality."

One finds here another key aspect of the lifestyle of the leisure classes that is curiously absent in Veblen's reflections: boredom. Daisy's friend Jordan Baker, an arrogant young sportswoman, does not stop yawning throughout the story. As for Daisy herself, here is her most heartfelt outcry: "What'll we do with ourselves this afternoon? . . . and the day after that, and the next thirty years?" (p.113) This confession epitomizes, better than any sociological discourse, the acedia — in its threefold meaning of laziness, tedium and melancholia — which leaves its stamp on the endless idle days of the happy

few. It is in order to escape boredom that Daisy travelled with her husband, Tom Buchanan, to France and to all places in the world where "people played polo and were rich together." (p.11) But this endless flight leads to a dead end: "I've been everywhere and seen everything and done everything. . . . God, I'm sophisticated!" (p.22) It is the eternal repetition of the same — polo, parties, trips, sportcars, race horses, polo again, and so on ad aeternum — that makes the life of the pecuniary elite so empty and so boring. According to Walter Benjamin, the worst of hells is that of the ancient Greeks, where the damned — Sisyphus, the Danaides — are doomed to the eternal repetition of the same gestures. From such a perspective, there is no doubt that the artificial paradise of the wealthiest idle has something to do with a descent into hell. We are not very far from the atmosphere of *The Great Gatsby*.

In order to overcome tedium, the "leisure class" sometimes chooses to have political opinions. Conservatism is, according to Veblen, the dominant trend among the wealthy idle because it is considered a mark of respectability with a decorative and honorific value. (*Leisure Class*, p.138) What he does not say is that this "respectable conservatism" is often quite hypocritical. Fitzgerald shows us Tom Buchanan displaying an ostensibly moralist discourse in defense of the family as an institution, while cheerfully entertaining an adulterous relation with the wife of a garage owner. Another aspect of the modern pecuniary (capitalist) elite's conservatism which seems to have eluded the sociologist is its claim to "modernity" and "scientificity" to prop up the most outrageously reactionary opinions. For instance, here is a discourse of the same Buchanan, faithfully transcribed by the novelist: "Civilization's going into pieces . . . Have you read 'The Rise of the Coloured Empires' by this man Goddard? . . . Everybody ought to read it. The idea is if we don't look out the white race will be — will be utterly submerged. It's all scientific stuff; it's been proved. . . . These books are all scientific . . . This fellow has worked out the whole thing. It's up to us, who are the dominant race, to watch out or these other races will have control of things." "We are Nordics," he adds, "and we have produced all the things that go to make civilization." A few days later, he insists again: "Nowadays people begin by sneering at family life and family institutions, and next they'll throw everything overboard and have intermarriage between black and white." (pp. 18, 124)

Such a discourse may seem somewhat excessive, but one should not forget that racist — and anti-Semitic — opinions were not at all exceptional, nor considered "bad taste" among the American pecuniary elite of the 20s. We should recall that those were the years when Henry Ford published *The International Jew* (1921), which was to become one of the favorite readings of the leaders of the Third Reich, also "scientific" partisans of "Nordic Civilization."

Modern economic competition and the lifestyle of the "leisure class" also end up shaping the character of individuals, their "soul," their "spirit" in the psychological sense of the word. In one of the strongest passages of his book, Veblen shows how the pecuniary culture and rivalry in conspicuous consumption create what he calls a "predatory" or "rapacious" temperament — a mixture of ferocity and cunning, a narrowly self-regarding habit of mind, a total absence of scruple and a callous disregard for the interest of others. (*Leisure Class*, pp. 153, 175, 181)

We find each and every one of these traits of personality in the novel's characters. If rapacity and fraud are not absent from Gatsby's financial activities — and above all from those of his "associate," the crook Wolfshiem — it is Tom Buchanan who embodies, in all its splendor, the "predatory temperament" of the idle classes. His "shining arrogant eyes," his "cruel body," "always leaning aggressively forward," his contemptuous manner, his "sturdy physical egotism," all witness to this propensity. The rapacious ethos reveals itself above all in his behaviour towards women, both his wife Daisy and his mistress Myrtle, whose face he hits, breaking her nose in a gesture of incredible brutality. But the other characters aren't much better, from the haughty and contemptuous — as well as "incurably dishonest" — Jordan Baker, who almost crushed a workman with her car by sheer indifference, to Daisy herself who ran over Myrtle "like you'd run over a dog," never bothering to stop her car. They were all, summarizes the narrator,

"careless people . . . [who] smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money . . . and let other people clean up the mess . . ." As for Myrtle, the garage owner's wife, she tries, with pathetic vulgarity and clumsiness, to imitate the arrogance of the pecuniary elite and its "disdain for the lower orders." (pp. 12-13, 34, 58-59, 170)

What conclusions could one draw from this brief analysis of the cognitive dimension of Fitzgerald's novel? Most importantly, that the specific contribution of the literary work takes the form of a concrete singularity, of a microcosm which contains, in a certain way, the social macrocosm. If it so much broadens and deepens our understanding of social reality, it is not only because it illuminates that reality differently than the concepts of the social sciences. It is also, and above all, because literature brings to light the "obscure" moments of this reality which the social scientist does not perceive, either by his own limitations or because they are, by their nature, of difficult access to the usual abstract and generalizing scientific viewpoint. This is the reason, by the way, that modern anthropologists and ethnographists — such as Jay McLeod and Michell Duneier — have been trying, following the clues of Clifford Geertz's "thick description" and his idea of the anthropologist as author, to integrate literary methods in their scientific practice.

In any case, the internal light, the subjective approach, the concrete, unique nature of the characters and situations, make of literature an immensely valuable and deeply penetrating means of social knowledge, which no work of science, however adequate, can replace.

NOTES

1. *Marx and Engels on Literature and Art*, eds. Lee Baxandall and Stefan Morawski, (St. Louis/Milwaukee: Telos Press, 1973), p. 105 (excerpt from an article by Marx, entitled "The English Middle Class," that appeared in *The New York Tribune* in 1854). The authors mentioned are Dickens, Thackeray, the Brontës and Elizabeth Gaskell.

2. He was interested in Marxism, and near the end of his life — in his notebooks for the year 1938 — declared that his perspective was "essentially Marxian," See Robert Sklar, *F. Scott Fitzgerald, the Last Laocoön*, (NY, Oxford University Press: 1967), p. 325.

3. In *Capital* Marx insists on the "mystical" and "fantastic" character of commodities, which, from simple products of human labor become autonomous entities on the market (K. Marx, *Capital*, NY: International Pub., 1967, Vol. 1, Chap. 1, Section 4). In developed capitalist society all things — material or immaterial — tend to become commodities, and exchange value, represented by money — the commodity of commodities — tends to subvert all other values. The social field, a network of living relations, becomes "thingified" by the transforming power of money; human relations are "dehumanized" into mercantile relations. This transformation effected by reification, moreover, throws a "veil" of mystification over real social relations, rendering their perception difficult. In *History and Class Consciousness* Lukács emphasizes that as capitalist society constitutes itself historically, reification penetrates more and more deeply and comprehensively into the multiplicity of social relations, until there remains no area that is not invaded and transformed. (G. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971, Chap. 4, Section 1: "The Phenomenon of Reification"). For another reading of *The Great Gatsby* that is based on Marxist and Lukácsian conceptions of commodity fetishism and reification, see Ross Posnock, "'A New World, Material Without Being Real': Fitzgerald 's Critique of Capitalism in The Great Gatsby," in *Critical Essays on F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby*, Boston, G.K. Hall, 1984.

4. More precisely the Middle West, but in the text the term "West" is used, as if to better accentuate the opposition.

5. See F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (London: Penguin, "Penguin Modern Classics," 1988), p. 8. All later references and quotations will be taken from this edition, and will be indicated in parenthesis in our text.

6. The strength of *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899) — that which has made it, up to today, a classic of modern sociology — is the sharpness of its critical view of the pecuniary elite. Veblen's ironic detachment allows him to present a pitiless analysis of the bourgeois social comedy, of which he draws a "caricature more faithful than photography" (Raymond Aron). His affinity with the novelists of the modern social condition distinguishes Veblen from most contemporaneous sociologists, and his romantic anti-bourgeois sensibility permits him — in spite of a certain scientism inspired by evolutionism and Darwinism, and based on an ahistorical doctrine of "human instincts" — to avoid the platitudes of positivist apologists for liberal capitalism (e.g., Spencer). Both aspects bring him, to some extent, close to Fitzgerald.

7. This critical observation is not without its political and philosophical presuppositions. One year before writing *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald defined himself as "a pessimist and a communist (with Nietzschean overtones)" (see Ross Posnock, "A New World . . . " p. 201). The Marxist approach and the Romantic/Nietzschean pessimism are certainly present as a background in the novel, but the book does not contain any "theoretical" formulae. One only finds in its pages unique characters and situations.

8. All subsequent references will be to the 1970 edition of Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class* (London: Unwin Books).

The Failed Critics of American Socialism

IT DIDN'T HAPPEN HERE: WHY SOCIALISM FAILED IN THE UNITED STATES by Seymour Martin Lipset and Gary Marks. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000. 379 pp., $26.95.

Reviewed by Nelson Lichtenstein

THE SUBTITLE FOR THIS BOOK IS "Why Socialism Failed in the United States," but the "It" referred to in the title is not organized socialism at all. Rather, Seymour Martin Lipset and Gary Marks take out after far larger game. Their target is not just the organized socialist movement, once led by Eugene Debs and Norman Thomas, but the whole idea of social solidarity, collective action, and politics as something other than a calculation of self-interest and possessive individualism. Lipset, who got his start debating politics in the pre-World War II alcoves of City College, has written book after book arguing that an ideologically-rooted, culturally-powerful American exceptionalism has made the socialist idea a utopian fantasy in the United States. In this book political scientist Gary Marks helps him make that historical, comparative argument and measure its contemporary economic and political cost with useful comparative data taken from the experience of Canada, Australia, and the European social democracies.

Indeed, the chief virtue of this book is to demonstrate that when it comes to the statistical social record, the United States remains a highly exceptional society. Compared to other advanced industrial nations the U.S. has a far weaker union movement, a lower level of state social spending, and much greater poverty, both in relative and absolute terms. Lipset and Marks do not find this state of affairs something to celebrate, or reinterpret into meaninglessness, which is worth noting, for ultimately much of their argument does feed into a complacent celebration of American values and culture. Instead, they blame this Euro-American statistical disjuncture on the hard fact that the U.S. working-class remains unorganized, especially in terms of any effective political representation. "No other western democracy remotely approximates America in this regard," they conclude. "When one considers the organized power of the lower classes, American political exceptionalism is still very much alive." (279)

This book is probably going to be the last word in a particular historical/political debate that began in 1906 when Werner Sombart first asked the famous question, "Why no Socialism in America?" Most of the subsequent arguments and rejoinders are well known, so Lipset and Marks have little trouble in running down the list as it was initially codified in those CCNY alcoves and in a variety of post World War II seminar rooms. They do add to the conversation, and score some points, when they bring to bear comparative historical insights. Thus, when they look at Great Britain and Australia they find that winner-take-all electoral systems are not always fatal to third party fortunes. And compared to the situation in Central and Eastern Europe during the first decades of the 20th century, anti-Socialist repression looks pretty tame in the United States, even taking into account this nation's periodic red scares. Moreover, when Lipset and Marks examine the impact of ethnic and religious divisions on North American working-class unity, or when they

NELSON LICHTENSTEIN *teaches history at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He is the author of* State of the Union: A Century of American Labor *(Princeton, 2002).*

look at the timing of lower-class enfranchisement in the United States, they find that the American experience is far from unique.

But despite their salutary sense of history and comparative politics, several things make this book an oddly misanthropic enterprise. The first is frankly aesthetic, but also structural: the book lacks a sense of political or ideological tension, in which the heartfelt impulse for a socialist movement comes into conflict with the structures, powers, and social tropes manifest within American political life. There is nothing tragic about the subject of this book, of the sort that infused Irving Howe's *Socialism and America* or Nick Salvatorie's biography of Eugene Debs, *Citizen and Socialist.* Since Lipset and Marks make the failure of socialism so over-determined and multi-faceted, it seems strange that any intelligent person might have entertained the idea in the first place. To quote Robert Dreyfuss in a recent *American Prospect,* "it is a cold and bloodless book that dissects the failure of socialism in America the way a forensic pathologist would slice into, pick apart, and examine the desiccated organs of an ancient cadaver."

THIS COMPLAINT MAY HAVE some further import because it leads directly to my second bother. What is the audience for this book? Why was it written? Of what conversation is it a part? Lipset and Marks seem to be jousting with a group of scholars and socialists who have long since departed the playing field. Sixty years ago, thirty years ago, you could have gotten a good argument on almost any of the issues raised by the authors in a Madison or Berkeley coffee shop. The frame of reference in this book is the same as that of Theodore Draper, who argued that Communist sectarianism doomed the CP after 1919; or James Weinstein, who made a case for the Americanist vibrancy of the Party during World War I; or Gerald Grob who thought the labor left unwilling to come to terms with the real structures of American capitalism; or Daniel Bell, whose classic history of American socialism refought the battles he had once waged at the *New Leader,* and who first put forward the then startling idea that the socialist impulse could best be understood, at least in America, as part of a sectarian Protestant tradition. Indeed, if you attended a Young Peoples' Socialist League meeting in 1958 or a New Left caucus a decade later, you could, as I did, still get into an argument over the opportunist politics of Victor Berger, the perfidious influence of the Catholic Church, or the Stalinist betrayal of radical hopes in the 1930s.

One can still find echoes of these and other battles, but from about 1975 onward, historians began to approach the classic question, "Why No Socialism?" from a very different perspective. Their answers may have been wrong, romantic, or worse, but a new generation of historians, social scientists, and politically engaged individuals did reframe the question for our time. Instead of "Why No Socialism?" historians like Sean Wilentz, Nick Salvatore, Gary Gerstle, Alan Dawley, Eric Foner, David Montgomery, Herbert Gutman, Robin Kelley, Dana Frank, and Linda Gordon offered a set of more fruitful queries: What is the actually existing consciousness of American workers? To what extent do they share an anti-capitalist sensibility, or sense of collectivist, oppositional thought and action?

This generation was willing to grant that the U.S. did not have a socialist party or even socialist institutions, but that did not end the discussion, nor the effort to understand the interplay of ethnicity, culture, ideology, workplace organization, and the state. In a nutshell, this generation of historians has conceded much of the case Lipset and Marks so strenuously make. The failure of socialist political action in the U.S. has been over-determined; there was no one climatic moment: 1886, 1912, 1919, 1937, 1948 or 1968 at which a more propitious set of circumstances and decisions might have opened the floodgate to an organized socialist party and institutionalized movement.

But that does not mean that one cannot explore a world of ambiguity, on the terrain of community culture and consciousness, in which vast numbers of Americans stake out ground that differs markedly from the Protestant/sectarian, individualist/libertarian mindset to which Lipset and Marks return for causal explanations again and again. Virtually all historians standing even

slightly left of center see a profound tension between the institutions into which so many citizens and workers have been consigned and the anti-market, even anti-capitalist consciousness that also reappears again and again. For a time 19th century "republicanism" seemed a viable substitute for the socialism than never was; more recently, some have found a popular, cultural universe, sometimes incorporating and transforming even the world of mass market commerce, in which utopian visions and communal sentiments have flourished. Not a social movement exactly, not a political party, but something more than the claustrophobic dead-end elaborated in the Lipset-Marks project.

Take, for example, the role of President Franklin Roosevelt during the Great Depression. "He stole our program," complained Norman Thomas, and so he did, or at least part of it. But in stealing socialist thunder, FDR also attempted to put at the service of a powerful, intrusive state much of the libertarian republicanism that Lipset and Marks see as so antithetical to the social democratic project. Thus did FDR famously attack the "money changers" and "economic royalists" when he accepted his party's renomination at Philadelphia in 1936. "Philadelphia is a good city in which to write American history," he began, evoking a Jeffersonian-Madisonian theory of republican citizenship. "Necessitous men are not free men," he asserted, and then argued that in the 20th century world, economic inequality made political equality meaningless. Before the New Deal, he charged, "a small group had concentrated into their own hands an almost complete control over other people's property, other people's money, other people's labor — other people's lives. For too many of us life was no longer free; liberty was no longer real; men could no longer follow the pursuit of happiness." Such rhetoric has long sustained social reform in the last half of the 20th century: illegitimate institutions and elites, of property, race, or gender, have subverted the individualistic promise of the founders. An intrusive state is needed to redress the balance. Not socialism, surely, but not Protestant libertarianism either.

THIRD, THE CAUSAL OVER-DETERMINATION so much in play within this book eventually generates a debilitating weakness within the core Lipset-Marks argument. Because the book so emphasizes the dysfunctional character of pre-1940 Socialist electoral activity, it fails to see how the heirs of that left have sometimes actually changed their tactics so as to learn from failures in both politics and policy.

Take the issue of sectarianism, upon which Bell, Lipset and Marks put considerable weight. Since the 1ate 1930s a Protestant moralistic sectarianism has hardly been the problem for American left-wingers. From the Popular Front onward, virtually all American radicals have, at one time or another, tried to bore within the Democratic Party to achieve a part of their aim. Since 1948 it has been the right, not the left, which has usually explored third-party options, with results that have not always been disastrous for their cause. So if Lipset and Marks make a case against Socialist Party sectarianism in the years before 1938, well maybe leftists have learned their lesson, because in the years since then, virtually all efforts to engage the polity in a party fashion have involved coalition politics. The 2000 campaign of Ralph Nader stands in this tradition. He did not win the 5 per cent of the vote needed for the Green Party to receive federal funds. Most of those who thought that Ralph Nader represented an admirable set of politics voted for Al Gore. The latter's defeat can hardly be blamed on an excess of sectarianism: Gore won 550,000 votes more than the GOP runner-up. The left in America is weak for many reasons, but political sectarianism is not one of them, at least not during the last half of the 20th century.

This same reductionism is apparent in their discussion of World War I era unionism for which Lipset and Marks posit a Manichean division between leftist industrial unions and a more pragmatic set of craft union organizations. But as historians like David Montgomery, Steve Fraser, Steve Babson, Jeffry Haydu, and Joe McCartin have pointed out, the AFL was far from monolithic; within those unions commonly denoted as craft, there was a strong line of radicalism, often generated by the Taylorist

assault upon the skill and status enjoyed by white male workers. And of course industrial unionists, beginning with UMW leaders like John Mitchell and John L. Lewis, have been just as opportunist as you like.

The Lipset-Marks thesis, that no idea or institution can long stand against the individualist antistatism that pervades American political culture, represents a kind of carpet bombing that generates much collateral damage to their own argument. For if the failure of socialism was so overdetermined, and so culturally fixed, why not also foresee the failure of all sorts of other institutional ideological arrangements that seem to stand athwart an individualist/libertarian/Lockian ethos.

The first among these is the labor movement. It now constitutes but nine percent of the private sector workforce and despite all the energy demonstrated by the Sweeneyites, there seems little to prevent the unions from representing an increasingly smaller proportion year after year. Would Lipset and Marks like to declare the demise of the union movement over-determined? Likewise, Social Security remains another collectivist, New Deal implant within the otherwise hostile world of American individualistic exceptionalism. Ten years from now, after its privatization is well underway, one can expect that Lipset and Marks will write its postmortem, in which America's antistatist culture will be given a prominent place of honor.

FROM SOMBART TO LIPSET, discussions of American exceptionalism have almost always devolved into a discussion of the peculiar nature of American working class consciousness. But when it comes to the working class and their world, the greatest U.S. exceptionalism arises out of the character of American capitalism itself and the practice of American management. None has been more intransigently anti-union and anti-statist and for reasons that reflect the economics of a continental, now multinational market, and the politics of a racially-oriented federalism. All this is missing from *It Didn't Happen Here.*

The tradition of American business enterprise was one of self-confidence and autonomy. In sharp contrast to their counterparts in Britain or Germany, American businessmen had presided over economic institutions that were of both continental scope and vast revenue long before the rise of a powerful state or the emergence of overt class politics. In every other capitalist nation, a strong bureaucratic state either preceded or emerged simultaneously with that of the multidivisional firm, but this pattern was inverted in the United States. Although, the government famously aided railroad development in the 19th century, such assistance and regulation proved the exception rather than the rule when it came to the great industries of the second industrial revolution: chemicals, autos, rubber, food processing, chain stores, and movies. Thus, throughout the classic era of U.S. industrialization, from the Civil War into the 1920s, the most critical decisions about the direction of American economic development were in private hands.

This legacy made business hugely jealous of their prerogatives when they confronted Progressive Era reform, Debsian Socialism, and the New Deal of the 1930s. American executives first began to use the term "free enterprise" to describe the American capitalist system in the 1930s. Such nomenclature reflected an effort, however crudely put, to distinguish U.S. conditions from those of Europe, where the state, the gentry, and the unions constrained entrepreneurial activity and regulated the labor market. Moreover, such a definition of U.S. capitalism highlights the desperate sense of autonomy America's captains of industry sought to rescue from both the state and the unions, not to mention what little power the Socialists might command. To them such threats represented a Europeanized collectivism, because even the limited constraints imposed by America's mixed social welfare regime seemed radical indeed. This was "creeping socialism," also a term first coined by business-oriented conservatives in the New Deal era.

MEANWHILE, AMERICAN BUSINESS never enjoyed a successful system of self-regularization or cartelization, often characteristic of Europe and the Far East. The American market was of continental magnitude and

regional variation. Despite much talk of giant trusts and industrial oligarchy, the U.S. system was a "disorganizational synthesis," a revealing phrase coined by historian Colin Gordon. Ironically, the relative conservatism of the American labor movement, especially that derived from the AFL tradition of "volunteerism," celebrated firm-centered bargaining and eschewed independent political action, thus exacerbating this competitive disorder. American employers never came to see a system of collective bargaining as a "lesser-evil" when compared to continental socialism or British Labor politics. Indeed, American capitalists saw even the most narrowly focused brand of unionism as highly detrimental to their "prerogatives" because the shop-centered thrust of such unionism insured that labor costs were unlikely to be distributed evenly among competitors. In France, Germany, Sweden, and Great Britain, industrial cartels and associations arose naturally out of the insularity and class-cohesion of their leading industrialists. But in the United States, the regional competitiveness endemic to the industrial archipelago gave ambitious entrepreneurs the opportunity to undercut trustification and managerial cooperation. Thus, in the U.S., the very disorganization of the capitalists put a premium on keeping labor costs flexible, production techniques plastic, and unions weak.

Thus when Lipset and Marks say, "American workers were not able to shape American culture as a class. They were not able to build class consciousness into American culture as a counterweight to individualism and antistatism," they might as well be talking about employer antiunionism as socialist failure to build a party. And this critique applies not only to radical or industrial unionism, but to the more conservative, job conscious craft unionism, often celebrated as an effective bulwark against a more universal consciousness within the American working class. "I concede to my radical friends," John R. Commons wrote in 1934, "that my trade-union philosophy always made me a conservative. It is not revolutions and strikes we want, but collective bargaining on something like an organized equilibrium of equality."

But from an employer point of view, incremental job-consciousness of the Commons-Lipset variety remains just as unacceptable as Reutherite industrial unionism or the syndicalism of Big Bill Haywood and his Wobblies. All are an illegitimate fetter on the prerogatives of management and the free sway of contract and market. This ideological assault on unionism has been going on for a long time now, and the kind of debates we used to have about the fate of socialism, now engage the fate of the labor movement. On this score, Lipset and Marks assert that after World War II "union density began to decline steadily in tandem with economic prosperity and the revival of the country's individualistic and meritocratic values." The "It" in *It Didn't Happen Here* is thus any value or institution that stands athwart an atomistic individualism. At the core of their argument, Lipset and Marks rely upon a decontextualized, metahistorical explanation for the failure of socialism in the United States. It is a worthless guide for contemporary political activists.

The Voyage of James Burnham

JAMES BURNHAM AND THE STRUGGLE FOR THE WORLD: A LIFE by Daniel Kelly. ISI Books, 2002. 475 pp. $29.95.

Reviewed by Kent Worcester

WHEN JAMES BURNHAM ARRIVED in New York City, in August, 1929, he had little interest in political issues of any kind. As an undergraduate at Princeton in the mid-'20s he had taken courses in literature, art, and philosophy. Described by one dean as "without any question the finest brain I have encountered in all my years," Burnham then enrolled at Balliol College, Oxford, where he studied Anglo-Saxon under J.R.R. Tolkein, as well as medieval and modern philosophy. He moved to New York at the ripe age of 23 to teach philosophy at New York University, which was at that time a modest operation on the eastern fringe of Washington Square Park. His salary, as an instructor, was an even more modest $2,300/year.

The stock market crash of 1929, and the economic depression that followed, propelled Burnham, along with other intellectuals of his generation, to the left. While Burnham continued to teach traditional humanistic topics, such as aesthetics and ethics, he migrated steadily leftward in the first half of the 1930s. In this new biography, Daniel Kelly reports that the "first public sign that Burnham was warming to Marxism" was his 1932 review of Leon Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*. During that summer he "pored over the writings of Marx and Engels . . . hoping to understand better the world economic crisis." A key influence on his deepening radicalization was his NYU colleague Sidney Hook, whose nuanced reading of key Marxist texts helped reconcile Burnham's underlying pragmatism and empiricism with Marxism's emphasis on deep-rooted historical change. For a time Burnham considered joining the Communist Party, and he even met with Earl Browder to discuss the party's program, but Hook managed to convince him that the party was "insufficiently Marxist both in its slogans and in its practices." As an alternative, in late 1933 they both joined the American Workers Party, which had been founded by the independent-minded labor organizer, A.J. Muste.

Burnham threw himself into the project of building the AWP. He spoke at its meetings, contributed to its fund drives, and wrote a column for the party newspaper entitled "Their Government," which derided FDR's New Deal as a capitalist plot. With Hook he helped negotiate a merger between the AWP and the Communist League of America, the Trotskyist group headed by James Cannon and Max Shachtman. Unlike some of his AWP comrades, Burnham admired the Trotskyists' hard edge and redoubled his party building efforts. He continued to denounce the New Deal, but he also "trained his guns on Stalinism, calling it a policy of tyranny at home and collaboration with the 'imperialist' powers abroad in order to consolidate the dominance of the Soviet bureaucracy." Kelly, who is unsympathetic to this phase of Burnham's career, speculates that the "amount of time and energy" he poured into revolutionary activism "suggests that he had lost his sense of measure, and was hovering on the brink of a full-blown sectarian neurosis."

FROM THE PERSPECTIVE of the beleaguered Trotskyists, James Burnham was definitely a catch. He was poised, articulate, and dedicated. He could quote Shakespeare and scripture from memory. He wrote quickly, he wrote well, and he specialized in American topics. Burnham also had a life outside of politics. He played the piano, and enjoyed theater and art museums. He and his family lived quite well; they had an apartment on Sutton Place and a colonial farmhouse in Connecticut. When Jean van Heijenoort, Trotsky's secretary, arrived for dinner, "he was surprised to find awaiting him an elegantly set, candle-lit table." Burnham may have been the only American Trotskyist of the Red Decade who owned a tuxedo. Kelly is coy on matters of personal finances, and

---

KENT WORCESTER *is a member of the* New Politics *editorial board.*

household help, but it seems evident that family money supplemented Burnham's meager salary.

Despite his privileged class location, Burnham undertook a full range of activities on behalf of the Trotskyist movement. He spoke on street corners, sold newspapers, penned columns, and edited articles. He took an interest in organizational matters, and applied himself to the short-lived "French turn," during which Trotsky's followers entered the larger Socialist Party, which was itself being pushed leftwards by the force of events. He also worked behind the scenes on the Commission of Inquiry that was chaired by the philosopher John Dewey to evaluate the Soviet Union's charges against Leon Trotsky. With Shachtman he edited *The New International*, which was the most impressive component of the newly launched Socialist Workers Party's propaganda efforts. Shachtman's and Burnham's "Intellectuals in Retreat," which appeared in *The New International* in early 1939, set a formidable standard for left polemics. While Burnham's relationship with James Cannon was never warm, and deteriorated from there, he maintained friendly relations with Max Shachtman, who, apart from Dwight Macdonald, seems to have been the only radical James and Marcia Burnham saw on a social basis.

Kelly's account of the pressures that led to the 1940 split within the Socialist Workers Party — between the Shachtmanite minority, which rejected both Trotsky's unconditional defense of the Soviet Union and Cannon's organizational methods, and the Cannonite majority — covers well-trod ground, but it adds a couple of useful touches. He rightly emphasizes the critical role that Joseph Friedman, known inside the movement as Joe Carter, played in opening up Trotsky's analysis of the Soviet Union to critical scrutiny. He also locates Burnham as a central actor in the Trotskyist controversies of the late 1930s. His close reading of Burnham's 1939 essay "Science and Style," which the SWP leader Joseph Hanson denounced as "just the brain sickness of a petty-bourgeois moralist," brings to light Burnham's eloquent critique of the majority's authoritarian style:

> I judge a political struggle *morally* as well as politically. Socialism is a moral ideal, which reflective men choose deliberately, by a moral act. Cold and sober scientific analysis convinces me that this ideal dictates an appropriate morality which must govern the struggle for it. Just as we say that the white man cannot be free while the black is enslaved, so a social order based upon truth and freedom and loyal cooperation cannot be won by those who in their relations with each other base their methods of action on lies and disloyalty and slander.

HAVING HELPED DEVELOP the minority's critique of party orthodoxy, Burnham immediately resigned from the new Workers Party that Shachtman and his followers launched in mid-1940. "The news came like a blow to the head," remembered one movement veteran. In his memoirs, Irving Howe complained that having "led them into the split, and then left them in the lurch," Burnham's departure "was like the feeling you get from a bad divorce." Kelly insists that it was Burnham who was hurt, and disillusioned, by Trotsky's "blind support for Cannon" and dogmatic insistence on Marxism's scientific purity. Once Burnham made his mind up to leave the movement, he "dumped his correspondence with Trotsky into his apartment incinerator. In the future he would speak of the Old Man critically, but never vituperatively . . . he gave the impression that he still viewed his first political mentor with great respect."

For a few years after leaving the socialist left Burnham's politics were defined more by their pronounced anti-Communism, and a general disdain for "progressives," than by any positive or comprehensive vision of the good society. He contributed pieces on the Soviet Union, as well as literature and art, to *Partisan Review*, but despite the fact that he served on *PR*'s advisory board he was never quite a paid-up member of the New York Intellectuals. By the mid-1940s he was implacably opposed to any and all forms of radicalism and even reform-mindedness and had swung from left to right without ever having a good word to say on behalf of moderation. Even by the standards of the times Burnham's political arc was unusually wide; in 1953 *Partisan Review*'s editors asked for

his resignation on the grounds he was too closely identified with Joseph McCarthy, and McCarthyism.

The wider reading public came to know Burnham's name through the success of *The Managerial Revolution* (1941), and *The Machiavellians* (1943). The former argued that entrepreneurs and capitalists were being replaced by a new class of managers and experts, which constituted part of a larger transition from private ownership and the free market to collectivism and central planning. The latter defended the empirical political science of Robert Michels, Vilfredo Pareto, and Gaetano Mosca, whom Burnham described as descendants of Nicolai Machiavelli — factually oriented, dispassionate, and ruthlessly objective about the cold realities of power. While both books are aggressively "realist" in tone, their political logic is somewhat indeterminate. In particular, many readers of *The Managerial Revolution* were left uncertain whether its author regarded collectivism's triumph as a good thing, a bad thing, or simply a fact of modern life. One of Burnham's objectives as a writer was to encourage a more "tough-minded" attitude on the part of his readers. In this respect, as in others, his polemical approach retained a great deal of the form of far left debate even as he jettisoned its contents.

BURNHAM'S STATUS as a best-selling author provided him with ample publishing opportunities as well as a ready-made audience. After *The Machiavellians* his books became increasingly strident in tone — from *The Struggle for the World* (1947), which endorsed the strategy of "rolling back" Communism, to *The Coming Defeat of Communism* (1950), which made the case for waging "political warfare" against Communists, liberals, and the left. Only true believers were likely to have derived much satisfaction from *The Web of Subversion* (1954), which was indistinguishable from other Cold War pamphlets of its ilk. In 1964, *Suicide of the West*'s scathing critique of contemporary liberalism had a bigger impact on its intended audience. Burnham said that liberalism was "infected with communism" and he blamed liberals for "corrupting the will of the West to survive as a distinct historical entity." Civilization itself was threatened by forces of "anarchic savagery" in the form of crime and deviancy. Liberalism, Burnham thundered, represented nothing less than "the ideology of Western suicide."

Daniel Kelly takes all of this blood-and-guts stuff at face value, and his general view seems to be that James Burnham should go down in the history books as a prophet rather than as a crank. It is a little difficult to take this claim seriously, however, once we learn that Burnham deplored the civil rights movement, defended the use of torture, doubted the veracity of the Sino-Soviet split, admired Spiro Agnew, championed Apartheid, and looked forward to the day when the United States would launch a nuclear first strike against Soviet cities. With regard to the U.N., he asked readers of his *National Review* column "Why in the world should any sensible person give a damn what some spokesman for cannibalistic tribes or slave-holding nomads think about nuclear tests?" A few years earlier, after complaining that India was "stark, abject, disease- and dirt-ridden, absolutely and unyieldingly wretched," he praised the KLM flight home: "How clean was each inch of upholstery, how rationally arranged each functional gadget! The tall, blond Dutch steward and the brisk, blond, bronzed Dutch stewardess, which their unclouded blue eyes and their well-soaped, unspotted skin and their nurse-clean blouse and shirt, looked as if they had just jumped, intact and fully clothed, out of the forehead of a laundry machine."

Interestingly, Kelly reports that Burnham was a maverick by the standards of the *National Review*, with which he was associated from its inception in 1955 to his death in 1987. Burnham served as an intellectual mentor to William Buckley, and he regularly wrote on international affairs for the weekly magazine. He scandalized other *NR* editors and writers by defending modern theater, modern art, and the Woodstock musical festival, which he described as "a mass ritual and mystery, a surge out of the deep and hidden springs of the spirit." At the same time, he castigated the New Left as the "savages within" and regarded marijuana's "non-western" origins as "disturbing." Most of his columns, of course,

railed against Communism and the abject complicity of liberals and the non-communist left. In 1983 he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by the Reagan administration, and toward the end of his life found satisfaction in the notion that the West's decline would unfold over a period of decades rather than weeks or months.

Kelly, a retired Foreign Service Officer, and a long-time acolyte of *National Review*, dismisses Burnham's radical phase while admiring his many years of service to the modern conservative movement. His biography is nevertheless well researched and only occasionally slips into the realm of hagiography. The book suffers a minor flaw, as well as a major one, however. The minor flaw is the absence of any photographs, so the reader does not gain any kind of visual sense of the personalities who march through the book's pages. The major flaw is that the author regards Burnham's deradicalization as a heroic rendezvous with humanity's true destiny rather than a biographical puzzle. But the question of why Burnham leapt further rightwards than almost all of his contemporaries is well worth asking. The answer is broached in a footnote on page 386, when Kelly notes that the novelist James T. Farrell once suggested that Burnham resigned from the Workers Party because "the 'third camp' line . . . made no sense to him." Kelly does not develop this line of thought but it strikes me as crucial for understanding Burnham's trajectory. Having rejected the Soviet camp, Burnham saw no alternative to supporting western capitalism with all of the energy and intelligence he could muster. His life story offers a cautionary lesson about the cost of rejecting third camp politics.

A Limited and Flawed History

AMERICAN PATRIOTS: THE STORY OF BLACKS IN THE MILITARY FROM THE REVOLUTION TO DESERT STORM by Gail Buckley. New York: Random House, 2001, 534 pp, $29.95.

Reviewed by Reginald Wilson

WITH WELL OVER 100 BOOKS and innumerable articles and monographs dealing with various aspects of black involvement in the armed services, Gail Buckley's *American Patriots: The Story of Blacks in the Military from the Revolution to Desert Storm* contains few surprises. But what makes her heavily researched work worth reading, particularly for an American audience with a notoriously short historical memory, is that it offers a comprehensive overview of the extensive part blacks played in every branch of the service since the Revolutionary War.

That story comes with so many broken promises and unrecognized acts of heroism that it still enrages the senses even decades after the events transpired. And all of these events occurred in a military that was racist and segregated until the Vietnam era.

Buckley recounts how blacks fought in the Revolution and the War of 1812, only to be betrayed by the Treaty of Ghent, which mandated that slaves be returned to their masters.

She tells how the New York Irish, believing they were being drafted to fight in the Civil War to protect blacks, went on a four-day rampage in 1863 that ended with more than 100 blacks murdered, victims hung from lampposts, and scores of homes demolished. Yet, because they wanted their own freedom, some 230,000 black men fought in the Civil War — nearly 200,000 in the army and 30,000 in the navy — winning fourteen Medals of Honor. Still, among the most memorable events emerging from that war was the systematic killing of captured black soldiers and their white officers by Confederates, and the U.S. War Department's insistence that this was "a white man's war." Blacks were 14 percent of the population, yet accounted for 20 percent of Union casualties.

Following the war, a reconstituted Army of the United States, comprising 25,000 mostly Civil War veterans, was fielded, including the strictly segregated 9th and 10th Cavalries of black troops who were used in the West mainly to fight Indians. Despite their segregation and unequal pay, these blacks were "deserting less and reenlisting more" than the white troops, Buckley says. The black troopers were called "buffalo soldiers" because of the texture of their hair, and kept the name through the Second World War. The irony of recently freed blacks fighting to eliminate another people of color goes unmentioned by Buckley who instead lauds the black troops for winning 18 Medals of Honor in this genocidal campaign.

Buckley does note, however, the irony of "colored fighting colored" in Cuba during the Spanish-American War, possibly because of the outcry against the war in the black community. The Buffalo Soldiers again fought valiantly, garnering four Medals of Honor on the island considered a "colored country." Although Theodore Roosevelt praised the black soldiers for their "great . . . courage to offer their lives in the service of their country," he betrayed them once back home, inventing a story of black cowardice and running from the enemy that was later proved false.

The Philippine insurrection of 1899 was a continuation of the Spanish-American War and aroused even greater opposition in the black community. The intervention brought blacks sharply and painfully to the realization of the contradiction of fighting a third-world people who were being wrongfully subjugated by the American army, a contradiction they would not face again until Vietnam. While one white enlistee could opine that "The Filipinos are 'niggers,' no better than Indians, and were to be treated as such," Henry McNeil Turner, the black Civil War chaplain, shouted sternly how "I boil with indignation when I remember colored men . . . are fighting to subjugate a people of their own color." David Fagan, a black

---

REGINALD WILSON *serves as the Senior Scholar Emeritus of the American Council on Education and is a member of the* New Politics *Editorial Board.*

soldier, resolved the contradiction by defecting to the Insurrectos and fighting the Americans for over a year before he was killed. Twenty others, both black and white, defected as well.

WHEN THE UNITED STATES ENTERED World War I, American society was as racist, rigidly segregated and dangerous as ever. More than 100 black men were lynched during the war years. Black labor leader A. Phillip Randolph said he could see "no reason for blacks to make Europe safe for democracy when America was not safe for American blacks." Yet blacks, 10 percent of the population, were 13 percent of those who served. The men were put into two newly created units, the 92nd and 93rd Divisions — the former under white American leadership and the latter assigned to the French. "The American-led 92nd would be vilified as cowards. The French-led 93rd extolled as heroes," Buckley writes. To be led by men who believed in your humanity, who treated you with respect, and who strongly supported you, was all that was needed to see men rise to acts of heroism. A simple lesson that was lost on the Americans. After the war, William Hewlett, a black private, would write, "why did black men die here in France . . . Was it to make democracy safe for white people in America?"

When World War II began, America was still deeply racist, and the American military still segregated and reluctant to increase black roles beyond laborer and stevedore. Stories abounded about black cowardice and lack of fighting ability, as if the heroic role of blacks in previous wars was forgotten — a prime example of cognitive dissonance and its ability to suppress information that disagrees with what one believes.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor and the American declaration of war on Japan and Germany, even the awesome task of war mobilization and the need for utilizing the skills of every able-bodied male was not enough to integrate industries making war materials or force the American military into accepting blacks for any but menial roles. "Negroes will only be considered as janitors," one manager announced in 1941. Again, A. Phillip Randolph rose to leadership. "We propose that 10,000 Negroes march on Washington," he said. His threatened march caused Roosevelt to issue Executive Order 8802 forbidding discrimination in defense industries. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt was among those responsible for pressuring the services to recruit and admit blacks. However, the enforced working together of southern whites and blacks in northern defense industries led to some of the worst race riots in American history — in New York, Detroit, and Los Angeles. This motivated the black press to start the Double V Campaign — "Victory at home and victory abroad."

Blacks began to be admitted into the Air Corps, the Marines and the Women's Army Auxiliary, but they found themselves fighting racism in the military more difficult than fighting the enemy. Nevertheless, blacks fought valiantly on land with the 92nd division and in the air with the 332nd Fighter Group, among others; fighting from Guadalcanal to the Battle of the Bulge (where blacks were briefly integrated into white infantry units when the fighting became desperate, and just as swiftly reassigned to labor battalions when the battle was won). However, no blacks won Medals of Honor in this war, and coming home to Georgia in 1945, two black veterans and their wives were taken from their car by a mob of whites and shot to death.

Upon hearing of the above incident, President Truman said, "My God! I had no idea it was as terrible as that!" His revelation was alleged to be the impetus for Truman's issuing his Executive Order 9981 in 1948, which required integration of the armed services "as rapidly as possible." The order was issued over the vociferous protest of the generals of the army (including Dwight Eisenhower), although the leaders of the navy and the air force were somewhat amenable to change. Thus, when the Korean War burst out in 1950, the ground troops were still mostly segregated.

Ostensibly a United Nations effort with England, Canada, Belgium and others supplying troops, the brunt of the war was carried by the United States and its more than 40,000 armed forces personnel. These included the still-segregated, all-black 24th Infantry Regiment, which was among the first units sent from Japan to fight in Korea. Despite months in Japan, as Buckley

says, "holding a glass in one hand and a Japanese girlfriend in the other," and ill-trained for combat, the 24th won the first battle of the Korean war with the capture of the town of Yechon. Nevertheless, their fortunes were not always so exemplary after that, ranging from charges of retreating from the enemy to their eventual vindication as a fighting unit.

The fortunes of the 24th caused General William Kean to observe that "the combat values of black soldiers would never be realized until they were integrated into white units." General Matthew Ridgeway believed that segregation was "inefficient and improper." And finally in 1951, the army chief of personnel, General McAuliffe, ordered "immediate integration with minimum press publicity." By October, 1953, the army would announce that 95 percent of blacks were integrated into white units. The Korean War ended in a stalemate at the 38th parallel, but the U.S. military was on a trajectory to a fully integrated armed service.

On May 7, 1954 the communist-led Vietminh defeated the French forces at Dien Bien Phu, ending a century of colonial rule in Indochina. The United States called the war "an integral . . . resistance by the Free Nations to Communis[m]," and refused to recognize the defeat. In 1953, President Eisenhower sent a 35-member military and economic mission to Saigon. Meanwhile, Representative John F. Kennedy was saying, "We have allied ourselves to the desperate efforts of a French Regime to hang onto the remnants of empire." However, in 1961, by the time he became president, he was sending troops of the most integrated army in the nation's history into the nightmare of Vietnam.

By 1968, American troop strength reached over half a million and its casualty figures soared to 50,000. Blacks represented 9.8 percent of the military and 14 percent of the fatalities in Vietnam. Both the army and American society were in near anarchy as many white youths sought college student deferments or sought ways to resist the draft, including fleeing to Canada, while black youth were drafted in inordinate numbers. For example, blacks were 12 percent of the population but were 20 percent of combat troops in Vietnam. There, blacks finally achieved ultimate equality; in death, black, Hispanic, white, all 54,000 of them became the same.

The Vietnam War was a low point of American race relations and for American society. The racial conflicts among the troops increased as they increasingly saw the futility of their fight, a mirror of the conflicts at home as the civil rights movement battled southern and northern resistance, political leaders including Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy were assassinated, and other conflicts among Americans reached the breaking point.

Gail Buckley ends her book with a description of Desert Storm — the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq and the subsequent American military response — "swift, victorious and popular." The victory was described as "the sins of Vietnam . . . washed away by the Gulf," and presaging the coming of the completely integrated armed service of the 21st century.

WHAT ARE WE TO MAKE of this prodigious research. First, its strengths: Buckley does not flinch from reporting the continuous mistreatment of blacks in the military and she devotes some space to describing what was occurring in civilian life to provide a context for her depiction of military life. And she is equally adept at describing the personal stories of GI's as well as telling the larger story of the history of the military and its engagements. Finally, the irony of the American military, now the most integrated institution in America, is not lost on her.

In interviews and book signings, Buckley stresses the same themes: "onward and upward, things are getting better and better for black GI's." On C-Span she echoed Tom Brokaw that "the World War II generation was the greatest generation," but contradicted her own book's conflicting description. On another occasion she said, "I'm a proselytizer not for war but for the military ethos." The book echoes this sentiment on the last page which reads, "The military is very good at solving . . . social problems." I take this to mean that, with nearly half of all blacks living below the poverty line, Buckley looks favorably on an institution — where blacks comprise 30 percent of the army, 20 percent of the navy, 19 percent of the marines and 13 percent of the air force — as an effective alternative to poverty, drugs and incarceration. Thus, Buckley

would agree with Daniel Patrick Moynihan that the solution to black poverty is the inclusion of young black men into the military rather than attacking the institutional basis of poverty. She quotes General Waller favorably on his belief in mandatory, universal public service.

Buckley, consequently, is right in the mainstream of the American neo-liberal opinion. She bemoans the condition of blacks in society and laments high unemployment rates and poverty, yet her only solution is the salvation of some through the discipline and camaraderie of military life.

Moreover, she accepts too many mainstream opinions of America's engagement in various wars. Despite the obligatory mention of Crispus Attucks and citing black bravery during the Revolutionary War, the fact is that more blacks defected and fought on the British side. Similarly, W.E.B. Dubois notes in *Black Reconstruction* that blacks in the Civil War were not treated fairly but "repeatedly and deliberately used as shock troops when there was little or no hope of success." John Hope Franklin corroborates this in noting that black casualty rates were 40 percent higher than whites. In the Spanish American War, most black soldiers were against the war, and against America colonizing a non-white people, but reluctantly fought because they felt their action would prove their loyalty.

Despite her prodigious research, Buckley does not cite I.F. Stone's *Hidden History of the Korean War* (1952), which demonstrates decisively that South Korea was as much responsible for the war as was the North. Nor does she cite Allen Matusow's *The Unraveling of America* (1984), which documents Lyndon Johnson's falsification of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which allowed him to bomb Vietnam and escalate the war. And she does not reveal that in the post-Vietnam era, blacks were 17 percent of those suffering post-traumatic stress syndrome, 30 percent of vets who were homeless, and three times more likely to be unemployed than were members of the general population. The sins of Vietnam are still upon us and visited most heavily on African Americans.

Buckley calls the invasion of Grenada "diversionary" and El Salvador and the Philippines "brushfires," and does not see these and others — Panama, Haiti, Guatemala — as part of the systematic imperial actions of the United States going back to the acquisition of Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Samoa and Guam by force over the objections of their people and contrary to the U.S. Constitution and international law. Making citizens of these indigenous people does not detract from the fact that they are colonials. The United States can be described as a capitalist-imperialist country as a statement of fact rather than one of opprobrium. Buckley is silent on all of these matters.

Here at home, blacks are nearly 50 percent of the national prison population while representing only 13 percent of the general population. This is an increase from 1954 when they were 30 percent of prisoners and from 1926 when they were 21 percent (*Monthly Review*, July-August 2001). Moreover, they receive longer sentences than whites for the same crime and are arrested more frequently for the same offense than are whites. In addition, from 1977 to 1999, in this, the most God-fearing of nations, blacks were 35 percent of those executed. To quote Christian Parenti (*Monthly Review*, 2001), "criminal justice regulates, absorbs, terrorizes and disorganizes the poor. At the same time it promulgates racism." Buckley laments the condition of the black poor while failing to assign cause to the situation of black males except to characterize it as "a state of war." The salvation she believes, quoting William F. Buckley, is "what we can do for our country in return for what they had done for us." In other words, join the army.

GAIL BUCKLEY'S BOOK, IN THE END, is descriptive rather than prescriptive. Her description of the military cites what it has done for and to blacks, and not what it has done in the world. Society has been bad for blacks, she believes, but the military is now good. But the military can do immoral things and be perfectly integrated while maintaining high morale. This observation is conspicuously missing from her book, making it limited and flawed. She may believe that her highest goal is to show blacks as patriots, but the supreme act of patriotism is to struggle to change society and make it worthy of the people who live in it.

Labor History and Living History

IMMIGRATION AND AMERICAN UNIONISM by Vernon M. Briggs, Jr. Ithaca: ILIR Press (Cornell University Press), 2001. $37.50 (paper, $16.95).

REKINDLING THE MOVEMENT: LABOR'S QUEST FOR RELEVANCE IN THE 21ST CENTURY, edited by Lowell Turner, Harry C. Katz and Richard W. Hurd. ILIR Press (Cornell University Press), 2001. $45.00.

FROM THE FOLKS WHO GAVE YOU THE WEEKEND: A SHORT, ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF LABOR IN THE UNITED STATES, by Priscilla Murolo and A. B. Chitty. New York: The New Press, 2001. $27.50.

THREE STRIKES: LABOR'S HEARTLAND LOSSES AND WHAT THEY MEAN FOR WORKING AMERICANS, by Stephen Franklin. New York: The Guilford Press, 2001. $23.95.

CENTRAL LABOR COUNCILS AND THE REVIVAL OF AMERICAN UNIONISM: ORGANIZING FOR JUSTICE IN OUR COMMUNITIES, edited by Immanuel Ness and Stuart Eimer. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2001. $58.95.

THREE STRIKES: MINERS, MUSICIANS, SALESGIRLS AND THE FIGHTING SPIRIT OF LABOR'S LAST CENTURY, by Howard Zinn, Dana Frank and Robin D. G. Kelley. Boston: Beacon Press, 2001. $23.00.

Reviewed by Paul Buhle

A HALF-CENTURY AGO, labor history and what might be called "labor studies" was a thin field dominated, in academic appointments and monographs, by university departments of Labor and Industrial Relations. The combined message seemed intended to soothe hurt feelings, dating back to the 1930s if not earlier times of Wobbly strikes and the notoriously hard-hearted robber barons of nineteenth-century industry. A degree of conflict remained between workers and owners, naturally, but the basic issues had been settled and the leftovers would surely be resolved by experts from unions and management working together. L&IR students sometimes took law degrees and became labor attorneys, but more often than not they were preparing to enter corporate careers precisely to "handle" problems that restrained the fine-tuning of the work process and lowered the bottom line.

In this now dimly-remembered past, labor history was hardly interesting at all to historians, who considered the "past politics" of elections, statecraft and war to be their proper domain. A few maverick sociologists, notably C. Wright Mills and Eli Chinoy, studied the labor process and the unions themselves, seeking the logic of an "alienation" (a newly-adopted word) that somehow troubled even well-paid workers. Meanwhile, hagiographic histories of specific unions and labor leaders by veteran labor journalists paid to elevate sagging reputations offered up quasi-histories which invariably began with oppression (and sometimes, visions of socialism) but ended happily in consumerist democracy. Altogether, and with a handful of exceptions, this was a literature apologetic in the extreme. Fiction, mostly memories of more exciting times but some of it riveted upon the present-day labor movement and the social life of the working class (Harvey Swados' novels and Langston Hughes' short fiction come readily to mind), gave the kind of critical accounts otherwise unavailable.

The newer labor history, an academic industry of considerable proportions, can hardly be called a "revival" because such a thing never previously existed. But in its best moments, from the early 1970s until today, it has embodied a revival of *themes* buried deep in the history of the working class saga, religious, cultural and above all community-connected, since the rise of post-colonial commerce (and even earlier, in the trans-Atlantic trade of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries). Magnum British scholar and peace leader E.P. Thompson is by far the largest name here, even if he wrote little about the United States. Thompson's *Mak-*

PAUL BUHLE's *latest book is* The Insurgent Image: Agitprop Murals of Mike Alewitz *(Monthly Review).*

ing of the English Working Class (1963) showed historians, but also sociologists, literary scholars and all sorts of intellectuals that the recovery of a hidden story and a hidden community life continuing into the present and extending to yet newer immigrant groups was a treasure and also, at least potentially, an arsenal for labor's revival.

Looking back once more on the writing at mid-century, the worst thing about it was not even its rationalizations for the existing labor-management "system," but its utter blandness. Even red-baiting labor's history practically faded (except, perhaps, among the wordy admirers of David Dubinsky) because the class struggle was so patently out of date that Communists or assorted other radicals in that quarter could now only be considered as a minor irritation best understood as a mere surrogate for the global communist conspiracy against benevolent Pax Americana. Lots has changed since then. But what blights labor writing, a half-century later, is another, albeit more sympathetic and often more insightful version, of the familiar blandness.

VERNON M. BRIGGS, JR.'S *Immigration and American Unionism* offers a beautiful case in point. It's hard to imagine an issue that, along with race, has been more divisive (gender might have been just as divisive, but organized labor has been largely asleep at that switch forever). What divided the AFL from its rival Knights of Labor in the 1880s and rival Industrial Workers of the World in the early twentieth century was inclusiveness versus craft unions; behind this divide was what to do with immigration, which Samuel Gompers and the AFL clearly wanted to stop. Political conservatives (which is to say, racists) in both major parties came around to this viewpoint by the early 1920s, sealing off an American empire from dilution by outsiders and cutting off the possible escape route of European Jewry in the process. Immigration reform, which is to say the renewal of mass immigration from 1965 forward, began as a Great Society reform expected to incur no widespread population movement. The AFL-CIO, again with notable exceptions, for decades made no particular effort to welcome or to organize the newest newcomers, a Gompers-like policy with catastrophic consequences. Now labor has to catch up, or else.

Briggs sees none of this. He provides extensive statistical information but wanders around his topic with often bewildering results. For instance: A. Philip Randolph, who indeed supported immigration restriction, becomes its chief advocate — a powerless figure barely tolerated by AFL conservatives, seemingly somehow in charge of pushing monumental legislation. In another staggering leap of logic, Briggs insists immigration restriction turns out to be the chief cause for 1930s unionization — although immigrants led the struggles for industrial unionism in the first decades of the twentieth century and their fraternal societies were the backbone of the CIO drive. In the Briggsian worldview, labor's later decline is due not to political repression, leadership incompetence and conservatism but — to new immigration! Nothing seems quite so ridiculous to him as the current AFL-CIO policy of amnesty for illegal aliens. Better, he suggests, to chuck them out: America for Americans. The bellicose blowhard George Meany is chuckling in his coffin, perhaps his bumbling successor Lane Kirkland also.

Rekindling the Movement: Labor's Quest for Relevance in the 21st Century has a good title and some very good contributors. It should be a better book. Dorothy Sue Cobble, Ruth Milkman, Kent Wong, Bill Fletcher, Richard Hurd, Kate Brofenbrenner, Tom Juravich, Eric Parker and Joel Rogers make a variety of useful contributions to the discussion of why reform is so desperately needed within labor and why it has had limited success in mobilizing either unionized or nonunionized workers so far. A close reading of these essays will reward efforts. The volume is weighed down by the perceived need to make as few criticisms of the post-1995 leadership as possible, and even more by the need to stroke the labor and industrial relations literature stressing the centrality of labor/corporate cooperation and the supposed difficulties raised by workforce diversity. The average reader will also be irritated by the book's often reductive, flowchart logic: if only more resources were available to the innovative agencies within

the AFL-CIO, if only Central Labor Councils would seize initiatives, if only union leaders and their staffs were not so very resistant and also simply unqualified to organize anyone, having no experience or even previous interest in this obviously exotic field. "We are struck," conclude Fletcher and Hurd, "how difficult it is for local unions to develop alternative approaches to representation and to manage the shift to an organizing priority in isolation." (205) And how!

Rekindling ends with a dull thud. In the penultimate essay, James Shoch and Lance Compa propose that labor abandon its opposition to NAFTA "fast track" in favor of what Compa calls a "grand compromise with capital" to make possible an "accommodation to the new era we have entered." (313) NAFTA has already prompted an ocean of toxic waste in Mexico, without the vaguest promise of meaningful reform — indeed, the Fox presidency is planning to lay waste to one avian sanctuary after another, with no real improvement for working people, as the building of new institutions continues. What these authors call "incremental advances" actually betide massive ecological degradation and the vast expansion of sweatshops, with some feel-good provisions. So much for legislative compromise. Harry C. Katz closes the volume by casting doubt on the very basics of reform: in good old L&IR fashion, he insists that business unionism is probably best after all, that workforce diversity is the big problem for unions, and anyway, the whole subject needs lots more expert analysis.

Three Strikes (how many times have two labor books appeared in the same year with the same name?), the history of the Caterpillar strike at Decatur, Illinois in the early 1990s, promises to be better. It's a close reading of a Midwestern, almost exclusively white and Protestant community facing up to the determination of an employer to wipe out their union. The Staley Corporation got global and the union (a UAW local inherited from the more militant FE, expelled and eradicated in the Red Scare) was predictably unprepared. Faced with a knockout punch, the local called in consultant Ray Rogers, who tried to shame the corporation by public pressure. Rogers was no Cesar Chavez and he had no religious crusade behind him. It didn't work.

Franklin devotes lots of space, usefully, to the story of Decatur as small industrial city, its industrial and commercial history, the takeover of institutions like the local newspaper by outsiders, and the winding down of industry that left unions desperate to compromise if only employers would offer them something barely acceptable. (Reviewer's disclosure: my late, strikebreaking uncle lived there.) The thumbnail portrait of strike supporters is the best part of this *Three Strikes*. Jerry Tucker, who ran a shadow campaign against national UAW leadership from his St. Louis base, and never stopped believing in organizing resistance from the bottom up. Franklin introduces Tucker, salutes him and then insults him later on through the voice of a disappointed local; this clues the reader in to the author's confusion and the underlying problems of the book.

Things took another turn when a second center of Decatur mobilization opened unexpectedly, at Bridgestone/Firestone. Prompted by what Franklin calls the "last strike in the history of the URW," i.e., United Rubber Workers before its merger, helped lead a public solidarity campaign unprecedented thereabouts since the days of the Illinois coalminers' uprisings led by Mother Jones. But even before the solidarity campaign was predictably sabotaged by a Decatur building trades leader who threatened to have picketers beaten up by unionized construction workers, it was clear that the internationals would rather let the whole thing go by. As usual, last-ditch hopes for favorable NLRB decisions were disappointed.

As the P-9 workers of Austin, Minnesota, learned in the eighties, there was nothing to do but launch a huge, multistate solidarity campaign connecting sympathetic working people across every boundary imaginable, generation, race and gender. Union members had great experiences with their counterparts across the Midwest in particular. Their biggest disillusion lay ahead: chartering buses to Bar Harbour, Florida, in 1995, they tried to meet with AFL chiefs, who predictably brushed them off. They had the consolation, by their presence and their courage, of actually helping to

overturn the Kirkland-Shanker machine which had practically run the labor movement into the ground. But Franklin can't register this at all. For him, Lane Kirkland's "speeches are gems" and his "fascination with policy matters and organized labor abroad" does not seem to include Kirkland's consistent support of corporate interests, his eagerness to assist CIA surrogates in flagrant human rights abuses from Asia to Latin America (but most especially Africa), and his real disinterest in folks from places like Decatur. By the end of the book, we learn that somehow, something has failed — too bad Franklin can't figure it out.

WE'RE WARMING UP, at last, with *From the Folks Who Brought You the Weekend*. Its novel feature is an intermittent series of labor history comic strips by Joe Sacco, a Maltese multiculturalist who has delighted readers these past ten years with telling narratives of the Occupied West Bank, the Balkans and other examples of violence in postmodern culture and human suffering *in extremis*. Here he tackles such subjects as the Boston Massacre, the rise of Fredrick Douglas, Mother Jones, the Flint Sit-Down Strike, migrant labor and the fate of postindustrial labor amid globalization. One hopes to see more of his work on labor subjects.

The text is more than competent: college and high school AP (Advanced Placement) teachers will find it a most useful overview, well-written, as comprehensive as possible in this length, and intelligent on race and gender issues particularly. It deserves and will likely receive wide adoption. But the book isn't nearly as lively as it should be, possibly from fear of giving offense. Samuel Gompers is seen as a pragmatic figure who was either a racist and a bitter opponent of solidarity unionism or a prudent steward of labor's limited strength, we never quite learn which. The Wobblies and Socialist Party rise and disappear without lessons of their experience drawn out. Industrial unionism finally takes shape, followed by the world war, another red scare and so on. It's all here, but bloodlessly.

Central Labor Councils and the Revival of American Unionism is more lively, despite the occasional lapse into sociologese and flow-chart looking lists of "objectives." The anthology comes out of the quarterly magazine, *Working USA*. Launched as a compromise between the exiting conservative elite and the reformers, it was, as gadfly-observer Harry Kelber sagely observed, utterly mediocre, basically a big disappointment. Immanuel Ness, the new editor, has worked hard to accommodate progressive academics and forward-looking union officers to the possibilities of real-life mobilization. He has largely succeeded in making *Working USA* lively, even if the ghosts of a creepy Kirklandism never quite seem to vanish from its pages, thanks to the presence of Meany Center veterans who were clearly more comfortable with the old machine but game to operate in the new one. *Central Labor Councils* enlists friends and allies to offer specifics, some of them quite helpful, about the tentative signs of union revival. Joel Rogers and Wade Radthke immodestly suggest that their 1996 paper (reprinted and updated here) "Everything that Moves" has "had enormous impact on subsequent union strategy." Others are more cautious but more helpful on the building of effective regional solidarity campaigns, not through the infusion of dollars but activation of locals, union members and sympathizers, around issues like a living wage.

The authors don't say so, but the CLC revival sounds like nothing so much as a return to the origin of the central labor bodies in their first years, the 1870s-90s. During those days, socialists (most, not all of them immigrants, Germans, Jews and others) fought with construction trades leaders and assorted Gompers loyalists who looked upon unionism as a business ripe with fine opportunities for bribes and political appointments. Gompers defeated the idealists through doses of patronage and punishment (with some hefty assistance of businessmen and government agencies), but never entirely. Ironically, the creation of the CIO wiped out most of the last strongholds of cross-organization solidarity and devalued the decades-old local CLC newspaper. Now, so much later, things seem to have come around again, at least in some places like southern Wisconsin, or the California's South Bay (which organizer Amy Dean describes admirably). Unfortunately, it's not hard to find other spots where aged sup-

porters of the Vietnam War still hold sway and the building trades, despite face-saving gestures, are just as exclusionary and reactionary as ever. In some places, the activation of the councils has had markedly good effects. But the consolidation of CLCs through the merging of smaller ones into larger may even reverse labor reform: small town city labor councils are unpredictable and can be both radical and democratic, while big city councils more often have long since turned into Democratic vote-machines with scarce internal democracy or progressive intent.

Three Strikes: Miners, Musicians, Salesgirls, and the Fighting Spirit of Labor's Last Century is the most lively of these volumes because in three glittering essays, we learn that moments of high social struggle make unions into something that they didn't know themselves (despite the rhetoric) to be: real engines for democratic potential. Howard Zinn, whose activity and writing these past forty years entitle him more than anyone else (since E.P. Thompson) to "historian-as-social-hero" status, tells us about the 1913-14 Colorado Coal Strike that Woody Guthrie sang about. Perhaps, as Zinn suggests, only now can we appreciate how much the militia attack on striking miners resembles U.S. treatment of civilians in Vietnam, both of them drawing upon earlier military experience in the Philippines and the Indian wars. Assassinations of strike leaders; troops on horseback riding into crowds of women, swords swinging; the machine-gunning of tents with strikers, and the loud applause of the original Rockefeller; all of it was already familiar, and remains familiar, wherever (notably Colombia) union leaders are marked for death by supporters of U. S. corporate interests.

Dana Frank's "Girl Strikers Occupy Chain Store, Win Big," is a happier tale by far, and a less remembered one. In 1937, amid the nationwide sit-down strike that radicals of all factions joined but definitely did not launch, Detroit's Woolworth employees refused to work unless they got union recognition, a raise and other benefits. It was nothing if not audacious. Frank points out that Woolworth's, now viewed with a certain nostalgia, was the Walmart of its day, gobbling up real estate, putting local stores out of business, and enforcing its harsh labor codes everywhere it settled.

Treated like serfs and paid next to nothing, the shop "girls" got precious little encouragement from the CIO, but in imitating the sit-downers of the UAW and other unions, created a microcosmic new society of cooperation right on the turf of the enemy. A *Life* magazine spread called it "Camp Woolworth" and local media portrayed them as "boy crazy," but when the strike threatened to spread across the city and the country, Woolworth's finally caved. This particular victory was only temporary, although the Hotel and Restaurant Employees' Union of Detroit and elsewhere not only survived but continues, at the national level, to be one of the most successful, and (contrary to the so-called expert opinions in several other books considered here) the most diverse, from gender to national origin to sexual preference.

Kelley's "Without a Song: New York Musicians Strike Out Against Technology" tells us about the fate of theater musicians during the 1930s when sound films eclipsed the orchestras of the silent-film palladiums. To hold on was, in a way, hopeless from the start. But these highly skilled workers (or artists, as they liked to think of themselves), doubly condemned by the effects of the Depression, garnered considerable public support in New York and attracted a huge Emergency Fund from the likes of aged German immigrant Walter Domrosch, since the 1890s one of the foremost popularizers of classical music in the U.S. Mayor LaGuardia declared a "Musicians Week" in 1934. Kelley takes us on a little sideroad at this point, to remind the reader that black musicians were never included in this end of the profession, and indeed posed another threat because jazz was fast becoming the accepted art music. Worse than all this, a strike flagged quickly because few moviegoers hesitated to cross a picket-line. (Audiences had other reasons if they needed them: the unionized film-operators were tightly controlled by a strictly racist, mob union, the International Alliance of Theatrical Screen Employees, best remembered for breaking actors' strikes and leading the blacklist in Hollywood.)

The strike failed and there's no clear ending here. Professional musicians' ranks,

in the decades ahead, won a few and then mostly lost their footholds, as changing technologies and the various instabilities of work allowed business to get around every effort to raise the status of musicians as a whole. Kelley's feeling for the race and more general cultural complications of the material make even this most diffuse story fascinating and definitely part of the labor scene. Currently working on jazz, he may be the one to put the music-and-labor story together at last.

AND THERE, reader, we leave the quandary of labor studies for now. The fine-tuning of labor's "conciliation" with capital now makes about as much sense as it did before the New Deal. The attempt to retell the labor story without culture and without a certain edginess is not destined to get far outside academia. But the willingness to look at labor's historic drama, especially at its less remembered heroes, heroines and oddballs, is going to become a growth industry if only the writers' efforts are lively enough.

Revisiting New Left Thought

INTELLECTUALS IN ACTION: THE ORIGINS OF THE NEW LEFT AND RADICAL LIBERALISM, 1945-1970 by Kevin Mattson. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2002. 305 pp. $24.50 pb.

Reviewed by Dan Geary

SADLY, WE LIVE IN AN AGE when defending a woefully inadequate program for Aid to Families with Dependent Children or criticizing a preemptive, unilateral, and foolhardy war makes one left of the political mainstream. In the 1960s, liberalism seemed to embody an establishment that made war in Vietnam and offered limited solutions to America's persistent racial and class inequalities. Yet, after three decades of conservative ascendancy, radicals might be more inclined to see liberals as worthy allies than as the enemy. In *Intellectuals in Action*, Kevin Mattson contends that there need not have been a gulf between radicals and liberals in the first place.

Intellectuals in Action has two stated goals: the first is to recount the history of a particular set of left-wing intellectuals from the mid-1940s to the end of the 1960s. The second, more ambitious goal is to recover an intellectual tradition of "radical liberalism" that Mattson feels is relevant for addressing the current lack of a coherent left-liberal agenda. Each task is a valuable one and readers can learn much from Mattson's lucid and engaging narrative. Yet, this book is does not fully succeed in either endeavor.

Intellectuals in Action is primarily a series of biographical portraits of four significant mid-century left intellectuals: the radical sociologist, C. Wright Mills; the historian and critic of American foreign policy, William Appleman Williams; the anarchist writer, Paul Goodman; and the political philosopher who developed the concept of "participatory democracy," Arnold Kaufman. Mattson's insightful accounts of each man's thought are bookended by chapters on left-wing magazines. The first chapter recounts the often told story of Dwight MacDonald's *politics*, while the final chapter focuses on the early New Left journals *Studies on the Left* and *New University Thought*.

Mattson's significant contribution to the history of this period lies in his discovery of several common perspectives among the different thinkers whom he investigates. All these intellectuals saw "participatory democracy" as a significant goal. They desired a more decentralized society in which citizens could have the ability to truly control the political decisions that affected their lives. At the same time, these thinkers sought to reconcile their commitment to decentralized participatory democracy with a concern for social equality, which at times (such as during the civil rights movement) could most easily be achieved through strong federal government action. These left intellectuals grounded their thought in a deeply American language of radical republicanism that they updated to suggest "how ordinary citizens could participate in processes of deliberation and decision making within the confines of modernity." (13)

Most significantly, these figures shared a common dilemma of how the intellectual was to effect political change. The best part of the book shows how each intellectual sought to balance intellectual detachment and political engagement. These figures believed that intellectuals needed to distance themselves from institutions of political power to retain their critical independence, yet they also needed to remain committed to political transformation. They could do both by practicing a politics of truth that sought to engage deliberative democratic publics in rational discussion. Such a politics manifested itself in such institutions as magazines, teach-ins, and freedom schools. Because the intellectuals Mattson discusses believed so deeply in a rationalis-

---

DAN GEARY *is a graduate student in history at the University of California, Berkeley. He is working on an intellectual biography of C. Wright Mills. His work can also be found in* American Communist History, Labor History, *and* New Labor Forum.

tic politics of enlightenment, they remained wary of the limits of countercultural rebellion.

Yet if the common themes Mattson weaves through his biographical portraits are illuminating, his approach has its limits. He doesn't really offer a persuasive rationale for focusing on these four particular figures, who hardly constitute a coherent group. Mills criticized Goodman's "gonad theory of revolution" in the mid-1940s; Williams stands apart for his focus on foreign policy and his lack of anti-Stalinist credentials; and Kaufman was far less conflicted about American liberalism than the other three. The strongest link between these four thinkers is that they each exerted a significant influence on the New Left, yet that is not the primary focus of the book.

Mattson seems unclear whether these intellectuals influenced the New Left, or whether they themselves were New Leftists. At one point, he suggests that the "spirit of the '60s" began in the mid 1940s and was evident in *politics* magazine. *Politics* anticipated many of the ideas of the student movement of the 1960s, yet it would be a mistake to confuse the two periods. What Mattson misses is that much of left-wing thought in the decade following World War II was a disillusioned radicalism more concerned with the historical failure of left-wing movements than it was a vigorous attempt to create a New Left. In Mills's case, for instance after he gave up on the labor movement in the late 1940s, the politics of truth emerged as the last stand of an intellectual who saw little hope of realizing his vision of social transformation. Only in the late 1950s, did Mills begin to talk about a "New Left."

MATTSON PERFORMS A VALUABLE SERVICE by showing how the rationalistic politics of truth was picked up by New Leftists. His chapter on *Studies on the Left* and *New University Thought* shows that the New Left was about much more than youthful romanticism. Yet, in order to fully understand the origins of the New Left, one would need to grasp its roots in white student support for the civil rights movement and in the feelings of alienation among middle-class youth that led them to adopt what Doug Rossinow has called the "politics of authenticity." The figures Mattson discusses were certainly encouraged by the formation of the New Left, but they were of an earlier generation, and their thoughts sprang from different roots. They were more a part of a "lost generation" of radical intellectuals who came of age in the 1940s and 1950s than they were members of the New Left.

In addition, Mattson's description of the New Left rests on a misleading notion of what the Old Left was. Mattson implies that what made the New Left "new" was its commitment to participatory democracy. Mattson seems unaware that many socialists were committed to participatory democracy — centralized state socialism was not the only variety of socialism. Mattson caricatures the Old Left as limited to "New York sectarianism." Thus, he ignores the fact that debates over the nature of the Soviet Union held pivotal consequences for defining democratic socialism against authoritarian Stalinism, particularly for left-wing intellectuals. The Old Left, Mattson implies, was narrowly focused on the issue of social equality, to the exclusion of participatory democracy. Yet, a vigorous debate about industrial democracy and workers' control had existed on the American left from the Gilded Age to the New Deal. The central concepts of the thinkers discussed here — "participatory democracy, social justice, public deliberation, and the idea of an engaged intellectual" — are very much a part of the historic project of the left, hardly limited to mid-century left intellectuals. (272) One thing that was different about the intellectuals Mattson discusses is that, in the wake of labor's postwar transformation from social movement to interest group, they gave up on the workplace as a key site of participatory democracy.

One of Mattson's goals is to recover an intellectual tradition of radical liberalism for use today. He takes this term from Arnold Kaufman, a neglected figure who, besides teaching Tom Hayden about participatory democracy, was at the forefront of the anti-Vietnam War teach-in movement. Kaufman sought to bridge the gap between liberalism and radicalism, traditions he saw as complementary, not opposed. Radicalism should thus build on liberal concepts such

as "individual rights . . . a common good, a certain amount of state intervention to protect the public interest . . . and public participation as a means of educating citizens for the responsibilities of democracy." (212)

Mattson makes an important point in reminding us that there was a humane, progressive liberalism that existed in 20th century America that should be carefully distinguished from a more technocratic, administrative, Cold War variety. However, as Mattson himself seems aware, the term "radical liberal" does not fit most of the characters in the book. Goodman, for instance, once hyperbolically wrote that "the liberal center is a corporate establishment tending toward fascism." Mattson convincingly shows that many of the mid-century leftists who criticized liberalism were less hostile to it than it might initially seem, but it doesn't make sense to retrospectively describe figures that very much defined their radicalism against what they saw as outdated or corrupt liberalism "radical liberals."

A more logical figure to include in the radical liberal camp rather than Mills, Goodman, or Williams would have been Allard Lowenstein. Or Michael Harrington, who even as he assisted the Johnson administration in its plans for the War on Poverty, ended his government memos with a reminder that "of course, there is no real solution to poverty until we abolish the capitalist system." As that quote suggests, there is a genuine tension between liberal and radical ideas that Mattson does not address. Nor does Mattson explain why many 1960s radicals would be so contemptuous of liberalism. Lyndon Johnson, the most liberal president in American history outside of Franklin Roosevelt, declared a War on Poverty but he also declared war on Vietnam; he signed the Civil Rights Act, but he also pandered to Mississippi segregationists at the 1964 Democratic convention.

In terms of the intellectual's relationship to political movements and the development of such concepts as participatory democracy, Mattson sketches out an intellectual tradition that does have relevance today. Yet, the intellectuals Mattson discusses failed to grapple with the key issues of race and gender, which makes one wonder whether this tradition needs serious revisions. Mattson lets his figures off the hook by stating that they did not prioritize "race and gender above all else" like current identity politics advocates. (21) Yet, this is far too easy. Figures such as Mills and Goodman not only largely ignored issues of race and gender, but developed a highly macho style that, when adopted by SDS leaders, alienated women from the leadership of the early New Left. There are ways to take race and gender seriously while avoiding the excesses of "identity politics," but we won't get any guidance on this from Mattson's cast of characters.

At the end of *Intellectuals in Action*, Mattson notes that his story is one of defeat. Yet, he does not adequately explore the implications of the conservative ascendancy of the last three decades for the relevance of radical liberal ideas today. Radical liberalism operates by drawing out the radical potential of liberal ideas. But today even technocratic Cold War liberalism is clearly left of center. At one point, Mattson seems to endorse Kaufman's tactic of "radical pressure" to push the Democratic Party leftward, yet is that a realistic strategy at a time when the Democratic Party is unwilling to use popular outrage with corporate America to advocate basic economic reforms and acquiesces to Bush's disastrously stupid war in Iraq? In his conclusion, Mattson suggests that radical liberalism should resign itself to minoritarian status, and can be effective as such. Yet, he fails to explain how. *Intellectuals in Action* is certainly well worth reading, but the radical liberalism Mattson lays out isn't wholly persuasive as historical description or political prescription.

Is the United States a Political Democracy?

HOW DEMOCRATIC IS THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION? by Robert A. Dahl. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001. 208 pp. $19.95.

Reviewed by Daniel Lazare

WHEN ROBERT A. DAHL, a former president of the American Political Science Association, was invited to deliver one of the Castle Lectures at Yale a couple of years ago, he chose a topic that must have struck many as quixotic: the undemocratic quality of the U.S. Constitution. Not that the Constitution's democratic shortcomings — its cockamamie electoral college, its unrepresentative Senate, its proto-Bonapartist presidency, etc. — are a state secret. But the document that sits in a bombproof vault in the National Archives is commonly seen as immovable as the Rock of Gibraltar. Given that it has been with us for some 216 years, what's the point of criticizing something that is effectively beyond criticism? Instead of trying to change the unchangeable, why not concentrate on ways of making do with the ancient machinery?

So Dahl's colleagues must have thought. But there's a problem with pragmatism of this sort: the Constitution's failings by this point have become too obvious for even the academy to ignore. As recently as the mid-1970s, liberals could argue that American democracy was still on an upward arc. Racial and sexual barriers were tumbling, organized labor was showing signs of life, while King Richard had just been expelled from Washington in a modern replay of the Glorious Revolution of 1688. The system worked, as the mantra of the day would have it. Yet by the end of the decade, it was becoming obvious that the days of onward and ever upward were over. Thanks to the law-and-order backlash and an increasingly fanatical War on Drugs (as much a Democratic creation as a Republican one), the U.S. incarceration rate began climbing to the point where it is now the highest in the world. The Reagan administration's war on PATCO was the signal for the most powerful union-busting campaign since the 1920s, while the hot-money culture that was the flipside of Reaganomics sent political corruption shooting through the roof. The 1990s brought further deterioration in the form of Newt Gingrich's Contract With America, the 1995 federal shutdown, the rise of the militia movement, and the impeachment crusade, while the Supreme Court's judicial coup d'état in December 2000 and the mass arrests and bipartisan war drive in the wake of Sept. 11 have brought the system to the verge of a wholesale political collapse.

Indeed, things have reached the point where one can legitimately question whether the United States even deserves to be called a political democracy. True, we can still speak our minds for the most part without having to worry about the police breaking down the door. But now that the popular vote has been determined to be of secondary importance in presidential elections, the people's ability to control the government made in its name is nearing the vanishing point. Rather than a modern democracy, America is fast reverting to an eighteenth-century aristocratic republic in which "we the people" possess little more than consulting voice, which, of course, is what it was originally meant to be.

This is the problem that Robert A. Dahl, has now turned his attention to. As a pillar of the academic establishment, he is not prepared to admit that the U.S. system has broken down. Nonetheless, he argues in *How Democratic Is the American Constitution* that the popular notion of the American system as a model democracy, the envy of the world, a light unto the nations, and so forth is unwarranted. With its elaborate checks and balances, separations of power, and extreme federalism, the U.S. system, he writes, is "among the most opaque, complex, confusing, and difficult" in the advanced

---

DANIEL LAZARE *is the author of* The Frozen Republic: How the Constitution Is Paralyzing Democracy *(Harcourt Brace, 1996).*

industrial world. Genuine accountability is nil, while the principle of equal representation, which is to say one person-one vote, is flouted by such institutions as the U.S. Senate and the electoral college, both of which give greater clout to voters in some states than in others. Socially and economically, the United States is increasingly inequitable, and although Dahl hems and haws as to the exact connection, he acknowledges that inequality at the constitutional level may have something to do with it. Although he can't say for sure, he strongly suspects that a more democratic constitution might result in a more democratic society.

While such statements do not rank terribly high on the Richter Scale, the fact that someone of Robert Dahl's stature is making them is viewed in some quarters as a major intellectual event. Certainly, that is the way Hendrik Hertzberg saw it in a long and enthusiastic review this summer in *The New Yorker*. And indeed, despite its extreme cautiousness, *How Democratic Is the American Constitution* has a number of things to recommend it. Dahl's discussion of the chaotic proceedings in Philadelphia in 1787, for example, is particularly clear-eyed and revealing. Despite the popular image of a group of titans calmly putting the finishing touches on the greatest government in creation, in reality the delegates were a group of state politicians struggling to get something down on paper before they all keeled over from exhaustion. Compromise was piled on top of compromise in an effort to rope every last state into the deal, while at various points the participants seemed confused as to exactly what they had agreed to. A senate based on equal state representation was probably the most egregious single thing to emerge from the process, while a Rube Goldberg-esque electoral college was undoubtedly the most farcical.

So much for the "miracle at Philadelphia," as one best-selling account described it in all seriousness in the 1960s. Nonetheless, *How Democratic Is the American Constitution* suffers from a number of defects, the most important of which has to do with just what democracy is in the first place. As a good empiricist, Dahl defines democracy in checklist fashion as civil liberties plus equal representation plus political accountability and so on. The higher a country scores in each of these categories, the more democratic he deems it to be. Yet the problem with this approach is that it sidesteps what is in fact the *sine qua non* of political democracy: popular sovereignty. Sovereignty is vital not only because it serves as democracy's driving force, but because it speaks to the issue of what a constitution is and what it is supposed to do.

Sovereignty is a much-misunderstood concept, especially in the United States. Contrary to popular opinion, it does not merely mean political power, but, rather, *supreme* power. The eighteenth-century legal authority Sir William Blackstone nicely summed it up as "supreme, irresistible, absolute, uncontrolled authority," which, put another way, means authority that is self-justifying, self-perpetuating, and self-referential — *autopoietic* to use Niklas Luhmann's terminology — and answerable to no one other than itself. Where Blackstone used the concept to describe the unqualified supremacy of the "crown-in-parliament," the Jacobins used it to justify the absolute rule of *le peuple, une et indivisible.* Rather than overthrowing absolutism, democracy became the *new* absolutism, a force in comparison to which all others faded into insignificance. In the socialist sense, popular sovereignty means not just supremacy vis-à-vis the political sphere, but supremacy vis-à-vis law, morality, and the physical environment. Like the final stage of communism, the final flowering of popular sovereignty implies a degree of human control over nature and society so complete that active domination can be said to disappear. The purpose of a constitution under such circumstances is to define, describe, and institutionalize the "democratic dictatorship," but by no means to restrict it.

Popular sovereignty must thus be seen as a process, a continual struggle to extend and deepen human control — not to tyrannize and destroy, as Foucault and various green critics of sovereignty would have it, but to preserve, strengthen, and improve the basis for human existence. By the same token, the concept of immovable checks and balances that is at the core of America's predemocratic Constitution represents an effort to freeze the process at a preliminary

stage of development. It is an attempt to limit a process that is in fact unlimited. When done in the name of a people's government, it is an effort to turn popular sovereignty against itself so that the people's prime responsibility is to see to it that their infinite power remains forever in abeyance. As Madison put it in a letter to Jefferson a few weeks after the close of the Constitutional Convention:

> *Divide et impera,* the reprobated axiom of tyranny, is under certain qualifications, the only policy, by which a republic can be administered on just principles. . . . The great desideratum in Government is to modify the sovereignty as that it may be sufficiently neutral between different parts of the Society to controul one part from invading the rights of another, and at the same time sufficiently controlled itself, from setting up an interest adverse to that of the entire Society.

"We the people" are sovereign, in other words, only to the degree that we never use our sovereignty to alter the society of which we are a part. The people are supreme except that the existing balance of power is even more so. Where the Preamble that the Philadelphia delegates came up with in 1787 suggested that the people were omnipotent, able to toss out old constitutions, e.g. the Articles of Confederation, and "ordain and establish" new ones at a stroke, the rest of the document restricted the people's ability to tax and legislate, to interfere with the slave trade, or even to alter the document made in their own name. Once they ceded power to the Constitution, the implication was that they could never have it back. Popular sovereignty was thus self-negating. The more "we the people" struggled to assert themselves, the more powerless they became.

This, in a nutshell, is why the constitutional order disintegrated so spectacularly in 1860-61. Even though it was becoming obvious that slavery and free labor were mutually incompatible, the "peculiar institution" was written in stone thanks to the immense impediments to reform set forth in the amending clause in Article V. Unable to act through any of the normal processes, the only choice for the burgeoning Northern masses was either to stand by and watch the Union disintegrate or intervene through sheer force of numbers to save it. They could either act constitutionally or democratically, but not both. They chose the latter course by effectively suspending the Constitution and its endlessly frustrating amending process and accomplishing militarily what America's eighteenth-century form of government otherwise prohibited. The people had to demonstrate not that they were powerful *under* the Constitution, but sovereign *over* it. They had to demonstrate that constitutional impediments were merely so many parchment barriers that the people could sweep aside as they once swept aside British rule.

Because he steers clear of popular sovereignty, Dahl fails to confront the problem of a Constitution designed to restrain the unrestrainable. Even though it is the linchpin for the entire arrangement, he mentions Article V only in passing. By requiring any constitutional alteration, no matter how minor, to be approved by two-thirds of each house plus three-fourths of the individual states, Article V is an attempt to slow historical change to a crawl by allowing tiny minorities to admit it only in dribs and drabs. This is impossible, of course, yet Dahl seems to believe that the Constitution can go on doing so forever. After criticizing one feature of the U.S. Constitution after another, he ends up expressing "measured pessimism" concerning the possibilities for change. The U.S. Senate, for instance, is not only the single most inequitable legislative chamber of any significant clout in the world by virtue of granting each state equal representation regardless of population, but it is growing more inequitable as the gap between demographic giants like California (population 34.5 million, up 16 percent since 1990) and midgets like Wyoming (population 494,000, down eight percent over the same period) widens. Yet because Article V declares in its final clause that equal state representation in the Senate cannot be altered without the unanimous approval of all fifty states, the likelihood of reform, according to Dahl, is "virtually zero."

Although not quite as egregious, the Electoral College similarly violates the principle of equal representation by granting each state one electoral vote for every sena-

tor and representative it sends to Congress. For seven states that elect just one member of the House, the effect is to triple their clout in presidential elections, for the six that elect two it is to double it, while for the four that elect three it is to augment it by roughly two-thirds. Yet because the two-thirds/three-fourths rule in Article V allows just thirteen states, representing as little as five percent of the U.S. population, to veto any constitutional amendment, reform in this area, to quote Dahl, "seems unlikely" too. Democracy is helpless in the face of a two-century-old backroom deal. The same goes for America's quasi-monarchical presidency, whose occupants cannot get a spending bill through Congress yet can pulverize Third World countries at will. "We may be able to alter it a bit around the edges with amendments or changed practices," says Dahl. But "[w]e have so deeply invested ourselves in the mythical aspects of the presidency that short of some constitutional breakdown, which I neither foresee nor, certainly, wish for, we won't seriously consider changing it."

Thus we are back where we started. The Constitution is undemocratic, but there is nothing the *demos* can do to change it. Rather than banging our head against a stone wall, we may as well all go back to sleep. As Jeremy Bentham once put it, no tyranny is more terrible than the tyranny of the dead.

But let me suggest an alternative scenario. Not only is America headed straight for a constitutional breakdown, but, *pace* Dahl, such a breakdown is earnestly to be desired. Readers are asked to cast their memories back to the period between the close of voting on Nov. 7, 2000, and the Supreme Court's infamous decision in *Bush v. Gore* some five weeks later. Three things about the episode stand out. One is that it was precisely the sort of constitutional breakdown that Dahl now finds so unlikely. Thanks to the Electoral College, the outcome hinged on a single state, yet everything about the Florida tally was in dispute — the registration process, the absentee ballots, the counting, etc. Where India, to cite just one example, has an all-powerful election commission charged with resolving such disputes before they turn explosive, the United States lacks any such mechanism for the simple reason that the Founders neglected to create one in 1787. Because they had forgotten to fill in the blank, the polity found itself paralyzed some two centuries later. As the well-known Democratic fixer Lloyd Cutler wisecracked about the Framers: "The boys in the powdered wigs didn't get this one right. They didn't anticipate anything like this ever happening, so we find ourselves in a kind of political wilderness." After allowing the issue to bounce back and forth between the state legislature and the lower courts, the Supreme Court's GOP majority finally put the system out of its misery by declaring the popular vote irrelevant as far as the Florida outcome was concerned and awarding the title to a fellow Republican.

Surprise, surprise. A second thing that stands out about the Y2K election fiasco is the passion that it aroused, while a third is the degree and rapidity of the political breakdown. A nation that could barely keep its eyes open during the presidential campaign suddenly jerked awake the moment it was over. On Nov. 22, the same day that a Republican mob was invading the offices of the Dade County board of elections, pounding on windows, disrupting the counting, and roughing up at least one prominent local Democrat, an obscure professor at the Naval War College published a remarkable article on *The Wall Street Journal* editorial page. While taking issue with the Gore campaign for seeking to disqualify a batch of undated military ballots, the professor, a former Marine colonel named Mackubin Thomas Owens, argued that something more was at stake: the Democrats' "unprecedented campaign against the military . . . in the name of multiculturalism, feminism, and the politics of 'sexual orientation.'" Because "the military places a premium on unit cohesion and morale," Owens wrote, it emphasizes "such martial virtues as courage, both physical and moral, a sense of honor and duty, discipline, a professional code of conduct, and loyalty." These are qualities "foreign to most civilians," especially the gay, feminist, and multicultural civilians that the Democratic Party represents. Hence: "What is at stake in this culture war is nothing less than the future effectiveness of the military as an institution."

And if the future effectiveness of the military was at stake, it followed that the integrity of the United States was also.

What was this but a thinly veiled call to save America from civilian mutineers? In little over two weeks, the United States had gone from political somnolence to rumblings of a military putsch. In the end, Max Frankel, a former *New York Times* executive editor, tried to assuage liberal pride by writing that while the outcome could be described as "ugly, unfair, confusing or wrong," matters could have been worse: it could have ended with blood in the streets. The words provided little in the way of comfort.

The Battle of Florida not only gave us a second Bush presidency, but opened a window onto the real state of American politics. Notwithstanding all the glutinous patriotism oozing forth out of Washington, we can see that the U.S. is as deeply split as at any point since the Civil War. It is divided between a left that is stunted, under-developed, and all the more resentful as a consequence, and a right that has been allowed to run riot in an eighteenth-century hothouse environment. Despite what the ACLU and *The Nation* editorial board continually tell us, the Constitution is not protecting democracy, but is undermining it by chaining it to pre-modern formulas about checks and balances and separation of powers. The more antiquated the constitutional structure grows, the more reactionary its influence on larger society. Now that the constitutional crisis and the economic crisis are intersecting in an increasingly powerful manner, the consequences are liable to be explosive.

For the moment, Americans seem oblivious to the system's enormous inequities. After all, that's the way the Founder said it should be, so who are we to say otherwise? But what happens when Wyoming enjoys an advantage in the Senate not just of seventy to one, but of a hundred to one? Or 140? At what point will the democratic majority finally take notice? Just as Americans eventually ran out of patience with slavery, they will eventually run out of patience not just with an unrepresentative Senate and a lopsided electoral college, but with the entire notion of subordinating modern society to certain eighteenth-century precepts. The moment the people begin questioning why they must put up with a host of constitutional anachronisms merely because a group of merchants and slaveholders said so, the game is up. Regardless of what Laurence Tribe and the other high priests of constitutionalism say, the *demos* will inevitably demand that such institutions be restructured in conformance with modern democratic norms. Even if the Constitution says it is impossible, they will demand that it be done. However distant such an outcome may seem at the moment, it could be a good deal closer than most people think. America may seem calm on the surface, but it is seething underneath. Despite the immovable Constitution, the political structure is in fact quite brittle. As we know from the history of France, Russia, and China, no country can just say no to change forever. The more it tries, the more it guarantees that change will be all the more furious when it finally arrives.

Rise and Fall of the "New Communist Movement"

REVOLUTION IN THE AIR: SIXTIES RADICALS TURN TO LENIN, MAO, AND CHE BY Max Elbaum, New York: Verso, 2002. 370 pp. $30.

Reviewed by Steve Early

> *If you go carrying pictures of Chairman Mao, you ain't going to make it with anyone, anyhow. . . .*
>
> JOHN LENNON & THE BEATLES
> in "Revolution"

IN THE INTERESTS OF FULL DISCLOSURE, I must admit that I was never a big fan of the "new communist movement" (NCM), whose rise and fall is chronicled so exhaustively in Max Elbaum's *Revolution in the Air.* The doctrinaire shenanigans of the NCM did little to build durable rank-and-file organization in any unions or industries targeted for colonization, in the 1970s, by its various alphabet soup groups. A number of "cadre organization" veterans continued to be active in unions after their enthusiasm for "Third World Marxism" waned and their respective sects imploded. Some have managed to secure comfortable careers for themselves within the labor officialdom and the bureaucracy of the "new" AFL-CIO. Once big boosters of China's cultural revolution, their political activity now includes cheerleading for "cadre" from the Democratic Leadership Council — Bill Clinton, Al Gore, and their innumerable state and local clones.

During the heyday of the NCM, some actual Third World Marxists were just beginning the process of building broad-based, multi-tendency anti-capitalist parties, rooted in militant unions and community groups. In Brazil, for example, the long, patient, and pragmatic march of the Workers Party has just led to the election of former metal workers leader Luis Inacio ("Lula") da Silva as president of the country. In contrast, 10,000 or so NCM adherents embarked, 30 years ago in the U.S., on a much shorter march — this one to political marginalization, organizational disintegration, and — for many — personal estrangement from radical politics in any form. Much of the emancipatory spirit of the sixties, so full of hope and new political energy, ended up being channeled here into the dreary sectarianism of the 1970s and 80s — thanks in no small part to the NCM and its many little would-be Lenins, competitors all.

Elbaum's book explains, in great detail, what went wrong with the NCM and what today's generation of campus and community activists might learn from this sorry experience. A veteran of Students for a Democratic Society at the University of Wisconsin and now a volunteer staffer of the valuable West Coast peace publication, *War Times*, the author is himself a recovering sectarian. For more than a decade, he was part of "Line of March" (LOM) — which, he now acknowledges, may have adopted "the worst name ever chosen by a party-building group." Previously known as the "Rectification Network," Line of March quickly displayed the kind of dogmatism that earned it the derisive nickname, "March in Line!" As an aid to readers, Elbaum includes a "Glossary of New Communist Movement Organizations," most of which now RIP; without this, it's very hard to keep track of the book's bewildering array of organizational acronyms — RCP, CLP, CP-ML, CWP, DWP, MLP, LRS, RWL, PRRWO, OCIC, et al. Any reader with the good fortune not to have been around when many on the list were still active will need to consult this glossary early — and often.

According to Elbaum, new communists' tendency to march in line — right over the cliff —was one of the NCM's major weaknesses, along with being "disproportionately composed of individuals from the intelligentsia" who had little "sense of proportion about theoretical differences and fell into

---

STEVE EARLY *has been involved in union organizing and reform activity for the last 30 years. In the late 1960s, he was a member of SDS and active in the campus-based movement against the Vietnam War.*

self-destructive infighting. Blinded by the light of Mao's shining path, NCM adherents linked their "never-ending quest for orthodoxy" with "a constant suspicion of heresy." No sooner was the NCM born, when it got busy dying — via inter-organizational feuds, internal factionalism, and eventual splitting over "minor points of doctrine" borrowed from "Cultural Revolution Maoism," "traditional Stalinism," or Cuban Communism. What Elbaum calls "the proliferation of ever-smaller vanguards" did, of course, create "leadership" opportunities for losers in various theoretical debates, because the latter invariably picked up their marbles and left, only to form their own group, based on a new and improved brand of "left purism."

Within the NCM, "democratic centralism" and party discipline became a cover for abuses of power by various ego-tripping males — and, apparently, a few out-of-control female authority figures as well. Here, for example, is Elbaum's memorable description of the not-so-democratic internal life of the "Democratic Workers Party," a "secret cadre organization "formed by thirteen women (all white) in the San Francisco Bay Area in 1974, under the influence of Marlene Dixon, a charismatic intellectual from a working class background." Dixon had "a deep-rooted dictatorial streak and major substance abuse problems"(a dangerous combination in any maximum leader!):

> In its internal functioning, DWP was rigid and top-down to a degree unusual even by the hierarchical standards of the New Communist Movement. Members were subject to nearly 24-hour-a-day discipline and internal political debate was suppressed via the argument that it was 'class standpoint' rather than political line that determined a cadre's mettle — with the precise definition and practical tests of class standpoint subject to constant change and leadership manipulation.
>
> Dissent was harshly dealt with, and purges and expulsions were commonplace. General Secretary Dixon ruled with an iron hand, and almost all major party documents were attributed to her or to other members working under her personal guidance. In practical campaigns, DWP rejected united-front cooperation with other left groups in favor of setting up mass organizations strictly under party control.

Not surprisingly, most normal people — regardless of their class background — did not last long in outfits like this. Many survivors of "new communism" — like former cult-members — "experienced something resembling post-traumatic stress syndrome," Elbaum reports. The burn-out and bitterness was so deep among some individuals that they "simply abandoned political work altogether" after leaving — or being expelled from — the hermetic world of the NCM. While freely confessing — and not absolving — the NCM's many sins of "ultra-leftism," Elbaum nevertheless expresses a certain lingering admiration for the movement's ability "to maintain itself as a militant, anti-capitalist current for longer than most other tendencies that came out of the upheavals of the 1960s." He even manages to find nice things to say about the DWP — how it "represented a breath of fresh air" and produced "analytical work on women's oppression [that] was far more sophisticated than the mechanical perspectives that had dominated the pre-1973 party building movement."

The NCM's bizarre ideological contortions reached their zenith in the late 1970s, when various groups — or their top commissars — began "to see splitting controversies in every disagreement over international affairs." While proclaiming itself to be "new," the internal dynamic of the NCM was not unlike that of the old CP-USA, from the 1920s to the mid-1950s, in that party members were frequently torn apart by abrupt ideological flip-flops, decreed by the leadership in response to political developments abroad — in this case splits between Russian, Chinese, and Vietnamese communists, Cuba and China over Angola, China and Albania, and even various Central American revolutionary factions. (Particularly jolting was Beijing's official recognition of the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile, just a year after thousands of leftists were killed, exiled, or imprisoned in that country's military coup.) As longtime Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) activist Tim Sears observes, "the basic political outlook of the new communists struck most people at the time — even most people inclined toward radical or progressive politics — as incredibly wacky." NCM ideas haven't improved

with age, either. If anything, many Maoist conceptions of "anti-imperialism" seem more wacky and other-worldly today than they did 25 or 30 years ago. How many of us remember, for example, that "by 1975, the October League —having achieved premier status in the Maoist camp — was arguing that the main blow must be directed at the USSR and calling for steps to strengthen NATO." Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan were only too glad to comply!

Elbaum also cites, as one of the NCM's achievements, the intervention of competing factions — in the twilight of their movement — into Jesse Jackson's two presidential primary campaigns during the 1980s. This section of the book is a case study in the behavior of small, secretive, "vanguard groups" when they seek influence within — and attempted control over — "mass organizations." During the grim Reagan years, Jackson's "Rainbow Coalition" initially showed much promise of becoming an ongoing mass-based, multi-cultural political insurgency with a progressive agenda. It quickly became a magnet for nearly every lefty in town:

> With campaign committees and Rainbow structures sprouting all over during late 1983 and 1984, and with traditional Democratic Party operatives hostile or hanging back, there was plenty of room for skilled leftists to assume leadership roles. LRS [League of Revolutionary Struggle] and Line of March cadre played the largest role, but PUL, RWH, and CLP also made their presence felt, as did a number of independent left veterans of other party building groups.

Elbaum's Line of March, to its credit, "stressed the importance of a Rainbow structure based among grassroots activists who had a major say in decision-making" and opposed "allowing the Rainbow to languish" during non-presidential campaign years. LOM's objective was to turn the Coalition "into a progressive vehicle not completely dependent on the appeal of its charismatic standard-bearer or susceptible to pressures from the Democratic Party high command." Meanwhile, the LRS — which closed up shop in 1990 — proceeded to aid Jackson's project of keeping the Rainbow securely under his personal control. According to Elbaum:

> LRS emphasized what traditional communist doctrine termed a 'united front from above,' and worked to forge strong ties with Jackson's inner circle, local elected officials, labor and community leaders. The organization pressed for structures and tactics that would be comfortable for figures with an established base, and were reluctant to set up a bottom-up, membership-based Rainbow . . . .LRS was likewise more willing than most others on the left to subordinate building the Rainbow to the immediate needs of Jackson's campaign apparatus when these were considered by Jackson to be at least partly in conflict.

Maoist labor work in the 70s was, on the other hand, characterized by spectacular adventurism and "ultra-leftism," combined with a similar penchant for manipulation and behind-the-scenes maneuvering that hardly had a liberating effect on the working class, or even that small portion of it touched — and usually turned off — by NCM activity. As Elbaum admits, "most of the movement gave little attention to – or actually opposed – the development of forms reflecting bottom-up initiative and working-class self-organization outside party control." Unfortunately, as Christopher Phelps points out in a recent *Left History* review, *Revolution in the Air* contains little detail on the trade union practice of "new communists" — i.e. what they actually did in factories, workplaces, and unions halls while trying to connect "party building and mass working class organizing." We learn more about what Marxist-Leninist colonizers criticized than what they proposed as a strategy for union radicalization. For example, in the middle of Ed Sadlowski's 1976-77 "Fight-Back" campaign — the biggest challenge to the Steelworkers' leadership in that union's history — the October League denounced Sadlowski as one of "the main scabs and slickest defenders of the system." His candidacy for the USWA presidency — which, as Elbaum notes, "grew out of a militant rank-and-file movement" — was, according to these Maoists, merely "a trick by the bourgeoisie to "channel the revolutionary aspirations and strivings of the masses into reformism."

As part of its rival effort to "sink roots

in the working class," Bob Avakian's Revolutionary Union (soon to become the Revolutionary Communist Party) sent some of its operatives to West Virginia to become coal miners in the early 1970s — one of the toughest assignments that any group of colonizers faced anywhere. They arrived amidst considerable political turmoil within the United Mine Workers and a wildcat strike movement of epic proportions. For better or worse (depending on your point of view), RCPers helped shape the latter as rank-and-file militants in the "Miners' Right to Strike Committee," which sought an open-ended grievance procedure in the union's national contract with the Bituminous Coal Operators Association. Little or nothing of this experience makes it into the pages of *Revolution in the Air* — despite the rich material provided by such adventures as the RCP's politically suicidal May Day marches in Beckley, West Virginia. (One annual exercise in red-flag waving led to the near lynching of their small band of coal field supporters — some of whom were forced to take refuge in the office of their attorney, a National Lawyers Guild member, who was more used to fending off injunctions, damage claims, and contempt citations arising from wildcat strike activity.)

Such local color rarely enlivens Elbaum's book. Instead, *Revolution in the Air* suffers from a Talmudic preoccupation with textual interpretation. Well-written and carefully researched, the book charts every ideological twist and turn of long-dead sects, as reflected in the author's voluminous collection of their now-yellowing flyers, mimeographed manifestos, newspapers, internal discussion bulletins, and "theoretical journals." As feminists have noted, however, "the personal" is also "political." What this history really needs is a human face — some personal profiles of those who once tried to change the world through NCM groups, more information about their family backgrounds and life on the job and in the community as radical activists, insights into how they felt about their political work then and how they evaluate it now, and an answer to the obvious question in the minds of many curious readers: "where are they today?"

Labor historians Alice and Staughton Lynd have provided a revealing retrospective look at the workplace experiences of several NCM colonizers — who tell their stories in their own words — in interviews published in *The New Rank and File* (Cornell, 2000). Unfortunately, Elbaum eschews this approach — or any other involving narrative journalism — on security grounds.

> Individual names are used sparingly in this book . . . only activists whose role was both highly public and important are mentioned by name, and even many who meet those criteria are not identified. This approach stems mainly from the power that anti communism still exercises in U.S. society. Today, it is considered at least semi-respectable to have participated in 1960s protests and joined some kind of radical group — but to have been a member of an organization that defined itself as Marxist-Leninist is still regarded as beyond the pale. Public acknowledgment of such membership can cost a person dearly . . . .

The possibility of creating personal embarrassment — for former cadre now on the capitalist road themselves — might be an additional reason for the author's reticence. According to civil rights movement historian, David J. Garrow, who reviewed Elbaum's book favorably in *The Village Voice*, "former top ideologues [of the Communist Party-Marxist Leninist, successor of the October League] nowadays include a millionaire venture capitalist who worked for many years at the Blackstone Group and a management executive for a prominent Florida-based restaurant chain." According to Garrow, CP-ML chairman and founder Mike Klonsky — the toast of party circles in Beijing during the late 1970s — is currently an education professor at the University of Illinois, having taken the more usual path for "new communists" to re-enter what Elbaum calls "the better off strata from which they had once defected."

Emphasizing the importance of cross-generational lesson-sharing, Elbaum has promoted this book with admirable entrepreneurial zeal of his own. The web site for *Revolution in the Air* (www.revolutionintheair.com) announces its second printing, tracks the author's extended book tour, and features both reviews and reader comments.

Elbaum wants to foster a "dialogue with many talented individuals from today's new generation of activists, to gain insight into how they see things and what they have and have not learned from the past." If the book "sparks criticism and further discussion of the left's history and future, it will have a met a major part of its goal," he says. He is certainly correct in concluding that:

> Every new generation reinvents the left, whether by transforming existing groups or by forming new ones of their own. This is both necessary and positive, not least because youth are far less likely than veterans to be shackled by the 'tradition of all the dead generations [which] weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living,' as Marx put it. This is especially crucial today, since at no time since the birth of the modern socialist movement has the left needed such a top-to-bottom overhaul.

One can only hope, though, that Elbaum's nostalgia for certain elements of the NCM experience is not contagious. As Garrow observes, the "movement's history is a powerful lesson in how not to pursue the progressive transformation of society." Elbaum's book illustrates how difficult it has been for radicals to build lasting and effective "intermediate organizations" — from rank-and-file caucuses to rainbow coalitions — much less left political groups that have any semblance of mass appeal in American society. If the current attempts at "socialist regroupment" are going to be anything more than linking together the walking wounded, what's left of the Left today must find a way to connect its anti-capitalist critique to the multiplying crises of real existing capitalism. Corporate globalization, the post 9/11 mix of war and economic distress, the widening attacks on labor and renewed meltdown of the U.S. health care system, the mounting evidence of long-term environmental catastrophe — all these conditions and more provide openings for expanded organizing initiatives. Revolution may not be in the air, but there's more than enough human suffering and popular unrest in America today to enable radicalism to break free from the confines of narrow sectoral struggles and single-issue politics. Left-wing activists may not have Lenin, Mao, and Che as their guides this time, but — based on the evidence in Elbaum's book — that may be one more factor in their favor.

The Tragedy of German Social Democracy

RUDOLF HILFERDING: THE TRAGEDY OF A GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRAT by William Smaldone. DeKalb, Northern Illinois University Press, 1998. 271 pp. $36 cloth.

Reviewed by Horst Brand

What came after Weimar was so terrible that we must count the failure of the first German republic as one of the great catastrophes in world history. Because of this, there looms in the background of all thinking about Weimar the question, how 1933 could have come about. Writing history about Weimar thus is necessarily always also a work of grieving.

H.A. Winkler, *Weimar, 1918-1933: The History of the First German Democracy* (1993)[1]

IN HIS MAGNUM OPUS, *Finance Capital: A Study of the Latest Phase of Capitalist Development,* first published in German in 1910, Rudolf Hilferding argues that socialism will be established as the result of the political struggle of the proletariat. Conflicts between employers and workers, capital and labor, will not as such bring about the socialist revolution. Rather, the proletariat's political struggle will be engendered by the imperialist wars Hilferding foresees, wars that are bound to impose great burdens and losses upon the workers. Revolutionary storms will thus be unleashed, leading to the breakdown of the capitalist order and of the state that is linked to it. The (victorious) proletariat will be the "heir" of the economy (the industrial plant and channels of distribution) within whose womb, as it were, the reconditions of socialism will have developed; and which finance capital — the combination of cartels, trusts, monopolies, and the great banks, which Hilferding subsequently referred to as "organized capitalism" — has prepared.

The institutional breakdown he projects will not, however, entail an economic breakdown. An economic breakdown, he writes, is "not a rational conception," and makes no sense.[2] Otto Bauer, the Austro-Marxist intellectual, was more cautious. Writing in 1909, he feared that any "brutal confiscation" of the means of production would lead to their ruination, hence to the impoverishment of the great mass of people. Rather, the "expropriation of the expropriators" should proceed in an "orderly, regulated" fashion, "so that the productive apparatus of society not be destroyed, the operation of industry and agriculture not be impeded." Bukharin, who quotes this passage, commented that Bauer wanted to build socialism not from earthly but from heavenly elements.[3] He might have spared his sarcasm. He wrote the work in which the quote occurs in 1920, under the cruel impress of the ruin to which civil war and the loss of managerial and other expert personnel had reduced the Soviet economy. Note that Bauer's reservations about expropriation were expressed years before Bukharin quoted them. Hilferding evidently came to share them.

When, after Emperor Wilhelm II had abdicated, and just prior to the armistice that ended World War I, the Social Democrats, together with the Independent Social Democrats (which, in opposition to the war, had split from the former, and which Hilferding had joined), had established a provisional government, Hilferding believed that a majority of the German working class had conquered state power. Like Bauer, he "imagined a gradual revolutionary transformation of society . . . toward democratic socialism," to be instituted by parliamentary means.[4] These hopes were dashed when the newly established republican social-democratic leadership repressed the uprisings of the workers' and soldiers' committees in Berlin, Hamburg, and elsewhere and their organizations; the murder of Rosa Luxemburg by right-wing hooligans; and, more generally, the effective alliance of the Social Democrats with the armed forces. The events convinced Hilferding, Smaldone writes, that "The revolutionary road to socialism was closed."[5]

HORST BRAND *is a frequent contributor to* New Politics. *His article "The Slidence of the Vatican and the Plight of the Jews" appeared in* New Politcs, *No. 30 (Winter 2001)*

Nevertheless, Hilferding held to the idea of a *gradual* road to that goal which, in his view, was prefigured by the planning and socializing trends of "organized capitalism," and would be secured by the accretion of a social-democratic majority in the parliament (Reichstag), construed by him (as well as by other leading Social Democrats) as the central arena of political struggle.

Socializing and Anti-Socializing Forces

THE BELIEF THAT A PARLIAMENTARY ROAD to socialism was possible was of course inherent in the structure of European social democracy generally, given the large number of its elected representatives and their extensive organizational and voter base. It had been implicit in one of the last writings by Friedrich Engels: in the introduction to a new (1895) edition of Marx's *The Class Struggles in France, 1848-1850,* Engels pronounced street fights and barricades as outdated, all the more so because universal manhood suffrage had been expanded since the 1860s; and because the bourgeoisie and the government had now more to fear from the lawful than from the extralegal actions of workers' parties, more from successful elections than from rebellion. (See Helga Grebing, reference note 21.) These remarks were taken as a powerful endorsement of the centrality of parliamentarism by the German social-democratic leadership.

The vision of a gradual parliamentary road to socialism was to be negated, however, by powerful economic and political forces, including the Great Depression — forces which the concept of "organized capitalism" could not deal with analytically, except within the limited terms of conventional business cycle theory. More of this below. Here, a more fundamental problem with the idea should be noted. The notion of the gradual attainment of socialism ignored or belittled the *anti-socializing* forces also inherent in the capitalist order. We need but point to a key dimension of that order, i.e., private property, and the command it confers over the fate of labor by granting or denying access to the means of production, these also being means to livelihood. The institution of private property was not perhaps a proximate factor in causing the Great Depression, yet it lay at the base of resistance to reflationary measures that might devalue existing real and financial assets. Hilferding's evident inability to cope with this problem or the related problem of unemployment when he was finance minister (1928-30), or later as a highly placed adviser to the social-democratic leadership, seems astounding yet it is related largely to his understanding of (mostly German) capitalism and its structures (articulated at a social-democratic party congress in 1927); and perhaps also to what I take to have been his view of the banks as central credit institutions and of sound currency as stabilizing factor, i.e., as dampening cyclical fluctuations. Our astonishment should, however, be mitigated by failures similar to Hilferding's on the part of the British Labor Party and his British counterpart, Philip Snowden.[6]

Finance Capital cannot be summarized here.[7] It remains one of the seminal works of Marxist analysis, is lucidly argued, and has a fluidity of style rarely met with in such works. It may still be studied with profit. Fundamentally, we might say, it deals with the transformation of the regulating principle underlying the capitalist economy since Marx had composed *Das Kapital* during the 1850s and early 1860s. Roughly speaking, the free play of market forces, given unrestrained competition, by and large governed the economies of Western societies after the demise of mercantilism during the 18th century, and until about 1875. While Marx had foreseen the tendency toward concentration and centralization of capitalist enterprise, the actuality of this development was linked with emergent heavy industry after about 1870 — steel and its raw material needs, chemicals, electrical power apparatus, steamship building, and others — hence with investment requirements which only corporate (i.e., equity) finance and large bank credits could fund. As in other industrial or industrializing countries, free competition, restricted in any case by rising difficulties of entry, presented unacceptable risks in addition to marketing uncertainties. All this led to the creation of monopolies, cartels (price and production quota agreements in industries with the same or similar product lines), and

trusts (amalgamations of firms controlled by investors or investment banks). Marketing uncertainties in turn were reduced by protective tariffs, as these had also been granted to agrarian interests so as to diminish grain imports. The reach of the world market was thus constrained. In addition, the attempts to control production and distribution at the time of a downward curve of the Kondratieff cycle over the 1873-96 period also was part of a "desperate drive to overcome the risks of cutthroat competition and to establish a more even level of business security and stability . . ."[8]

As Hans Rosenberg has written, until 1877, the German government "had adhered to the gospel of automatic adjustment from within the economic mechanism," but, "[t]he Great Depression (of 1874-96) marked the decisive turning point in the nineteenth-century history between the state and the economy."[9] Protective tariffs were among the important marks of the turning point; Hilferding devotes an extensive chapter of his book to the drastic change in trade policy this had meant as typifying an aspect of finance capital's efforts at controlling the economy. He did not object to the educational tariffs, meant to allow a domestic industry to mature enough to be able to cope with foreign competitors. But he urged that a free-trade policy be adopted so as to keep consumer goods prices low.

The regulating principle of capitalism following the demise of free trade, and the decline of the liberalist ideology that justified it, became the control of the economy by combinations of its corporate components. "Finance capital desires not freedom but dominance; it has no sympathy for the independence of the individual capitalist but requires his integration; it detests the anarchy of competition, and wills organization . . ."[10]

True, the state did not, at the time Hilferding wrote *Finance Capital,* provide guidance or direction for these combinations. It did not formulate and adopt employment policies, and neither in his book nor during subsequent decades is the employment problem a major concern of his. In fact, the policies he pursued or proposed during his two tenures as finance minister in the 1920s were as orthodox as the British Treasury's. For example, to end the hyperinflation that plagued Germany in 1922-23, he suggested the return to the gold mark, which, had that been done, would have brought on a deep recession and aggravated the unemployment that already existed. His (successful) opposition to a large-scale public works program as adviser to the Social Democratic Party leadership in early 1932, urged by the trade unions so as to reduce high unemployment levels, was similarly motivated by a concern with sound currency and finance. It was only during the later 1930s that the industrial nations gave priority to employment policy over sound finance.[11]

The State and Finance Capital

THE STATE WAS, HOWEVER, AN ALLY of finance capital in its drive to secure outlets for capital investment in the territories to which imperial claims had been made. As noted, Hilferding foresaw the international frictions to which imperialism would (and then actually did) lead and the war or wars this development would engender. The burdens "imposed" on the workers would in turn lead them to revolt. Their political struggle, if successful, would then gradually lead them to institute socialism.

Imperialism as being in conflict with the longer term interests of the workers was not an uncontested idea prior to World War I (or, for some nations even for decades thereafter). The "colonial question" gave rise to considerable divisions in the Socialist International electoral politics.[12] An example is the (electoral) reaction to the German Social Democrats' vehement opposition in 1907 to the brutal expulsion of the Hereros of Southwest Africa (today's Namibia) from their pastoral lands when they revolted against the construction of a railroad through these lands that was to lead to a mining area. Troops had been dispatched by Berlin to suppress the revolt, and were ordered to shoot the Hereros on sight, those not being killed to be driven into the waterless desert. The social-democratic Reichstag delegates refused to grant the budgetary credits the government demanded as well as any other credits for use to repress native revolts in German possessions. The government thereupon dissolved the Reichstag;

the chauvinism it stirred up cost the Social Democrats close to one-half of their seats at the following elections. The Revisionist wing of the party (including Eduard Bernstein) blamed the party's "negative colonial policy" for these setbacks, and demanded a "more positive" one.[13]

At the 1907 congress of the International in Amsterdam, Karl Kautsky (of whom the one generation younger Hilferding was a close and lifelong friend) voiced his radical opposition to any "socialist colonial policy" as a contradiction in terms, inasmuch as all and any colonial policy implied the imposition of foreign domination ("Herrschaft"), thus denying the basic principle of socialism of the right to freedom and independence of all people ("Voelker").[14] Eduard Bernstein opposed Kautsky on the ground that a capitalist colonial policy would develop the productive forces needful to reach the stage of socialism. We cannot pursue the controversy further. Hilferding stood with Kautsky on this question, as also attested by his opposition to World War I as an imperialist war and by his resignation from Social Democratic Party (whose Reichstag delegates had voted war credits). Yet, if Hilferding's theory of imperialism was correct, Bernstein's thought could not be wrong, given the historical perspectives to which both men held. The paradox has always posed a fundamental dilemma for both liberalism and democratic socialism.

Free Trade and Tariff Walls

NEVERTHELESS, WHILE HILFERDING fully recognized that imperialism may indeed prepare a capitalist order in less advanced countries, he also pointed to the profoundly regressive ideological and political changes in the countries where it originated, e.g., Germany. As the bourgeoisie abandoned the idea of free trade and the belief that free trade will inaugurate an era of peace; as it was driven to enlist the aid of the state to impose a protective wall of tariffs so as to withstand international competition, the liberal ideal of humanism was replaced by the ideal of the "greatness" of the state. Earlier, nation and state territory were to coincide. The right of nations to build their state within national borders was unconditionally recognized. Such recognition ceased to be upheld after about 1870. One's own nation began now to be elevated above all others. The liberal-democratic ethos of the equality of all who bear the human countenance was negated. One's own nation was, as it were, "chosen," its chosenness owed to its natural superiority, attributable to its race. It is, avers Hilferding, the driving spirit of finance capital, which seeks to impose not freedom, as envisioned by the protagonists of free trade of an earlier bourgeois generation, but domination.[15]

Be it noted parenthetically that Hilferding's (later) conception of "organized capitalism" does not take account of what might be termed the psychological homogeneity that the ideology he traces to the alliance of state and capital in Germany instilled — a homogeneity that undoubtedly survived the defeat Germany suffered in World War I among much of the German bourgeoisie. Not only were the social strata on which "organized capitalism" presumably built anti-socialist, their ideological homogeneity must be reckoned to have been a powerful additional factor in the eventual destruction of Weimar democracy.[16] Hilferding held to the firm belief in the permanence of Weimar's parliamentary democracy, a belief unshaken by the surrender of the Reichstag to Chancellor Bruning's emergency decrees in 1930 and its impotence thereafter until Hitler's 1933 assent to power.

"Organized capitalism" was of course rooted in *Finance Capital*. The research and writing of this work took place during a period of vigorous economic growth (dated from a cyclical low in 1880 to 1914). Unemployment fluctuated (and figured, beginning 1887) did not average more than 6 percent.[17] Hilferding's business cycle theory to an extent reflects these favorable conditions. The cycle was smoothed, he thought (he did not say it was eliminated), by certain structural changes. For example, commercial credit was increasingly replaced by bank credit. The cascading effect to which nonpayment of given debts gave rise (because of business failures and other difficulties) when commercial credit was the rule (as during Marx's time) was greatly mitigated by bank credit because the banks were usually able

to minimize the wider impact of defaults. Another example was the consolidation of retail firms and the expansion of manufacturing enterprise. Such firms were less likely to fail because there would always be a relatively high floor below which their output would not sink. There would also be a relative decline in inventories as means of transportation improved and the link between output and demand shortened, helping to stabilize production and prices. Swiftness of communication was an added factor in making timely adjustments in business dispositions possible. Finally, there were the organizational changes already noted (the various kinds of combinations) which facilitated large-scale planning of investment and output, further smoothing out cyclical swings.[18]

The Logic of Parliamentarianism

LIKE SOME OTHER MARXIST THINKERS, Hilferding virtually foreclosed any continuity in the development of capitalism (he found a ready pupil in Lenin in this respect). True, finance capital was but "the most recent stage" of capitalism, but it spelled a maturity of economic development such as to ease "enormously the task of overcoming capitalism." "Even today, taking control of the largest Berlin banks would mean taking possession of the most important spheres of large-scale industry . . ."[19] He did not subsequently amend this view, nor publish a revised edition of *Finance Capital*. In the mid-1920s, he began to think that severe economic crises were a thing of the past.[20] The thought was premised on the "socializing" planning of the large-scale industrial and banking combinations replacing competition. He seems not to have taken account of the kind of competition of which a precondition is the ready availability of privately disposable capital (in whatever financial form) — competition not within the same industry or product line but from new industries and outsiders, displacing the former — e.g., concrete displacing steel, natural gas substituting for coal, synthetics for naturally derived materials. He also ignored the many indications of slack that preceded the 1929-33 slump. That slump falsified the premise underlying the idea of the lessening severity of crises; an alternative explanation of capitalist crisis was not offered by Hilferding.

Helga Grebing, in her *History of the German Workers Movement,* has written that the "practical" (i.e., the non-theoretical) part of the Erfurt Program of the Social Democratic Party (1890) "included demands, the premises of which implied the recognition of the existing state as the basis for the improvement of the political and social situation of the worker, e.g., universal and equal suffrage, equality of women, secularity of the schools, occupational health and safety regulation, and guarantees for the right to organize."[21] The question of reform and/or revolution cannot concern us here; suffice it to note that leading socialists who urged reforms accepted the argument for revolution as well, the contradiction being seemingly resolved by Karl Kautsky's refinement of it, that the Social Democratic Party is a "revolutionary party" but does not "make revolutions."

Central to the reformism and politics of the party was parliamentarism — not merely parliament as institution but as noted, as primary arena of political struggle. (The trade unions demanded, and were eventually granted, autonomy from the party, labor-employer conflicts being "economic," hence anyway subordinate to the party's political role.)

Parliamentarism was inseparable from the ethos of "socialist-democratic reform" (Eduard Bernstein). It was, to be sure, most deeply engrained in Britain's Labor Party. Early in the 20th century, as Ralph Miliband has written, not many people in the labor movement contested "the view that Labour's grievances and demands could only find solution through parliamentary action, and that the parliamentary method was ideally suited, not only to the achievement of immediate gains by the working class but also to the socialist reconstruction of society."[22] Karl Kautsky fully agreed, "the parliament was the natural 'battleground' where the 'last decisive battle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie can be fought." He also insisted that the modern state, being defined by its system of representation, the governing system of the Social Democratic Party paralleled the state's, in that it was "the only form in which the entirety of the

party can come together, understand itself, and make its decisions."[23] Such views, so eloquently expressed by Kautsky, were undoubtedly influenced by the model of the British parliament (both Kautsky and Bernstein had spent some of their earlier years in London), and, perhaps more important, they were vindicated by the party's great electoral successes during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. But, unlike British democracy, the historical roots of German democracy were relatively shallow. The political significance of this fact (readily grasped by so perspicacious a thinker as Jean Juarès) was not perhaps appreciated by social-democratic leaders (and only belatedly by such left historians as Arthur Rosenberg). The lack of concern about this contributed to the misestimation of the Nazi danger, right up to Hitler's taking office in January 1933, on the part of both Kautsky and Hilferding.

The Pressures of Leadership

THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT that founded the Weimar republic after Emperor Wilhelm's abdication in November 1918 was unquestionably based on broad worker support, but it almost deliberately failed (or abstained) from making even a beginning of eliminating the authoritarian elites who staffed the military, the civil service, and the judiciary. With the aid of the army, the government crushed the popular uprisings whose core demands were the democratization of industry and the military. Socialization commissions were indeed created, and chaired by Kautsky, but were rendered impotent by cabinet ministers. About the revolution's failure, Hilferding thought that it had been the "most fateful misfortune that such small men were faced with so great an opportunity," men "entirely without vision . . . petit bourgeois who want first of all order."[24]

Yet, those men were creatures of the parliamentarism on which their party prided itself, and whose support they had (Friedrich Ebert, head of the initial and provisional government at the time was chair of the party). They would have agreed entirely with Hilferding's quote of Marx and Engels in November 1918, that, "the proletarian revolution is the revolution of the great majority in the interests of the great majority";[25] and would have had difficulty distancing themselves from Rosa Luxemburg's programmatic statement: "The Spartacists will never take over the power of government except by the clear and unambiguous will of the great majority of the proletarian mass in Germany, and never otherwise than by its deliberate agreement with the views, aims, and methods of struggle of the Spartacists."[26] Like other European socialist parties, the German Social Democrats produced its share of mediocre leaders but, also like them, it never produced a Stalin, a Hitler, a Mussolini, a Franco. It proved to be constitutionally incapable of breaching its parliamentary tradition.

But hence also rendering it incapable of opposing by extralegal means the threat to the rule of parliament posed by the reactionary emergency decrees of the government of Chancellor Bruening and of his successor, Franz v. Papen — decrees which deeply cut wages, prices, social benefits, unemployment compensation, salaries of public employees, etc.; and which in effect shifted legislative power to the executive, i.e., the office of the republic's President and the anti-democratic elites in league with it. The social democratic leadership, with Hilferding among its most influential advisers, decided to "tolerate" both governments (by way of the pertinent parliamentary votes), partly for fear that otherwise the Nazis would be asked to join it, thus enabling them to spread their influence throughout the public agencies.

The deflationary policies which the decrees enacted were largely an attempted, if in the end futile, response to the deepening economic crises — the near breakdown of production, the failure of major financial institutions, steeply rising unemployment, and widespread want. But powerful political forces, associated chiefly with heavy industry, contributed to the authoritarianism of the process, with the goal of eventually eliminating the Weimar "Trade Union State" and its parliamentary base.[27]

The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy

HILFERDING WAS AT SEA about how to deal with the crises and the threat to parliamentary democracy it entailed. In correspon-

dence with Kautsky, he wrote: "The basic misfortune is that we cannot say concretely how we would get rid of the crisis . . . The capitalist tremors surpass all expectations . . . A socialist solution is not there and that makes the situation terribly difficult and allows the Communists and National Socialists to grow ever larger."[28] Nor did Kautsky have an answer. In 1931 he saw the evolution of the depression as similar to earlier cyclical pattern, the depth of the downswing comparable to that of the late 19th century, but eventually leading to recovery, "accompanied by a new rise in the strength of the workers' movement." He thought the end of the crisis would "create the preconditions for a great advance of the proletariat and lay the basis for the socialist revolution." Hilferding, more involved in the prevailing political situation, may not have shared this optimism. Neither man had an inkling of the eventual outcome of the crisis in bringing Hitler to power.[29]

Large numbers of the Social Democratic Party's rank and file members, of its fraternal organizations, of the trade unions, and of other, avowedly republican parties, would have been ready to defend the republic and its democratic institutions. The leadership feared bloodshed, the crushing of extralegal actions by the military, and surely the involvement of the Communist Party.

Leon Trotsky, who with prophetic intensity envisioned the enormous dangers to Germany and Europe generally that a Nazi victory would present, and who, during the early 1930s, untiringly called for concerted working class action against them, repeatedly urged a common bloc with Communists. It was precisely what the social democratic leaders wanted to avoid. Trotsky clearly judged the German Communist Party as an at least potentially revolutionary force, for all the criticism he levied against the "subjective factor" of the inadequacy of its leadership, and its subservience to the Soviet bureaucracy.[30]

Trotsky perhaps underestimated the depth of the ideological chasm between the two parties. Hilferding equated the Communists and the Nazis "morally and intellectually" in 1931.[31] The Communists denounced the Social Democrats as "social fascists," following a redefinition of the "stage" of capitalism as the "Third Period" by Moscow. Kautsky remained an implacable adversary of the Bolsheviks since at least their dissolution of the Constituent Assembly in January 1918, and the repression of the Social Revolutionaries, the Mensheviks, etc. He had bitterly polemicized against Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalinism in numerous publications, and against the suppression of all civil freedoms by, and the degeneracy of, the Soviet regime (also in *Die Gesellschaft,* a periodical edited by Hilferding). It is likely that he regarded the German Communist Party as a mere agent of the "counterrevolutionary" Soviet Union, and that collaboration with them was out of the question.[32]

Hilferding, having been warned by Bruening — a personally decent man — of his impending arrest by the Nazis, fled Germany in March 1933. Thereafter he worked with the executive committee of the Social Democratic Party in exile, in Prague, Zurich, Paris. Unable, perhaps unwilling to give up this work and to leave France, he was later seized by the Vichy police and handed over to the Gestapo (a fate, a betrayal, which other German leftwingers also suffered). He was jailed in February 1941, where he committed suicide.

WILLIAM SMALDONE HAS WRITTEN a discerning scholarly work. While focused on Hilferding, the work provides much insight into the grandness of thought and struggle and ultimate tragedy of one of the great social movements of the 20th century.

NOTES

1. Translated by the writer of this article.

2. Rudolf Hilferding, *Das Finanzkapital. Eine Studie ueber die juengste Entwiclung des Kapitalismus,* Berlin, 1955, p. 555. Translated from the German. The English edition of the work was not conveniently available to me.

3. Nikolaj Bucharin, *Oekonomik der Transformationsperiode,* Hamburg, 1970, p. 58. Here translated from the German.

4. Smaldone, p. 77.

5. ibid.

6. Ralph Miliband, *Parliamentary Socialism. A Study in the Politics of Labour.* 2d ed., London, 1972, 1975. See Ch. VI, "The Price of Respectability."

7. Smaldone, especially p. 41ff.

8. Hans Rosenberg, "Political and Social Consequences of the Great Depression of 1873-1896 in Central Europe," *Economic History Review,* v. XIII, no 1

& 2, p. 71.

9. ibid, pp. 65,67.

10. Hilferding, *op. cit.,* p. 502.

11. Smaldone, pp. 127, 129, 120-121.

12. Julius Braunthal, *Geschichte der Internationale,* Hanover, p. 310 ff.

13. ibid, p. 319.

14. ibid, p. 325.

15. Hilferding, *op. cit.,*pp.488-504.

16. ibid in the Introduction by Fred Oelssner, p. XIII.

17. Detlev J.K. Peukert, *The Weimar Republic. The Crisis of Classical Modernity,* New York, 1987, 1992, p.12.

18. Hilferding, *op. cit.* See Section 4, and Ch. XX, p. 425 ff.

19. Smaldone, pp. 50-51.

20. Smaldone, p. 117.

21. Helga Grebing, *Geschichte der Deutschen Arbeiterbewegung. Ein Ueberblick* (History of the German Workers' Movement. A Survey), Munich, 1970, p. 108.

22. Miliband, *op. cit.* p. 13.

23. Massimo Salvadori, *Karl Kautsky and the Socialist Revolution, 1880-1938,* London, 1976, 1979, p. 38.

24. Smaldone, p. 82.

25. ibid.

26. Quoted in H.A. Winkler, *Weimar, 1918-1933. Die Geschichte der ersten deutschen Demokratie* (The History of the First German Democracy.) Munich, 1993, p. 56. Translated from the German.

27. See Peukert, *op cit.* pp. 126, 128.

28. Donna Harsch. *German Social Democracy and the Rise of Nazism,* Chapel Hill, 1993, p. 161.

29. Salvadori, *op. cit.* p. 347.

30. Leon Trotsky, *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany,* New York, 1971. See especially Ch. 7, p. 138.

31. Smaldone, p. 171.

32. Salvadori, *op. cit.,* especially Pt. VIII.

Kurt Jacobsen

IN THE COUNTERCULTURAL WHODUNIT *The Big Fix* (1978), hippie-turned-gumshoe Moses Wine doggedly sniffs his way down a long foul trail littered with ample evidence of corporate greed and political sleaze — just the sorts of things that bugged him as a tender tie-dyed youth in the late, lamented 1960s. Wine, played by a Richard Dreyfuss who positively flaunts his touch of gray, recognizes a former flashy movement figure who fled underground only to rematerialize magically in a plush LA manse barbecuing back ribs beside a blue shimmery swimming pool.

The middle-aged firebrand sheepishly marvels that — oh, isn't it ironic? — the repugnant "system" he so mischievously resisted wound up rewarding his knack for clever phrase-mongering. Shrewd corporate bosses elevated him (under a pseudonym plus God knows how much plastic surgery) from a menial stock room job all the giddy way up to the universally envied lifestyle of a thriving ad executive. Only in Amerika? No, as usual, only in the movies.

You can't beat the munificent system: it beats you or, with rabid post-modern glee, absorbs you from afro to toe. So goes the Gospel according to mainstream movies. The ruefully wry fugitive, of course, was intended to evoke 1960s movement *uber*-jester Abbie Hoffman who, as it happened, was on the lam after a coke bust and in no position to object to this typically condescending portrait. So, by dint of Hollywood rewrite, all Abbie's fierce, funny, and even preposterous acts of cultural resistance were sown like so many wild but sterile oats. The shock-haired clown who so conspicuously conspired to levitate the Pentagon, and all the braid inside it, who mocked Mammon's mean-minded disciples by spilling a profanity of dollar bills down upon the New York stock exchange, was inducted mythically into the money-grubbing fold. (Yes, we all know notorious Yippie sidekick Jerry Rubin nauseatingly opted for this public penitential route.)

The Big Fix was pretty much a two-hour long Rorschach test undergone by film makers who distilled for us the Abbie Hoffman and the depiction of the Sixties that they saw in the ink blots, the demeaning perspectives they needed to peddle. The basic bountifulness of the "system," after all, is a credo that Hollywood honchos embrace about as sincerely as they embrace anything. Subversiveness — or just going against the grain — is a cute game for low-grossing foreign filmmakers, or cynical advertising executives, to play at. Does it spoil the party to observe that the real Abbie Hoffman morphed not into a latter-day gray flannel suit wearing Babbitt but rather into a cunning and staunch environmental activist while in hiding, before he turned himself in after lying low for seven years.?

In 1989 Hoffman, who evidently suffered increasingly severe manic-depression, apparently committed suicide. So, despite a regrettable end, the authentic fugitive, like most 60s activists, remained pretty faithful to the rambunctious half-rebel, half-communitarian spirit of the era. It will come as no surprise that avid filmmakers who scrabbled all their lives to clamber to the top at any cost might find the actual Abbie Hoffman, and all fellow mutants ("freaks"), completely unfathomable. Poor darlings. One very nearly sympathizes. A recent biopic *Steal This Movie* (2000) was marginally kinder than usual to showboat Abbie and his unruly decade but it was fatally marred by flabbergastingly bad casting, a dire script, and no discernible feel whatsoever for the grit and wit of the times. Another well-meaning but self-hobbled travesty.

"Abbie was a joy and delight," recalls Studs Terkel. "I met him at the Chicago Seven trial and when he was traveling around under a nom de plume when he was

KURT JACOBSEN *is a research associate in Political Science at the University of Chicago, and a Visiting Academic at the London School of Economics (2002-2003). He is a film contributor to numerous periodicals in the U.S. and Britain.*

doing environmental stuff. He was full of goodness. He was genuine. He was up and down a lot. He was an opportunist, okay, but a good one though. I think he killed himself because he was a romantic but a romantic in a good sense. He wanted to build a New Jerusalem. All his dreams, his romance with the future, were being shattered. Along come the MBA kids, you know? He didn't live long enough to see the streets of Seattle and things of that sort. I think that was it."

DID THE MYTHIC SIXTIES ERUPT with JFK's 1963 assassination (or the Beatles in America, or the Cuba missile crisis the year before)? Did they sputter out with Nixon's delectably ignominious resignation in 1974 (or maybe the fall of Saigon in 1975)? Over ensuing decades American filmmakers looked back in anger or envy or contempt, but always with traces of awe at the rapid-fire progression of epochal upheavals: civil rights uprisings, Southeast Asian slaughter, antiwar demonstrations, countercultural antics, psychedelic and not-so-psychedelic drugs, religious dalliances with the ill-understood "Orientalist" East, alternative medicines, the women's movement, gay rights, slimy agents provocateurs everywhere and hardly any condoms. Isn't it fair to say that in higher social circles, where former frat rat power brokers dwell, that no other decade arouses more hostility, more horror, more preemptive sneers? Movies and television relentlessly recycled cherished clichés of switches from Yippie to yuppie as fast as you can shave your beard or legs, from window-breaker to stockbroker, from idealist to I'm all right, Jack.

Let's hold 9/11 for the moment. Kosovo was a key marker, a crisis point. Recall how pundits gloated in 1999 that decrepit New Leftists, oh so slow on the uptake, finally wised up and shuffled contritely to the Right. And there was something, though not much, to it. Kosovo was the "first time I was ever on the same side as Pat Buchanan," a bemused Abe Peck, former underground paper editor and now associate dean at Northwestern's journalism school, told me at the time. Peck opposed air strikes although his "weekly peacenik poker group" provisionally supported NATO. A pair of former Students for a Democratic Society leaders, Carl Davidson and Mike Klonsky, took opposite sides, and Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) were split down the middle. "U.S. foreign policy is wrong often enough that occasionally the odds are in favor of it doing some good," sighed VVAW member David Curry, a professor of criminology in Saint Louis. For Barry Romo of the VVAW the exact motives why NATO went in were irrelevant: after all, "the same cop who beat me up in demonstrations could save my 17-year-old daughter from an assault in the streets." No sixties activist I encountered perceived more than a weird coincidence — for once, and perhaps only this once — of *realpolitik* with crying humanitarian need. None were rushing to vote the Republican ticket.

VVAW members also attest that they failed to establish a single verified instance of insolent antiwar activists spitting on returning soldiers — a widely circulated and deeply relished right-wing tale that got enshrined, along with the indestructible POW/MIA myth, in movies. Some of us recall certain uniformed soldiers merrily assaulting demonstrators while the police, when they weren't egging them on, remained olympianly aloof. In the cotton candy tall tale *Forrest Gump* (1994), a key scene displays an utterly odious peacenik beating up his own paisleyed, beaded and bangled girl friend. Good ole whiskey-swigging boys from Gump's neck of the woods have never ever been known to raise a hand to defenseless critters, here or abroad.

What the slickly self-pitying *The Big Chill* submitted for our twilight zoney inspection in the 1980s — the me decade that never went away — were a desperately mild bunch who clearly never ventured within a gas canister's throw of an organized protest but manage anyway to mourn the soulful selves they never were. If you didn't have an FBI dossier tucked away somewhere, you just weren't there.

On the brink of the 1990s, in the midst of the remorselessly rapacious Reagan-Bush mis-administrations, portraits took a Dorian Gray-ish tack. In *True Believer* (1989) James Woods gibbered and blustered brilliantly in the role of a seedy disillusioned movement lawyer who (rather like the CIA) was re-

duced to defending vile dope dealers. Woods was his usual fidgety, riveting, weasely persona on screen, but the real life model for Wood's burned out attorney, Tony Serra, whom I interviewed at the time, complained that he himself hadn't budged one little bit from his sixties values: liberty, fraternity, equality and fun.

Hubris is the cardinal sin of the movie-scripted 60s radical, but very rarely is the "system," or those happy few who mind it, deemed guilty of anything except inevitability: There's nothing new under the Klieg lights. In *Running on Empty* ageing survivors of a bomb-flinging fringe — conjuring images of "the Weatherman" faction of SDS — eke out furtive suburban lives as anonymously as they can, literally having blown it. (Tony Serra recently became defense attorney for a resurfaced and now matronly Symbionese Liberation Army fugitive — and you can draw your own moral from that.) Yet if you care to look around, you even find weatherman alumni like Bill Ayers and Bernadine Dohrn — self-indulgent and dangerous in that immensely addled offshoot of the 1960s, to be sure — running a legal center for the poor, and striving for badly needed education reform in Chicago public schools. Mark Rudd teaches in a community college in New Mexico where he too works for progressive causes. Just what amends have ever been made by those self-assured and well-tailored policy makers, the vaunted best and the brightest, who masterminded the killing, maiming and poisoning of millions in South Asia for, as the song goes, absolutely nothing? I seem to recall a single apology from former Defense secretary Robert McNamara. That's about it.

NOT ALL SIXTIES FLICKS are unmitigated rubbish. The best of the lot surely was John Sayles' impish low-budget ode, *The Return of the Secaucus Seven* (1979), which accurately showed the frequently over keen consciences and self-burlesquing humor in a period when "political correctness" was just a chiding joke deployed to abort any hint of imminent self-righteousness. In the late 1960s audiences were treated to intriguing counter-cultural glimpses in the wonderfully unsentimental *Alice's Restaurant* and sensationalized Beavis and Buttheaded *Easy Rider* — amid unredeemable crap like *Strawberry Statement* and *Getting Straight*. A decade later Four Friends and the American Graffiti sequel creditably grappled with the seismic shifts in John Wayne's excruciatingly gullible, post-McCarthyite America. The media battle to frame, and neuter, the sixties continues because that horrifying decade obliterated what was a reflex-like public belief in their authorities who, not to put too fine a point on it, were exposed as arrogant, lying, self-serving bastards. Authorities are still smarting from it.

So the 1980s became a bonfire not of vanities but of what were deemed to be dangerous idealistic pretensions. How dare any fool imagine that everyone else wasn't in it exclusively for the money? Every Vietnam film from Chuck Norris' hard-ass neantherdalism to Stanley Kubrick's slippery surrealism were, by definition, Sixties movies vying over whether that carnival of carnage was worth it or not. No one excavated the detritus or plumbed the paradoxes of the 60s more assiduously than Oliver Stone, who crafted his redoubtable Vietnam trilogy, and threw in *Nixon*, *JFK* and *The Doors* for good measure. (Abbie Hoffman in self-referential glee did a cameo as himself in Stone's *Born On The Fourth Of July*.)

The 1990s seemed poised to inflict yet more fraternity boy revisions of the 60s: the alleged snuffing of the "Vietnam syndrome" after the Gulf War, groveling for dollars transmuted into a public virtue, and a celebrating of remote control murder. Yet *Flashback* (1990) came along and charmingly depicted a rigid young FBI agent recovering his soul through the canny midwifery of a Hoffmanesque radical, who, all too woefully, predicts that "the nineties will make the sixties look like the fifties." Ah, don't rub it in.

And, of late, American films indulged in a slightly more wistful glance back at the 60s in unabashedly nostalgic vehicles like *Waking the Dead*, which centers on a troubled young Chicago politician who is visited, like Scrooge by Marley's ghost, by the sinuous wraith of his deceased sixties' lover — "his jiminy cricket" who died in an Orlando Letelier-like car bomb assassination — to be taken in ghostly hand in search of the better angels of his nature. *A Walk on*

the Moon took a peek at how the 1969 Woodstock festival might have reverberated in the quietly desperate lives of a Jewish working class family holidaying in the time warp of the Catskills. The less said about that god-awful television series entitled "The 60s" (and its sequel "The 70s") the better. They're mires of nothing but clothes, attitudes and jargon.

Why do the 60s attract so much kneejerk scorn? "The Sixties is always being put down," Studs Terkel says, "because it was a moment when kids found causes outside themselves. A woman I know says the Sixties is put down by those who delight in the failure of dreams. That's an [apt] quote." In post-9/11 America, as Dylan too damned prophetically crooned, Bush, Jr. and his "agents and his superhuman crew come out and round up everyone that knows more than they do." Will the onset of plainly ethical issues — anti-sweatshop campaigns, anti-WTO agitation, the plights of all those shunted aside by corporate globalization — be deemed just another fad? In mining the mythic "Sixties" for marketable themes, overly shrewd mainstream film makers find themselves pretty much in the same fix as the Victorian churchgoers in England who, as a keen observer scribbled a century or so ago, would equally have been horrified to behold their ballyhooed Christian values being disputed, or put into practice.

CORRESPONDENCE

Continuing Debate on The Legacy of Rosa Luxemburg

On Formation of Workers' Councils

To the Editors,

OVER THE COURSE OF THE LUXEMBURG DEBATE, Stephen Eric Bronner has made several remarks on the phenomenon of workers' councils, observations that range from the ignorant to the obscure. He notes that the "historical record" makes it clear that "councils have only emerged under circumstances in which liberal republics were absent." How then to account for the *arbeiterraete* during the Weimar period (suppressed by Social Democrats) or the factory collectives in the Spanish Republic (dismantled by the Popular Front government)?

If, as he claims, councils "have no appeal for modern workers," how to explain the German factory committees formed in the immediate aftermath of the Nazi collapse, the workers councils of revolutionary Budapest, the rank and file assemblies in France in '68, the Cordoba insurrection in Argentina that same year, the *cordones industriales* in Allende's Chile, the councils in the Portuguese Revolution, the *shuras* in Iranian manufacturing plants that spearheaded the overthrow of the Shah in 1979 . . . I mention here only the most prominent examples of council activity of the last half-century or so.

The formation of workers' councils, dating from the days of the Paris Commune, were not and are not the result of agitation by "a few sectarians," but rather rational and pragmatic responses by rank and file workers to economic and political crises endemic to the capitalist system, which the election tomorrow of a million socialists around the globe would do little to affect. As organs of direct democracy, councils have naturally excited fear and hostility among the ranks of fascists, Communists, conservatives, liberals — and "socialists."

MARTIN COMACK

Parliamentarianism and Socialism

To the Editors:

HAS MICHAEL J. THOMPSON deliberately misunderstood Marx's view of the relationship between universal suffrage, revolutionary violence and class rule? The passages (from "The Chartists" and *Minutes of the Hague Congress*) he cites to imply that Marx put his faith in the possibility of a peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism are well known and oft-quoted, but I have rarely seen them taken out of context with such opportunistic crassness.

Marx's point with regard to the United Kingdom and the United States (and possibly Holland) was that these countries' lack of a heavy bureaucratic-military state apparatus might allow the working class to come to power through the acquisition of a parliamentary majority — unlike in the countries of continental Europe, where the bureaucratic superstructure of the bourgeois state made a mockery of representative institutions and placed an insuperable barrier between parliamentarianism and working-class rule. The reasonableness of Marx's assumptions about at least the UK are shown by the fact that, for most of the 19th century, the British bourgeoisie would rather have risked civil war than grant universal suffrage — because, in the absence of institutions such as a standing army and a well-oiled party political machine for the co-option of the workers' movement, votes really were power.

Even in these circumstances, however, Marx did not view this as the end of the matter. He was well aware of the possibility that a peaceful, legal, parliamentary assumption of power by the labor movement would be followed by a "slave-owners' war," i.e. a bourgeois uprising to overthrow the

newly established workers' government. Asked very specifically about this issue by a British reporter, he replied that he was "not sanguine" about the chances of avoiding armed conflict. In short, he believed that, although in certain very specific historical circumstances the working class could initiate its conquest of power through parliamentary means, it would have to be prepared for the use of revolutionary violence in order to defend its position.

Moreover — and this is the point Thompson appears determined to miss — the exceptional circumstances which Marx noted in Britain and the United States had changed decisively by the turn of the 20th century, with the UK and U.S. states becoming (as Lenin pointed out in *State and Revolution*) precisely the sort of bureaucratic-military monstrosities which had long existed in Europe. This state of affairs is precisely why universal suffrage had become, from the viewpoint of the bourgeoisie, a relatively harmless reform by the time it was finally achieved in the advanced capitalist countries — and why, as Marx put it in *The Civil War in France*, "the working class cannot simply take hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes." And the trend towards bureaucratism has accelerated during the course of the 20th century; can anyone — even Stephen Bronner — seriously maintain that the modern "liberal" state, with its huge military machine, army of bureaucrats and superpowerful executive, is a suitable mechanism for the radically participatory democracy which Marxists see as the precondition for the working class building socialism?

The whole point about workers' and community councils, as my comrades Alan Johnson and Barry Finger have eloquently reaffirmed, is that they allow the institutional realisation of democratic aspirations and popular sovereignty in a way that the parliamentary-bureaucratic state is neither able or supposed to. Lastly, Bronner and Thompson's claim that the Marxist conception of council democracy is essentially "anachronistic" would be premature if it were not so deliberately obtuse. Soviet-type institutions played a major role not only in post-WWI Russia and Germany, but in numerous working-class and popular upheavals in widely disparate countries throughout the 20th century (e.g., China 1927, Spain 1936-8, Hungary 1956, Iran 1979, Poland 1980-1, Russia during and after the collapse of Stalinism). They remain the institutional ideal to which socialists, while of course fighting for the extension of democratic rights and institutions within capitalism, should continue to aspire.

SACHA ISMAIL
sacha@workersliberty.org
www.workersliberty.org

Metaphysica ad absurdum: A Response to Ismail & Comack

THE PERSISTENCE OF THE PRESENT DEBATE has its roots, as I argued in my previous article, in what appears to be the undying nature of what I termed "socialist metaphysics." Far from seeing the actual, concrete realities of politics, socialists aligned with the dogmatic ultra-left allow themselves to be seduced by what they mistakenly see as an anti-authoritarian stance toward the idea of the liberal state, seeing it instead as being inextricably linked to militarism, and capitalist interests. My use of Marx's own words on this subject meant to use Marx against this outdated brand of Marxism — it appears that was not convincing enough.

Ismail specifically accuses me of taking Marx's words from *The Minutes of the Hague Conference* and "The Chartists," "out of context." But this seems to me more a result of an ignorance of Marx's true attitude toward politics in general and the political institutions of liberal democratic regimes, more specifically. The dominant idea among ultra-left, anti-statist Marxists is that Marx made the case against the state because it was a mere reflection of dominant class interests and that bourgeois law and politics was incorrigible as a result of its class character.

However, Ismail would be wise to turn away from ideology and toward the actual writings and ideas that Marx himself put forth with respect to the function of politics. My quotes were not out of context, they were the expression of some of Marx's fundamental ideas on the way the liberal state could be used by the working class to further its interests: the core issue of this en-

tire debate. As Marx also argued when discussing the reform of juvenile workers' codes in England:

> This can only be effected by converting *social reason* into *social force*, and, under given circumstances, there exists no other method of doing so, than through *general laws*, enforced by the power of the state. In enforcing such laws, the working class do not fortify governmental power. On the contrary, *they transform that power, now used against them, into their own agency*. They effect by a general act what they would vainly attempt by a multitude of isolated individual efforts.[1]

I can scarcely imagine a clearer statement against the sham interpretation of Marx's anti-statism.

The state — the liberal state as constituted in England at the time — is therefore not a mere cockpit for the interests of capital; it has, through its democratic character, the ability to enforce the interests of the working class as well through the institution of the law. And Marx was correct in his assessment. His emphasis is also on the reality of social movements that could realize the interests of working people and affect law and the institutions of government. His point was not that the state would evolve to the point where it would simply grant these laws to working people.

As Marx said about the Proudhonists: "They scorn all *revolutionary* action, that is, action arising out of the class struggle itself, all concentrated social movements, and therefore also those which can be carried through by *political* means (for instance the legal shortening of the working day). [They act] [u]nder the *pretext of freedom* and of anti-governmentalism or anti-authoritarian individualism."[2] Without reaching, Ismail himself could be the target of this critique. After all, in the end, it is not an issue about what Marx "really meant" but rather about what is relevant in his thought for the contemporary political situation.

Now, all of this relates back to the fundamental idea I was raising and which Ismail and Comack seem determined to ignore, if not avoid: that the notion that the liberal state is somehow defined by its opposition to the interests of working people and of progressive social change is ludicrous, that it was not, in fact, the position of Marx himself, and that their ideas to the contrary continue the tradition of irrationalist notions of political organization and metaphysical conceptions of society and political organization. The longer these ideas persist, the more irrelevant the left will become. In times such as these, it is truly staggering that reality has yet to sink in. I might recommend to each of them a good dose of Aristotle before returning to Marx.

MICHAEL J. THOMPSON
Hunter College, CUNY

Dialogue Not Dogma: Response to Ismail & Comack

ALL I SEE FROM THE LETTERS to the editor by Sacha Ismail and Martin Comack is an ability to talk some trash and throw out historical examples whose relevance for the contemporary political scene are simply presupposed. I agreed with Michael Thompson when he claimed that workers' councils have only appeared under circumstances where liberal regimes were absent: perhaps he or I should have added the word "functioning" before the words "workers' councils" or "established" before the words liberal republic. That might have made things clearer — but, then, probably not.

Let's begin with Germany in the aftermath of World War I which, though you wouldn't know it from these letters, received much attention in the prior debates. Now, I certainly don't want to be "obscure," but it might be useful to consider that the most important uprisings in Kiel, Munich, and Berlin occurred before and during the actual creation of the Weimar Republic.[3] None of the communist inspired uprisings that came later, like the March Action, received support from even a marginally serious minority of the working class and none of them lasted more than a few weeks. Also, forgive my being "ignorant," but I simply don't know of a council that arose after 1923 in Germany. With regard to Spain, moreover, didn't anarchist strikes accompany the creation of the republic in 1931 and continue for the five years of its duration? Its anarchism, by contrast, was generated in a monarchical-theocratic context and reached back to the time of Bakunin?[4] As for the

councils in Chile, I seem to forget, where were they before the disintegration of the Allende regime? "Obtuse" I might be, but always let it be said that I am willing to learn: perhaps Ismail and Comack can teach me about the liberal republics that apparently had been established in Hungary before 1956, or in Iran and Portugal before 1979, or in Poland before 1981, or in Russia following the collapse of Stalinism. Damn it! I also can't seem to remember those experiments in *autogestion* in France ever vying for political power, or how long the Cordoba insurrection lasted, or the name of the liberal republic that had preceded the rise of a few factory committees immediately following the fall of Nazism.[5] Sorry.

Guys! There's nothing new here. All your points were covered. Could you at least have bothered to read the debate? I never denied that councils often arise in times of crisis or that they can serve a revolutionary purpose. My concern was rather with the belief that councils accompany every revolution, that revolutionary valor is enough for a viable politics; that councils offer a sustainable form of rule, that they are representative of the nation as a whole, that the majority of the working class endorsed them, that they preserve civil liberties better than a republic, that they are more efficient than other institutional forms, and that the councilist form of socialism is still relevant in an increasingly complex and global society. Regarding this latter point — just so there is no misunderstanding — I also never claimed that the liberal republic is a "suitable mechanism" for "radical participatory democracy." My point was rather that the old factory based and local understanding of direct democracy is anachronistic. Both of these letters are merely content to assert — rather argue — the opposite. They give me no reason to change my mind other than a reference to Marx. If the councilist enterprise was really so "rational" and "pragmatic" why did it receive so little support; why were its institutions so weak; and why is its theory still so impoverished?

I meant it when I said that I enjoyed debating with Alan Johnson, David Camfield, Paul Le Blanc and Barry Finger in the pages of *New Politics*. But these letters by Ismail and Comack are smug and dogmatic without being substantive or insightful. They refuse even to consider any institutional or historical criticisms of their own positions and they illustrate why most people on the broader left have so little use for the ultra left. But no matter guys: just keep talking to yourselves while believing that all of your opponents are simply "ignorant," "obtuse," and "obscure": it's a great political strategy that — everyone knows — has had enormous success in the past.

STEPHEN ERIC BRONNER
Rutgers University

Green Perspectives

Building an Authentic Movement

To the Editor:

HOWARD RYAN'S "Critique of the U.S. Greens" (*New Politics,* Summer 2002) seeks to construe the Green Party as "making a break from the Democrats their strategic paradigm." This is setting up a straw man argument. The Green Party makes no fundamental reference to the Democratic Party. Rather, it seeks to create an authentic party of the left, a new kind of party that seeks social and political transformation through a range of radical strategic elements. Ryan's call for bottom-up left organizing, while correct on the face of it, fails in the context of his critique of the Green Party from four fatal flaws: his misunderstanding of the political position of Green Party activist Howie Hawkins and thereby of the Green Party tendency that Hawkins represents; his inability as a reformist to fully apprehend Hawkins' more radical stance; his apparent ignorance of Green Party history; and a failure to grasp the challenges radical democratic organizing faces in the U.S. political context.

Ryan characterizes Hawkins' position as "what ails the left is its relationship to the Democrats." In fact, going back at least fifteen years, Hawkins has advocated "a left that could unite the new movements into a broad, popular movement for greater political and economic democracy." (*New Politics*, Summer 1988) That this approach continues to inform his thinking is evi-

denced by his role in the recent founding of the Green Alliance, a group that intends to "Organize Green activists and diverse progressives into local democratic organizations of the Green Party and Movement. Promote radical social, ecological, and economic democracy as a solution to capitalism's exploitation and ecological destruction." (www.thegreenalliance.org)

Ryan's failure to understand Hawkins can be attributed in part to his own reformist perspective in which political change is enacted through "the pursuit of demands by exerting organized pressure upon bosses or elected officials." Thus, Ryan's movement takes the capitalist economy and its handmaiden, the modern nation-state, as the only legitimate terrain of struggle. By contrast, Hawkins understands that both state and corporation are inherently hierarchical, anti-democratic, anti-ecologically, and unjust.

He has long called for "a fundamental opposition [that] will refuse to be contained by these structures . . . which is not vying for state power like a conventional party but to restructure political institutions into a grassroots democracy." (*New Politics,* Summer 1988)

Hawkins played a key role in the struggle for a grassroots democratic Green Party over the past decade, a history that appears to be unknown to Ryan. The key moment in that struggle perhaps came late in 1995 when the fate of the Green Party was still uncertain. At that time an elite clique of California and New Mexico Green Party leaders recruited Ralph Nader to run for president and presented this to the rest of the nation's Greens as a fait accompli. Radical Greens, miffed at this affront to democratic procedure, were presented with the uncomfortable choice between ignoring the movement's first moment in the limelight or climbing on the Nader bandwagon and attempting to use it to strengthen their own local and state organizations. This crafty maneuver by the Green electoralist vanguard brought into Green Party organizations thousands of members whose *raison d'etre* was the building of the single-minded third party that Ryan correctly criticizes. Hawkins among others (myself included) continued to work for a more radical Green Party even as they watched the electoralist Association of State Green Parties morph into the now hegemonic Green Party U.S. in the wake of the Nader 2000 campaign.

Here, Ryan's failure to grasp the importance of the political culture of the capitalist state comes into play. It is citizens' acculturation under the disciplinary power of the hierarchical structures of capitalism that largely explains both the dominance of the electoralist wing of the Green Party and the persisting failures of left social movements. The political party is an implement of the state, designed to restrain political activity within the disciplinary apparatus of the state. As such, it mimics the state hierarchy, required to do so under law. Those who participate in party activity, even in those parties seen as barely legitimate such as the Greens, are rewarded with leadership roles from precinct captain to national chair, with media attention, and with the recognition from their fellow citizens that they are engaged in significant political activity. The biggest prize of all was a key, if unfulfilled, objective of the Green Party in Nader 2000: millions of dollars in state financial support. Thus, when a tiny electoralist vanguard broke off from Green Party USA in 1992, smart money would have bet on their success, at least in the short term. They had the advantage of state sanction and support for their project and of state education of the citizenry to understand and find meaning in their activities.

Ryan correctly asserts that left organizations, particularly large-scale ones, tend to follow a hierarchical, leader-oriented, top-down model. Where he errs is in his implication that this is merely an error of strategy. Rather, it is their almost inevitable succumbing to the pressures and rewards of a hierarchically oriented culture. Citizens are taught from an early age that power lies in the hands of the rich and powerful before whom they are merely adherents or supplicants (Ryan's quote in paragraph 3 above is a fine example of this effect). The American myth of the rugged individual casts a handful as "men" of consequence and the masses as disempowered monads. And if, as individuals, they have no power, they have no further recourse since organizing is not offered as an option under the prevailing

paradigm. Most Americans do not know, to take the bumper sticker example, that "unions [are] the people who brought you the weekend" and they are certainly not aware of the grassroots militancy, the decades-long commitment, and the state and corporate violence that surrounded the movement for the 8-hour workday.

Born into a culture in which they are raised, schooled, and churched in patriarchal hierarchies, where the first work experience is likely as not in a fast-food assembly line, it is little wonder rank-and-file members of left organizations readily defer to the established leadership. Those leaders find similar comfort and "effectiveness" striking deals with political and corporate powers. Often as not, the movements find their success in the welcoming arms of the Democratic Party which rewards their support with compromised legislation characterized by wavering commitment, weak enforcement, scant funding, and erosion over time. Once in the Democrats' embrace, these movements — whether labor, feminist, civil rights, or environmental — soon relax their vigilance, relying ever more on the "influence" of their leaders. Greens correctly pointed out the Sierra Club's pimping for Al Gore in 2000 as a textbook case of this dynamic. Thus, radical Greens have long held, as Ryan correctly quotes, that "the Democratic Party has been the graveyard of every democratic social movement."

The remedy is for the left to build a movement committed to a culture of authentic democratic participation — no easy task. Such a movement must remain independent from the hierarchical organizations that comprise the status quo if for no other reason than to buffer its members from the seductively familiar roles and rewards that they offer. Thus, there can be no inherent role for the Democratic Party. On the other hand, the Green Party still holds out its original vision of a place where the movements coalesce, where a program of radical transformation is developed and disseminated, and where a lived workshop in democratic practice is a day-to-day affair. For such a party, the choice of political strategies, which races to enter with which candidates and with what style of campaign will remain points of contest. The Green Alliance was founded last year with the understanding that Green Party U.S. was in danger of losing its mooring as a radical force. Many of us have worked over the years developing the Green Party. With continued radical left participation we can ensure that it fulfills its promise as an effective force for radical democracy, ecology, and justice.

DAN COLEMAN

P.S. Many of the themes in this letter are discussed in far greater length in my book Ecopolitics: Building a Green Society *(Rutgers University Press, 1994).*

Running Green Party Candidates

To the Editor:

HOWARD RYAN'S CRITICISM of the Green Party (*New Politics,* Summer 2002), as I understand it, is this: The Green Party runs candidates against Republicans and Democrats. He is particularly concerned that challenging Democrats is " . . . out of synch with the immediate legislative needs of the [labor and black] movements." According to Howard, this alienates "many movement activists" since Green candidates " . . . operate not only against the Democrats but also against the immediate issue-based needs of the movements."

It is certainly true that "activists" whose activity is shilling for Democrats will be put off.

When black and labor movement activists support Democratic candidates, or occasionally become Democratic candidates, they are, according to Mr. Ryan, just working on "issue-based needs of the movements" in a practical fashion. When the Green Party runs candidates, it is guilty of "electoralism," defined as an over-reliance on the electoral arena.

And yet, "the essence of change from above," as Ryan defines it, "is its reliance on the activity of top leaders and their good relations with people in power." But somehow, the Greens are accused of cultivating good relations with people in power (Republicans and Democrats) by challenging their candidates. The good movement activists who support Democrats and are Democrats are magically exempt from being charged with "electoralism." The illogic is apparent.

Ryan's prescription for the Green Party is very simple. Greens should "set aside

party building," and "focus on movement building." Apparently some very limited party building would be permissible in small cities such as Berkeley, Madison, and Ann Arbor. Ryan would not mind the occasional Green city council member or county commissioner. Green candidates for President, Senator, Congress, Governor, and so on should be postponed indefinitely because — "Nader helped elect Bush."

It's the familiar charge that the Greens are only "spoilers" who would want to see liberal Democrats elected but have the effect of helping elect Republicans instead. If Mr. Ryan is hoping to persuade Greens, by this exquisite reasoning, to retire their own ballot line and run in Democratic primaries instead, his efforts are guaranteed to fail. Every Green still standing has heard this argument so many times, an immunity to it is firmly established.

If I am going to speak on behalf of the Green Party, then I should demonstrate some right to do so. I'm a member of the Green Party of Michigan. I'm the treasurer of my local and the chair of the state Platform Committee. In the 2002 General Election, I was one of 11 candidates nominated for the state legislature. Because the Green Party of Michigan is not a democratic centralist organization but is explicitly democratically decentralized, the views expressed are my own, not binding on other members. You will have to decide if they are representative.

It is of course silly to say there is no difference between Republicans and Democrats, and even sillier with particular Democratic candidates. The late Senator Wellstone for instance, was for more investment in Head Start and in public education generally. He was for expanding health care coverage instead of cutting Medicare funds. He was for more environmental protection, not more deregulation. He was for raising the minimum wage. He was for maintaining a more liberal Supreme Court that will protect abortion rights. And so on. He was a good guy, within his limitations.

There are differences between Democrats and Republicans, with the differences mostly making the Democrats somewhat preferable to the Republicans. We all know that. This is like saying there are issues where the Monarchists are preferable to the Nazis. Maybe they are — but is supporting Monarchists a viable strategy?

If the balance of power in the Congress in the next election is always the most important thing, there will never be a time when opposition to Democrats is appropriate. It won't matter, in this way of looking at politics, how pathetically trivial are the differences between Democrats and Republicans, so long as there is something.

To concentrate on differences between Republican and Democrat is to ignore the range of issues on which the Republicans and the Democrats are allies in principle and in detail. Greens are in opposition to many of their bipartisan agreements.

If Mr. Ryan wants to argue for voting for Democrats instead of Greens, he should do so. He'll have to argue, if he is honest about it, voting to support the Patriot Act instead of civil liberties; voting to support corporate managed trade instead of worker's rights and union jobs; voting for marginal piddling with the price of prescriptions instead of for universal health care; voting for stimulating an unsustainable economy instead of creating a green economy; and so on. If he is comfortable making that case, he should go right to it.

The above is not an exhaustive list of issues for which he'll have to make his case. Greens would repeal the Taft-Hartley Act. Greens are the only party in favor of reparations. We are opposed to the War on Drugs — not in favor of making minor adjustments to penalties and such, but in favor of abandoning it. We oppose Bush's war in Iraq and Sharon's war in Palestine.

By running candidates at all levels, the Green Party gives people the chance to vote against Republicans and Democrats on these issues. Getting this message through the obstacle course of corporate media and campaigns shaped by commercial advertising isn't easy and it does not happen in one season, but we are getting there. I understand we are the fastest-growing political party in America. It has taken the Greens of Europe a couple of decades to become an undeniably significant force on the political scene. In the U.S., we've been working on it for about half that long, and we are getting there.

Mr. Ryan charges that when we launch campaigns at all levels (instead of focusing on the city council of Ann Arbor), this constitutes "alienating other left constituencies who endorse Democrats, and leaving the movement building for those other left constituencies to handle." A simple description of the activities of the Green Party of Michigan demonstrates how far this is from the truth.

Since the election of 2000, we have cosponsored a forum on ending the War on Drugs; formed (and re-formed) Labor Greens; worked as part of the Sweetwater Alliance against the Perrier water-bottling plant in the middle of the state; supported the candidate slate of CPR-Detroit in the 2001 city council primaries; participated in rallies against sanctions, the Poor People's March and Summit in Detroit, meetings defending Palestine, various anti-war activities, and a conference in Ann Arbor proposing divestment in Israel, and more.

We have worked with and within the ACLU, Amnesty International, Earthwatch, Jobs With Justice, Labor Notes, the Michigan Peace Team, the Lawyer's Guild, Peace Action, the Sierra Club, Transportation Riders United, the Triangle Foundation, and many more. I have focused on activities around Detroit, probably slighting the work done Up North and elsewhere in the state. We have in no way left the movement building to others. Michigan, I understand, is about an average state for the Green Party; more advanced than some, less organized than others.

The fourth alternative, not mentioned in Mr. Ryan's list but actually practiced, is to run candidates and build movements. These are not mutually exclusive activities. They are in fact complementary.

Perhaps this election is only one round in a continuing struggle over issues of civil rights and civil liberties, war and peace, corporate rule or grassroots democracy. Perhaps what is important is not who wins this round, but how these issues are ultimately decided.

In the election of 1852, the balance of power in the Congress was at stake. The Republicans then were a small and radical third party. The main effect of a Republican candidate was to tip the outcome of the election between the Whig and the Democrat. Today we can see that it did not matter whether the Whig or the Democrat was elected to Congress in 1852. Fifteen years and half a million dead soldiers later, the Whigs were history, slaves were free, and our society was changed forever. Just imagine — all those important politicians, blindsided by history.

Then the big issue was slavery, dealt with by compromise after compromise — but the compromises kept on breaking down. The environment now, like slavery then, is tied into issues of trade and tariffs, war and peace, human rights and corporate rights, democracy versus the police state. More desperate stimulation fails to restore an unsustainable economy, and you can't have secure jobs or any other kind of security with an unsustainable economy. You can't live a healthy lifestyle with polluted air and water and food. The compromises keep on breaking down.

The Supreme Court's selection of Bush as President is about as popular, and as supportable, as the earlier decision to uphold slavery in the Dred Scott case. The Supreme Court discredited itself then, and it has done so again. Before the Civil War, we had Bloody Kansas; now, we have Bloody Palestine.

There are other parallels, but this is just an analogy, not a theory of history. The point is that predicting the future is very difficult, and believing that the balance of power between Democrats and Republicans in the next Congress is *the* important issue for our time is absurd.

Anyone still worried about Green spoilers should join the Greens in working for Instant Runoff Voting (IRV). It lets voters rank all the candidates instead of picking only one. With IRV, there is no spoiler effect. The winning candidate will actually have a majority of votes, not just a plurality. It's legal for all elections, including presidential ones, with no constitutional changes required. It would be good for minor parties and good for major parties and even good for democracy. The major parties know about it, but they don't like that part about it being good for minor parties.

I'm willing to have the Green Party spoil any number of races, until IRV is the law of

the land. Most Greens feel the same way. We're going to be in more and more races, and more visible in any movement with compatible goals. We are in no way a left wing for the Democratic Party. Get used to it.

I don't owe my vote to any Democrat, but I don't want to be doctrinaire about it. If and when I see Democrats actually opposing the Republicans on the issues I care about, I'll just be surprised. I believe the Democratic Party is more likely to split and dissolve than to change sides.

I will not accept promises about how things might be better in the future, if I will just go along with supporting the defective Democrats of today. Joe Hill taught me all I need to know about pie in the sky.

ART MYATT

1. "Instructions for Delegates of the Provisional General Council," in *Selected Works*, v. 2, Moscow: Progress Publishers, pp. 80-1. (Italics are my own.)

2. Marx in a letter to Kugelmann in Hanover, London October 9, 1866, ibid, p. 417. (Italics in the original.)

3. The call for a republic was, in fact, made by Philipp Scheidemann *after and in response to* the demand for a *Raterepublik* by Karl Liebknecht who, along with Rosa Luxemburg, was killed on the 5th of January in advance of the voting that took place for a National Assembly — the first elections for the new regime were held in 1920 — on the 19th of January 1919. With respect to that vote in 1919, according to the finest left historian of the period, "the majority socialists [SPD] received eleven million votes and the independents [USPD] two million. The Spartacists did not participate in the elections: according to later voting results, however, it had at most one hundred thousand supporters." Arthur Rosenberg, *Geschichte der Weimarer Republik* (Frankfurt am Main: Europaischeverlagsanstalt, 1961), pg. 15.

4. Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), 41.

5. Note the fine novel, which describes the few weeks of existence of the lone German "council" to have emerged in the immediate aftermath of World War II, by Stefan Heym, *Schwarzenberg* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1989).

Stephen R. Shalom replies to Jason Schulman*

JASON SCHULMAN RAISES AN IMPORTANT QUESTION for all who want to enhance security while avoiding warmongering.

Consider an analogy. There have been many terrorist attacks against civilian targets in India. India suspects, with good reason, that Pakistan has been giving support to the terrorists and has demanded that Pakistani authorities turn over the culprits. Musharref has said he would crack down on those responsible, but hasn't done so. Would we support India invading Pakistan, declaring "we go to war and hope very few civilians die"? Even if the danger of nuclear confrontation were not present, we presumably would not support such an action. In the long term we would call upon India to change its policies in Kashmir, but admittedly this would not stop some of the terrorist fanatics. Surely, India is entitled to defend its population from attack, but we would insist on two conditions: first, that India act in conformity with international law, going through the UN, and, second, that innocent civilians not be endangered. Note that saying "act so as not to harm innocent civilians" is not the same thing as saying "hope very few civilians die." If a serial killer has fled to Chicago, we wouldn't call in B-52 strikes and "hope very few civilians die"; instead we'd reject any approach that involved substantial risk to civilians. What if there were no other means of getting the killer except with B-52s? Then (I hope) we wouldn't get him.

After 9-11, I and many others called for those responsible being brought to justice (as well as for changing U.S. foreign policy). But the call for bringing the terrorists to justice was resolute in insisting that it must be done legally and without substantial risk to innocent lives. The legal requirement was important for the same reason we reject vigilante justice in general: even if an evildoer is brought to heel, the violation of legal norms will lead to further law-breaking in the future. The Bush administration never received UN authorization to wage war. (Some claim that authorization was provided by Security Council resolution 1368 which called "on all States to work together urgently to bring to justice the per-

*See Schulman's letter, p. 22

petrators, organizers and sponsors of these terrorist attacks." This is very different, however, from authorizing the United States to decide unilaterally to go to war against Afghanistan. If it authorizes U.S. war on Afghanistan then it authorizes as well an attack by any state on any other state as long as the attacker believes — or says it believes — that it is helping to bring 9-11's perpetrators to justice; hence, by this reading, the Council has authorized Iraq to invade Saudi Arabia, from where many of the hijackers originated.) And it was not enough to hope that civilians wouldn't die in Afghanistan; it was incumbent upon Washington to refrain from actions that carried significant risk to civilians. Given that credible aid officials warned that the bombing placed huge numbers of Afghan civilians at increased risk of starvation, to pursue the bombing under such circumstances was morally reprehensible.

As I've written before, no military action can totally avoid risk to civilians. So we need to weigh potential risks and potential benefits. The enormous risks were evident and blithely accepted by U.S. policy makers. As for the benefits, anti-war voices warned in October 2001 that war on Afghanistan would do little to prevent terrorism and would likely make things worse. The *New York Times* reported on June 16, 2002, based on conversations with senior government officials, that "Classified investigations of the Qaeda threat now under way at the FBI and CIA have concluded that the war in Afghanistan failed to diminish the threat to the United States. . . . Instead, the war may have complicated counterterrorism efforts by dispersing potential attackers across a wider geographic area." Such an achievement cannot possibly justify endangering the lives of hundreds of thousands of Afghans.